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The Slavery to Which the  
Present Social System  
Reduces All Classes



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The Slavery to which the  
Present Social System  
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BY MORRISON I. SWIFT.

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PRICE FIVE CENTS.

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PRICE 5 CENTS.

# The Slavery to which the Present Social System Reduces All Classes.

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BY MORRISON I. SWIFT.

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## I. MODERN KINDS OF SLAVERY.

**T**HERE is some confusion in our day as to the exact nature of slavery. Americans of the war generation conceive it as ownership of the person of another, so that that other is private property like a spade, or a piece of land. But the unvarying meaning of slave is not discovered until the purpose of bodily possession is followed through its historic phases. What never changes from the dawn of tradition until this date is the use made of the slave. He labors for someone else and not for himself—this is slavery. He is not free to develop himself and his life for himself; another thwarts this in some way; and if it is thwarted in any way the consequence is slavery.

There may be different degrees of personal or bodily freedom in slavery, and the slave may be made to feel his slavery more or less. He may be forced to deliver his labor at the end of a whip, under the seeming of friendship, by custom, legal codes, or elaborate kindness codified as competition. All his actions may be under the master's inspection, or the master may be contented with obtaining a due quantity of labor gratuitously.

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The effectiveness of a system of slavery is determined by the amount of labor extracted and the ease of its extraction. The most effective form is that in which the slave is willing to serve. If he does not require driving, expense and the indulgence of brutality are saved. Perfection of slavery will show the slave laboring to his utmost contentedly, free from physical compulsion or supervision, and intelligent enough to direct his own efforts.

To obtain this highly productive, self-running slavery, the master would pay a very great price, and certainly, in exchange for it, would be eager to part with that authority over the body of his slave which is only empty and irksome. If there is some satisfaction to pride in being able to order another mortal to go here and there, it is also a sore drain on the master's own freedom to see that the other does as he is ordered.

There were heavy, and it proved, fatal objections to the slavery of bodily ownership. There was the necessity of supporting the personal chattel. If he died from neglect it was the owner's loss, and when there was not work to keep him profitably busy he lived at the owner's cost. There was the necessity of mingling with the slaves, who were kept about one like the other stock, and contact on these terms was always degrading and debauching to the class or race that had supremacy. It was a school for brutality and arrogance and for physical vice. Whatever inferiorities the slaves had would impress their owners, if the children of the latter were reared and tended by slaves. Mere proximity to a really inferior order damages the rest. Moreover, just as a farmer is very much the slave of his horses and cows, if he owned men he would be their slave in the same way; so that bodily slavery makes the master a slave also.

The sort of work to be done in modern times by the slave requires great intelligence. The slave in body would

not take interest enough to learn intricate trades and complicated mechanical operations. Hence it has been necessary to alter the form of slavery in order to have the slave develop sufficient intelligence for the finer work. It was requisite also to provide a new impulsion for greater and more difficult effort, since the intelligent would not exert themselves under the goad of physical force.

At the same time the aim of the race in its moral development has been personal freedom. Religion and morality have lent their intricate motives and semi-mercenary enthusiasms to the cause of personal liberation. These two principles growing side by side and advocated by the same persons have produced some unique effects. On the one hand the stimulus to production has been enormously enhanced; on the other, the amount which the slaves retain of their own labor is tragically small. People own land or a business, but all that they have actually to consume for themselves is a mere bare living.

This is a startling result of fancied liberty, not yet much understood. Given a new country, prodigious in its power and possibilities, and how does it happen that the farmer is soon brought to the point where he has to work desperately for sheer subsistence, and many times forfeits even this? Why is it that the mechanic and common laborer hardly ever advance beyond this meagre subsistence line, while the store-keeper with moderate capital, wages usually a slowly losing struggle with the inexorable conditions of social survival? It is because their slavery has only changed its outward shape, and exists for them all still under the guise and glamor of serene freedom.

The keenness of the master nowhere ever manifested itself so mightily as when he made the slave convinced that he was free and that he was working for himself. Then the master had harnessed freedom in his service, and thenceforward all the effort that a free man will put forth to better him-

self belonged to the master's stock. The imaginary free man now became the imaginary owner of his productive substance; his movements were not hampered at every turn, and exasperating impositions and taxes were not put upon him in all forms. He was conscious of proprietorship, the sublimest prod to effort for the unshackled slave. How man has toiled under this incentive! He has adorned rocks with remunerative verdure, made arid deserts beam with vegetation, and converted the perpendicular mountain side into a home and a harvest; he has built up a majestic edifice of traffic and commerce, carried iron roadways over every impossible steep, and plundered the bowels of the earth of her costly substance. And all this he has done, why? Under what indomitable energizing idea has he created a new earth and trained terrific nature as his docile servant? Why, strangest of all, to compass these prodigies, has he gaily dedicated his days to the beast's drudgery, burnt up his life's store of health in the fierce fever of a few herculean years, neglected his life as though it were a silly bauble, and entailed upon his prenatally half-spent children a legacy of toil and care outweighing his own? Why, if not that these mad men dreamed that they were the owners of their works and miracles? Why, truly, except that these reckless, adamant pioneers expected to reap where they had sown and gather where they had strewn? It was the conviction that they at last were masters of themselves and full owners of their own efforts, that moved them to move the world and to buffet life with an incomparable disregard.

But what became of the labors which the hands and brains of the prodigious workers of three generations reared? Have those who created the industrial fabric kept it? Is it the possession of the children of those who destroyed themselves to lay its foundations? This question had its answer long ago. The accepted fact that American industry and



American wealth do not now belong to the American people but to a small body who are not of the people in sympathy, sentiment or conduct, is a part of the answer. These owners of the most of that mighty output of energy, work, life, hope and national anticipation which raised America up, are in every quality aliens to the American people, despisers of it, owners of it, masters of it, prospective destroyers of it. Did they snatch the wealth of the people through processes of liberty? No, through slavery disguised as liberty.

But the answer is not complete until we study the terms on which the small remaining wealth which is nominally the property of the American rank and file is held by them. Here the sagacity of the slave owners blazes out most brilliantly. The remaining property which is not avowedly owned by the wealthy is distributed in small quantities among the people, who are allowed to think that they own it, and who therefore expend all their energy and zeal in making it productive. But it is determined by the masters just how much of the product of their toil they may retain for their own consumption and support. The real owners of the property are clearly those who decide this question, who determine how much or how little of the product the workers of the property can have.

The sum wanted by the master is taken out of a tenant in the form of rent, but the tenant is not under the deception that he is owner; he knows that if he expends his labor in improvements of the property the owner and not he will profit, and he governs himself accordingly. But the legal or documentary owner is under this delusion. He makes the improvements, but in some way which he has not heretofore understood, the profits do not reach him. Still he goes on and toils and toils; he says to himself: "Perhaps there was no increase from that improvement, since had there been I as owner must have

reaped it"; he thinks that ownership is an infallible protector, that an owner cannot be robbed or be a slave; he addresses his energy to more improvements, with no happier results.

One circumstance does baffle him: the product is greater; by actual weight he grows more grain or vegetables or fruit; but when the year's expenses are paid nothing more is left to him to represent this increase and reward him for obtaining it. It is even necessary for him to put a mortgage on his land to pay for the expenditures which brought the increase. But how is the interest on this new burden to be raised if he had no surplus above his living before, and has not added to his income now? He must meet the new demand by paring off and curtailing his living. He must work even harder, and pinch and squeeze, and take his children out of school and show them how to pinch and squeeze and work like grown people, and the occasional days of journey and relaxation which kept alive the spirits and strength of all must be given up.

For whom are he and his children and his wife pinching and squeezing and working, since all they get out of it for themselves is the privilege of this endless and fatal working and economizing? Who took the increase of the product from all his improvements and finally compelled the mortgage to be placed? There is no such complication to this inquiry as should blind the agriculturist to his absolute slavery.

#### II. FARMER-SLAVERY.

The agriculturist is obliged to satisfy three claims on his produce before he arrives at his own sole remnant. These three claims represent his three masters and the real owners of him and his land. He has to raise and prepare the product for market, and for this purpose he requires material and machines. Most of these articles are now

manufactured by trusts, and the farmer cannot obtain them except by paying a monopoly price. These abnormal prices are the trusts' notification that if he desires to raise grain or fruit he must give them whatever quantity of this fruit or grain they may determine upon, for the privilege of doing so. Under this implacable compulsion are the trusts master or is he master? Does he have his own, what his labor creates? Is he free, or is he a slave of the trusts?

After discharging this forced tribute he has next to face the railroads. "These are our freight charges," says this set of masters. "But they are extortionate," protests the dismayed farmer. "If I pay them I shall have but a miserable remainder for all my labor." But he pays them, for his only choice is to burn his grain or let his fruit rot. (If he sells his product to an agent at his door, this agent has to satisfy the demands of the railroads, out of the farmer's product; that is, the farmer pays the bill through the agent.) Thus the landowner temporarily releases himself from another master, by parting with a second quantity of his produce and labor, to which the master has no claim but his power to refuse shipment to a market; and this power under the circumstances is almighty.

Lastly, the bemastered producer meets the purchasers of his product. They are a combination or "Trust" of persons who buy all the fruit or grain of a vast section and establish the price they will pay to the growers arbitrarily. They estimate how much can be taken out of the growers without too serious resentment, and they fix the price by that standard. If they are sometimes private buyers they recognize the importance of a private understanding among themselves to regulate the purchasing price. Now the farmer or rancher may dislike this situation very much. Indeed, it may be so offensive to him that, in preference to accepting a rate which he knows to be undisguised robbery, he will store his product in a warehouse, and try by

waiting for a time of scarcity to force his masters to fairer terms; but unless the warehouse or elevator is his own, he pays storage and does not know but the owners of it are in secret connivance with the syndicate of buyers to wrest from him in one way what they cannot get in another.

And so the the landowner comes out of these three encounters with just nothing as a balance in his favor from the year's exertions—nothing except the exalting consciousness of his liberty. For even at this last station before despair the farmer will doubtless be emphatic that he is a free man, and will light up his grizzled and toilworn countenance with some poetic early-July reflections on the equality which reigns in this blessed republic, meaning some mystical supermundane and mental equality; and not the homely and familiar equalities of poverty and wealth, of aging excess of work and gorgeous excess of idleness, of mortgage and foreclosure and common labor and possible tramping. He is an owner, and the magic of owning is that although you do not live as well as a chattel slave, but work as hard as ten of them, and see your toil appropriated by others, and have a worry at your heart which the chattel never dreamed of, you are a free man.

But in sober reality could any one be more of a slave than he? And are not those who take his substance and labor so delicately and deftly that he hardly knows to whom it has gone, the very princes and paragons of masters compared with those unskilled possessors of chattel humanity whose methods were open, rough-handed and offensive? Modern slavery is a dazzling development of of finesse and fine art, flattering and fooling its victims, and sometimes even moving them to be active participants, vociferous and fanatical, in their own plucking and skinning.

The perfect and ideal liberty which they have won, is to be robbed in a businesslike and absolutely polite manner.

And certainly it is a large advance to be robbed respectfully, and, looking back on the cuffs and kicks and stripes and vigorous insults which the old time slave suffered, it is not surprising that the present slave experiences a glow of gratitude, each time he bows to the master's exactions, because the orders are couched in gentlemanly language and are not spiced with buffets and a broken head.

It would have astounded the ancients had they been assured that a time could come when a social system would emerge competent, to train slaves with such strong convictions of their freedom, that they would become their own keepers and set their masters free from the ordinary responsibilities of maintaining them in bondage, by aiding to keep themselves there. It is hard to imagine the Spartan helots or the American negroes so confused over their own condition as to oppose themselves against those who might endeavor to set them free, and even to take up arms to preserve their own slavery; and this incredible phenomenon it has been reserved for the latter-day slave to contribute.

Wherever the farmer lifts his voice against striking workmen in cities, towns, or on railroads, he is locking on his own handcuffs. Wherever he endures a magistrate or administration that employs the armed mercenaries and the mercenary courts of the country to defeat the protests of the laboring classes—fellow slaves of the farmer—he is his masters' guard and sustainer. When he draws an imaginary line between his interests and those of the farm laborers who work for him, and another between himself and the wage earners of the cities, he is making fictitious separations and divisions which neutralize the strength of the whole slave class and keep them as safely bound and innocuous as if they were in a dungeon. While the western railroad men struggled against their masters, the railway magnates, in 1894, there were farmers who declared that the strikers ought to be shot down as enemies of the coun-

ly; farmer-slaves of these very railroad magnates, whom the railroads have brought well nigh to beggary, but who nevertheless consider the railroads the country, and their selfish private interests as masters as identical with the national interests. They were not able to perceive that the strikers in their noble contest for general emancipation were fighting for the liberation of the farmer as well as for their own; and the farmers therefore threw away a transcendent opportunity to begin to cast their masters off. If the farmers had then held mass meetings in every township and county in the whole union, to thunder in stentorian tones against the common slavery, that conflict would have marked a memorable victory of slaves over slave owners.

The ancient slave holder would not have dreamed of endowing his slave with the vote, for the vote affords the most direct road to liberty. The depth of mental enslavement of that people which holds in its hand the simplest and surest means of obtaining freedom, but never uses it for that purpose, can only be apprehended by studying modern democracies of the type of our republic. The masters of the modern slave regime can trust their slaves with this implement of freedom; and the slaves use it faithfully at all the elections for the perpetual solidifying of slavery institutions. If rifles had been presented to the negroes in black slavery days with permission to use them as they pleased, it would not have displayed so great confidence as leaving the ballot with the white slave implies. The old southern woman Chloe, as the readers of Aldrich know, had her mind made up about the people in the "Norf" who might attempt to free the slaves, and announced with flashing eyes, "if any of dem mean whites tried to get her away from Marster, she was jes' gwine to knock 'em on de head wid a gourd!" and this is the spirit in which the average voting white has thus far appreciated his possibilities of liberty. We may be confident that the popular ballot will not be molested while

the slave is in this loyal mood; but if he were to show signs of applying the ballot to dethrone his masters, there would be a movement on their part to take the popular power out of the ballot. From the side of the slave owners, the concession of the free vote to a not too keenly wide-awake and intelligent people has been a prudent policy; for it beguiles them into stronger convictions that they are free, since they reason that such a revolutionary instrument would not be accorded to slaves.

In no time or state would the slave fight for his own slavery if he knew that he were doing so. But the ownership of property has been represented as freedom so long and insistently that all of the best and highest aspirations for independence and personal and national development have woven their roots with those of possession, until they seem now identical, and to tell a man that, although he may be owner of considerable substance, he is a slave, appears to him untrue and even socially disintegrating and treasonable.

The identity of property-ownership with liberty is the fallacy which is the prop and safety of modern slavery. It is true that one who has no property is most obviously a slave, and it has therefore been over hastily inferred that the counter proposition must be sound, and that whoever owns property is not a slave. But the reality is that under modern social conditions the small property owner is the slave of the large owner. And the secret of the stability of modern slavery is the apparent similarity of the slave's condition to that of his master. Each has property, and as the master is made free by his property, how can it be that the other is enslaved by his? In fact, not only the intense instincts that have arisen out of the acquisition, possession and transmission of property, but the plexus of customs, usages, laws and relations that encircle and protect it, have been taken advantage of and wrought into

effective instruments for enslaving the small owners. Property has developed into a system of slavery.

### III. THE SELECTION OF SLAVE-MASTERS UNDER LIBERTY.

It becomes vital to know by what system the masters are selected, for, if a people is not spirited enough to be free from masters, it is well for it to have the best sort. The manipulation of property, which is the one requisite of mastership, is a special power which some are born to, others obtain by training and experiment, and the majority do not acquire at all, or even seek, being contented simply to produce property. It is not in itself an important or significant proficiency, and if pressed far is contemptible; and it is, from any standard, but a faulty and unnatural index to the quality, intelligence or character of its owner. Hence it does not select for masters the largeminded, best men, who would employ their talents for the good and development of their slaves, but men qualified mainly by a certain knack, which even disqualifies them for the higher uses. The best would positively refuse to be masters. Nor are the best even who would consent to be masters chosen, for they would use their powers to develop the whole also; but it is rather the worst, who use their mastership so far as they dare wholly for themselves. For a man, to be a manipulator of great wealth and acquire a fortune, must be without soul, since the acquisition of wealth is always the deprivation of others.

If we made ability to turn well in a circus the ground for choosing our masters we should be laughed at, for people would rightly say, "What has that to do with wise mastership over slaves, or with any right to own slaves whatever?" And we should join in the laugh ourselves at the thought of those who could contort their frames best presuming to conduct themselves as masters of those who could not turn at all, and drawing compulsory tribute out of them. Why then is the laugh not equally against us when we submit to



the same ridiculous pretensions in those who can merely turn and twist property better than other men, instead of twisting their bodies more wonderfully?

Mastership, or great wealth, is the gauge we have for determining those who are to be given opportunities for development; for great wealth confers the means of education, leisure and travel, whereas want of large property limits and prevents development. By this criterion the least fitted are supplied with the means and opportunities for development, which they abuse and waste; and those with native powers competent for the highest perfections are obliged to spend their days grinding forth the tribute for these worthless masters, and to desolate their own divine gifts. We should not wonder at the almost complete dearth of fine men and women in human society, at the low general average, or at the base contentment of the many under the reign and saddle of the few.

#### IV. FREEDOM TO CHOOSE THE PLACE TO STARVE.

But we ought to follow the idea of liberty a little farther, to see how it ends, and the kind of motive that is ultimately furnished to the slave to cling to his little property and work to death for the masters; what punishment awaits him if he loses it, and always hangs above the wage-slave if he has ill-luck. This liberty has been subtly bereft of its substance and does not embrace even the right to life on the lowest and most degraded terms. As far as concerns the individual without belongings it is the liberty to convey himself from place to place at will upon public property, such as roads and parks. It provides no way for the earning of bread when private persons do not offer the opportunity. The freedom thus far won is the freedom to choose the place on the public highways where one prefers to starve. If in this case one chooses to live rather than to starve, there are egregious penalties and conditions.

Every sentiment of degradation is associated with the the poor house; its entire aspect is offensive and humiliating; it is made barren and dreary from principle; one who enters it is branded for contempt henceforth; in many places the recipient of its heartless hospitality is robbed of his only remaining possession, political standing. The ideal of personal freedom, which the race has exalted, has nourished in all breasts an aversion to dependence and charity, and the poorhouse is the fleshless embodiment of these ignominies. It may seem malicious to bury under disgrace those to whom the avenues of earning are sternly closed, but society has chosen this way and sees neither the stultifying humor nor the villainy of it. A man that wants to earn is not a pauper because he has nothing and can find no way to earn.

The nominal personal freedom which is prized and cried for so vehemently ends in equivalence to starvation or the poorhouse, in death or life more bitter than the felon's, because it is undeserved. There can be no freedom until a man is free to live and not to die. Until no casualties or chicanery can drive him to these abysses his freedom is a humbug. The value of freedom resides in the opportunity it gives to be something that is worth being free. Nothing should be called freedom which does not ensure the liberty to exercise one's powers in production equally with others, and to enjoy equally the results of that effort.

There is at present a counter tendency, both to the movement to increase the intelligence of the slaves and to allowing them freedom of action. The extreme division of labor does away with the need of superior intelligence in the operative, and an inclination is consequently manifesting itself to let him sink. The personal freedom which had been allowed him is also being curtailed, as is shown in the accumulating laws and, 'precedents' against strikers.

How are these statements proved by the social conditions of California? Everyone knows there is no state in the Union where the wage-earner is in such an evil pass as here. Servility is written all over his life. He sleeps in a wagon, barn, tent, or the corner of a field. His hearth and home are the blanket which he carries strapped to his back. As soon as he is out of work he moves on, his home becomes the highway, and he is dubbed tramp. Worst of it is, work is out of reach of many of these tramps, but they are never out of reach of the contempt which is reserved for those who cannot find work. The working man is always a begger, either for work or bread. His position is degraded. The tramps of the country must be regarded as an army of men under drill to hate society and some day to fight it. It was the unemployed who carried the day for popular liberty twice during the French Revolution. Every common workman, every skilled workman in fact, is to all intents and purposes, a tramp. If not actually walking to-day he may be to-morrow.

The rancher looks at the workman or tramp and says, I am higher and better and freer than thou. But I question if the tramp is not higher and happier than that poor rancher. There are hardly any ranchers in California who are not anxious to sell out and get out. This is not evidence of happiness. There is a patch, or plaster, or whatever the mortgage may be, upon almost every ranch in some parts; and, as the ranchers say, when it is once on I do not see how it can be got off. The ominous time has arrived when it is more profitable to some ranchers to let their fruit rot than to hire help to pluck it, so insatiable have the railroads and middlemen, who live like nabobs by writing with their pens, become. The pen is at least mightier than the plough. "There is work enough to be done," one rancher observed, speaking of the tramping applicants for work, "but the trouble is to get any thing to

pay for it with." And this is the heart of the evil. The rancher is working himself old because he cannot afford to hire, and the country is full of idle men living as they may, while the wealth which these two factors should have is drained off to the cities and the rich; and the wealth they would produce if allowed freedom to cooperate and have their own, is lost. The slaves toil and worry and die, and the masters laze and luxuriate and travel. Will the towns dependent on the trade of the ranchers and workmen thrive?

For a momentary respite, and in the hope of discovering a profit for themselves somewhere, the ranchers have turned to the employment of Japanese labor. Thirty-five cents a day, and the Japanese boarding themselves, is one of the popular prices. Can these ranchers not see that the masters will immediately take what is thus saved, out of them? Nor can even the Japanese live on these prices.

We are familiar with the wage slave, but this discussion has shown us that we should also speak of the farmer and rancher slave; and I am sorry that I have not time to show how the store-keeping class is in bondage also, compelled to toady and cringe for trade, and pay its tribute to the railroads and trusts, and squirm and wriggle and writhe to keep out of financial perdition. It has to bribe the master capitalists to come and start industries in its towns and cities so that it may live. The New York "Post" has just announced that "Citizens of Thompsonville, Conn., have contributed \$17,000 in cash, a valuable lot of land, and some \$4,500 worth of other property to a Western bicycle company to induce it to locate its factory there. On its part the company agrees to put up a factory building costing \$20,000, and to employ as many as 150 hands for three years." The stores of every American town are in the same needy and pleading condition. A Los Gatos paper tells the whole story in twenty words. "Los

Gatos wants several small factories that will employ Americans, intelligent, honorable and progressive, who will make their homes here and support our stores, schools and churches." The uses of the laboring class were never so honestly declared. Their mission is to support stores, schools and churches—for other social classes. As to the churches, they do not care for them; as to the schools they can not long attend them; and as to the stores, of what interest is it to the working class to keep up factories for the sake of supporting stores? Was the laboring class invented and created to support stores?

Viewing these distressing phenomena of our times, it is safe to say that there will never be any great prosperity again for the American farmer or store-keeper until they free themselves from slavery by abolishing the capitalist masters.

#### V. WAGE-SLAVERY.

The wage-slave is a distinct figure in the economic literature of the day, and a far more distinct figure out of it. No trick of apparent ownership deceives him into thinking that he is not a slave. He is a cipher in life, unloved, unknown, unwanted. He belongs to the world of gloom and dirt and discharge. Who cares what happened to him when discharged? No one. Does any one care that Edward D. Flavin, a former laundry driver in San Francisco, committed suicide day before yesterday, by cutting his throat from ear to ear? Or that August Schottler, a miller, committed suicide yesterday by sending a bullet through his brain? I have not heard of any body who is worried by these daily suicides. Both of these men, who are merely random samples of the wage-slave suicides, were despondent unto death because they had been out of employment for some time.

To-morrow, and day after, and all the coming winter, and all next year, there will be more suicides, because the rich have locked up the social pantry and put the key in their pockets. And who will care? Nobody. It is too much trouble to care.

We talk of hell! This is hell. The social table is spread with wealth and abounding food. We let the free workman, free of work, approach to look at it. He is starving, and the only things between him and the groaning board are a plate-glass window and a policeman. He cuts his throat. Society sits down to its daily feast while the workman's body is taken to the morgue. This is hell improved. The hell we had waited until a man was dead before it applied the irons; the hell we have lights up the instruments for the living. The old hell tortured a man for sins; the new one does not care whether he is a sinner or not, but only requires that he shall be a working man. We have abolished the fabled hell; the omnipresent social hell will abolish us if we do not put out its raging and real fires.

This state of affairs is highly perfected savagery. The forest of the dead in Ashantee, where the ground is paved with the skulls of the king's victims, cannot rival it. Civilization stands aghast before such unimaginable Ashantee atrocities—excelled only by its own atrocities upon those who commit the crime of working for a living. Cruelty is not cruelty when applied to them. There are more skulls of suicide workingmen in this country than the Ashantee king ever bleached. And we kill in the new world with so much less scandal! We have our victims quietly killing themselves, and then we are not to blame for it.

I should think the conscience of America would raise a whirlwind over this social savagery that would annihilate the new hell. But where is the American conscience? It has not been heard from since the war, and many fear that

it is lost. It is not as big as a dollar, and if it saw two or three billion dollars like our rich men, it would fly to some holy cyclone cellar for protection.

But I should think these daily starvation executions of workingmen would drive the working classes to a state of uncontrollable intelligence. They ought not to leave society as it is one day. Which one of those now working will be out of work for months to-morrow? Will he have to sacrifice himself, perhaps his children too, on the altar of suicide? When one workingman is obliged to take his life through starvation, it is suicide of the whole working class. And society would not care if all committed suicide, except that it would be temporarily inconvenient, until more were grown to do the vulgar work. If all workingmen should commit suicide of one accord, it would solve the labor question.

But I can conceive the workingman in a frenzy of intelligence using the ballot on the man who has the wealth and will not give him work, instead of using the bullet on himself. The daily suicide of the working classes would not be a useless loss of life if it taught those classes that life is better than death, food than suicide, plenty than poverty, liberty than slavery; and that they can have every one of these preferable things by using the ballot for themselves rather than for those who starve and enslave them.

Society should, however, perform the obsequies of humanity. If it has nothing but suicide to offer to the workingman who cannot get work, it should not usher him into the eternal silence with unnecessary suffering. Keeping a victim awake until he dies is said to be a fearful mode of execution, sleep all the time being so near and tantalizing. And it is likewise said that to die of thirst with a cool stream running before one's eyes is an exquisite and successful torture. But all that society requires of the ordinary workingman out of work is that he shall simply

die. There is no general desire that his sufferings shall be rendered acute. It seems an uncalled for affliction to let him die with visible plenty all about him. Even the life of the murderer is now taken as tenderly as science can, and the workingman is not worse than the murderer. So that at least the humane ought to agitate for an American Siberia, whither the unemployed wage-slaves could be taken to commit suicide untantalized, without any food in sight.

People who are free to live do not have to commit suicide because they can find no way to live. The only inalienable right that the working people seem to have won for themselves is the right of suicide; and the only indisputable freedom they have is the freedom of choice between starvation and suicide.

But some professional bulls of our civilization in the market of time, like to say that the wage workman is not a slave, because he can become free. As one word-broker describes it, "We hear a good deal about 'wage-slavery'—a recent discovery of alien 'labor leaders.' There is no such thing. In neither kind nor degree does the wage system resemble slavery. What kind of slavery would that be from which, by industry, skill or education, the slave could free himself and become a master?"

This is asking how a man who may die can be alive while he is alive. Political industry may make a man president, but he is not president until he becomes such. Besides, it has been a part of many systems of slavery that the slaves could work themselves free or buy themselves free. While they were slaves, however, they were slaves, less than men, half men half beasts.

But how many slaves ever won the diploma of freedom? And how many wage-slaves ever become masters? From the arguments that are popular with the learned and great it would appear that if one slave in ten thousand obtains freedom on the verge of death, it ought to satisfy the



ten thousand with slavery. But this learned demonstration is not so convincing when we apply it in another way. If we suppose that society were to hang all but one in ten thousand capitalists and learned men, on the ground that if one remained unchanged it would be a compensation to the rest for their disagreeable experience, would the hanged ones acquiesce in the measure? And should working slaves who will never be free consent to slavery because a fellow slave occasionally mounts to freedom?

There is another side of it all, too. What a training slavery is for citizenship and manhood! If you train a man as a slave in the beginning, he will be a slave all his days. Plate him with dense gold, lard him with social politeness, take him to church for electrical baths of morality, let him found a university to wash away his crimes, marry his daughter to a prince in order to sanctify capitalism with feudalism, let him dine with the Queen of England or the Sultan of Turkey for culture, and he will die the slave that he lived. If we should train a man as a monkey or a dog, after life would not untrain him, although it were spent with President Cleveland or the Prince of Wales. Over his beautiful collar of monument white we should see the canine teeth and the busy simian eye.

But we vastly chuckle with ourselves over the invention of the self-made man, who has come up through scouring hardship to mastership. Why we should like him or laud him is the mystery, and in honesty we do not. He likes himself, and, being master, compels us to act as if we liked him. Of course he treats the rest of us as he was accustomed to be treated while he was making himself. Everybody was his enemy then, trying not to let him make himself, for his success stood in the way of their plans of self-making. This bristling opposition made him hard, and, if he overcame it, made him a dizzy and defiant egotist. If he won his way by disregarding other men, how could

he learn after that to regard them? He had only one test of respect for others: could they succeed like himself? He overlooked that he might be the meanest of all men, and yet succeed on account of that meanness; and society overlooked it too. Self-made merely meant money-made; it often meant un-made in everything but money.

Now this drill in hardship, meanness and general antagonism was the drill of a slave, and we Americans of this generation are all descended from slaves. Many strange features of the American character of the time may be traced to this lineage,—the decadence of liberty, the rise of rank reverence, the conscious resignation of the idea of equality, and other senile attributes in which slaves and the sons of slaves abound.

If the idea of self-made men were carried out properly and reasonably, every infant would be conveyed to a desert island, and left there to grow up alone and make itself in full. But if the principle of child-care is valid, if education is legitimate, if friendship and the mutual help of friendship are defensible factors in personal development and success, then all social assistance that can be rendered to the making of a man is right, and each man of such rearing will have the whole strength and wealth of society in himself.

#### VI. THE SLAVERY OF THE WEALTHY.

The slavery of the wealthy demands a chapter. It must be recognized that many of them are enormous workers and enormous magazines of care. Premature age is common among them, it is the business man's badge. I have no sentiment to offer them, for business men have abolished sentiment, and I should be merely stretching out the hand of commiseration to an heroic, self-destroying grindstone. Nevertheless, the most frozen scrutiny of science reports that the position of the wealthy man is

pathetic. The question regarding him is, what is he doing it all for? Is he a machine, and is life the thundering revolution of wheels? Is he in a dream, and carrying on this fantastical industrial revelry as a sleep-walker? The narrowing of consciousness by the exclusion of all but one motive is the formula for destroying men and producing decadents.

The most deeply pathetic fact of all is that so many good men of the business world do not want to give themselves a living offering to the soulless Moloch of mechanical affairs. Life is worth too much to be ground into mansions and money. That man is a caitiff who will sell a corpuscle of his good blood for a million dollars. Will the Vanderbilts breed an Abraham Lincoln if they reign in haughty republican grandeur a thousand years? Their monopoly may prevent the birth of a thousand Lincolns in other spots, but in the evil air of their millions never one can be conceived.

A man may be a very big fish in business and yet be shadowed by some larger shark whose stomach he will some day fill. Most of the prosperous people we meet on the street have the air of debating with themselves how they will feel when they have been swallowed. It must be a fruitful theme for wakeful nights and realistic dreams. And when the sharks have made their meal, the whales of industry will sit down to a banquet of fattened and prepared sharks. It is one of those situations where doubt does not enter. Three-fourths of the present leading business men would be safe in ordering their commercial coffins, in preparation for the day when consolidated capital will softly chloroform their trade.

It must sometimes occur even to the most infatuated rich man that he is the focus of the portentous popular dissatisfaction. Men never were contented with monopolists, and now all of the very rich are monopolists. The wrath

of the whole suffering nation points to them. No prophet ever said more plainly, "thou art the man." All classes, wealthy and workers, are united in saying to the monopolist, thou art he. What gloomy thoughts a man might have who knew that the majority of his countrymen were coming to regard him as the curse of their lives and the pestilence of the world. Monopolists' gains have been invariably, in all times and under all circumstances illegitimate gains; hence, if the monopolists were to put on the crown of Ceasar and promulgate their ownership of what they have monopolized, with a German army and an English navy behind them, the people of this country would not believe.

What is to come out of this strong and rising popular conviction? The stability of the wealthy is decreasing every day. Bereaving a great number of people of natural human sentiments is an iniquitous thing, but it is also injudicious. I saw a man go up to a garbage wagon this morning and take therefrom a repulsive lump of unrecognizable decay and eat it. This is the way street dogs with no friends or owner do, but when strong men come to it! And nameless wealth shedding its effulgence over the scene!

It is injudicious to put men through such demoralization as will eradicate their humaner sense. A morning paper describes the state of seige to which cranks have reduced the White House at Washington. "The executive mansion is well guarded by trusty men. A large force of watchmen, including police officers, is on duty inside the mansion at all hours night and day and a continuous patrol is maintained, by local police, of the grounds immediately surrounding the mansion. - The mansion is also in direct telegraphic and telephonic communication with police headquarters, military posts at Washington Barracks and at Fort Myer, Va., and the marine barracks, and it

would not take very long to secure a heavy detachment of men from each of the places named." The social conditions must indeed be grave when dangerous characters have become so numerous and bold that the president of the republic has to be protected like the Russian Czar. In the earlier days of our government, equality of condition and opportunity gave our citizens something else to think about than assassinating presidents.

Eighteen months ago there was said to be a plot to blow up the national capitol building, with both houses of Congress in it. The Washington "Post" published columns of disclosures, and would not afterwards abandon its assertions. Not long before that a Cambridge, Massachusetts, clergyman had publicly announced that if it were not for his christian principles and the cruelty involved he should believe the best thing for the country to be the explosion of a hundred tons of dynamite in the Washington capitol. This was in view of the national suffering which Congress would not attempt to alleviate.

Men are made insane by too much starvation, and the heads of other men who are not starved, are often turned by the sight of piercing misery set in the gold and diamonds of bewitching luxury. This is the chemistry of cranks. And if hordes of men are to be starved and put upon rations of garbage, there will be so many cranks in the country before long that every wealthy man's residence will have to be an arsenal and guarded like the white house.

At Biddeford, Maine, a mill belonging to the York Corporation has just been blown up, and it is supposed that a discharged workman caused the explosion. It took place on Sunday evening at an hour when one of the owners makes a weekly inspection, and it seems that the attempt was leveled at his life. To lose a job in these times is often equivalent to starvation, sickness and death; it is very many times the breaking up of family security and happi-

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