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KING WEALTH COMING.

BY D. GOODMAN.

THE following article was published by the writer in the *Galaxy* for November, 1869. It sets forth briefly what he believes to be the solution of the political problem in this country.

We live in an industrial age, of which the natural leaders are the bankers, manufacturers, and merchants. We all complain of the demoralization and corruption of our political life; what we mean is that wealth is becoming as powerful in politics as it is in industry. The great corporations, or rather the wealthy men who control them, are the real rulers, and not the characterless lawyers and politicians whom universal suffrage sends to our legislative halls. There is not a State in the Union through which runs a great railroad, but what is practically in the power of the corporation which controls it. The manufacturers could do what they please with any Congress that has sat for the last eight years, and it is quite safe to predict that for the next fifteen years the owners of the Pacific Railroad and the giant consolidated roads which feed it, will be the real masters of the American people. That is to say, no Congress can by any possibility be elected which they will not be able to control.

To this state of affairs no complete Positivist objects. We submit to the inevitable, and can only hope to modify it by a sound philosophy, and the wise, practical activity it enforces. What is needed is the *moralization of wealth*, and to effect this it must become *personal* and *responsible*.

But here is the article:

Nearly all the evils connected with our system of government can be traced to one primary cause, to wit: the influence of wealthy corporations and individuals in controlling legislation and executive action for purely selfish ends. In other words, in modern civilization, wealth has become an enormous power, while in this country at least, it has no recognized political responsibility or well-defined public duties. The lobby notoriously controls legislation—wealth controls the lobby, but what controls wealth? Nothing but the purely selfish aims of its possessor.

How is this difficulty to be met? Shall we organize against wealth; bind it in fetters, legislate it out of existence, or exile its influence to some sphere outside of political action? We are entering upon an era when all this will be attempted; but, however well meant, every scheme to limit the power of wealth will inevitably fail, and, in the opinion of the writer, ought to fail.

For we must remember that the capitalist is the true king of the industrial era

When war was the normal condition of the race, the great warrior was the ruler, and all the honors in the State were based upon military merit; but among the advanced natives of Christendom, industry, and not war, is now the absorbing business of the mass of the population, and hence the banker and the manufacturer are destined to be—nay, are the real rulers of the people. This may seem to be a preposterous statement, in this age of equal rights and the sovereignty of the people; but it is nevertheless true. Who to-day is supreme in the financial, commercial, and manufacturing world? Who owns the telegraph, the railway, the manufactory, the newspaper, the land? The capitalist, of course. He is our boss in the shop, our employer in the field, our landlord, our care-taker on the railroad and steamship; he keeps our money in his bank, and looks after our souls in his churches; for the church of to-day, of all denominations, is the church of the capitalist. People are under the curious hallucination that the only power which controls them is that exercised by the State or the nation, whereas they touch us scarcely at all in the most intimate relations of life.

But the capitalists, the owners of the wealth, are not content with all this recognized authority; they desire to control also the political power of the State and the nation. Well, they are right. They ought to have it. There will be a struggle against it, and the most impassioned protests will be made when their right to rule is formally recognized; but recognized it will be in time. While the struggle is going on, the capitalist will rule all the same. Our legislators are nearly all lawyers; now, the lawyer is a creature of the capitalist. He is trained by him, and his wit and tongue are at the service of his employer in the court, and his vote is at his command in the legislative body. Wealth, as a power unrecognized, without responsibility or moral accountability, is simply another name for hideous corruption. Hence the lobby, and the sickening legislative history of our City, State and National Government for the last fifteen years.

Now wealth, and the enormous social and political power it yields by its very existence, is one of those facts which cannot be ignored. We must accept it, and see what can be done about it. To destroy wealth, or take away the power it naturally gives its possessor, is impossible. If it could be done, civilization would perish.

What, then, are we to do?

Accept the inevitable. Capital has the power. Make it personal, responsible. Put the capitalist in authority instead of his creatures, the lawyers and politicians, and then—

What then?

Hold him responsible. The next greatest power in modern civilization, after wealth, is public opinion. As yet it is unmoralized, unorganized; but its influence, even now, is mighty. When this spiritual power has its proper recognized organs, which it will have under Positivism—then will we be able to control wealth. Public opinion cannot be brought to bear upon corporate bodies; "They have neither bodies to be kicked nor souls to be damned." What does the ring or the lobby care for public opinion? Once install the individual who is the soul of the lobby into some recognized public position, and he is sensitive enough. Abuse the Erie Railroad Company, and who cares? Attack Jim Fiske, Jr., and he is after you with a sheriff's *posse* or a libel suit.

Here, then, is the Positivist's solution of our political and industrial problems. Wealth, under the foul shapes of the ring or lobby, controls our legislation. We say, Put the holders of this wealth in authority. Make this irresponsible power responsible. You cannot get rid of the power; it is one of the most enormous facts of modern times. It exists, and will control, whether we like it or not, and hence we must make the best of it.

The capitalist has his excuse for using the ring and the lobby. He says, "What else can I do? There are certain great industrial enterprises to be undertaken,

which cannot even be begun without legislative authority. The lawyers and small politicians, who form the great bulk of the assemblies and senates, cannot rise to the height of the great schemes which I have on foot; they oppose me; but the work must be done—the times demand it; and so I hire the lobby, who buy those fellows up. I am in the habit of employing lawyers to do my business, and when you can hire a man's brains with money, his vote follows, as a matter of course. Take the case of the great railway consolidations, which are so necessary: why, I am compelled to buy the legislators outright, or these essential changes could not be made."

So there are two sides to the story. The capitalist has his excuse for making our legislators scoundrels.

But how is this change to be brought about?

The writer gives that conundrum up at once. He really does not see how it is possible to change our republican representative system without a political convulsion. Hence he looks for years of grievous misrule; of future legislative conduct worse than any in the past. A possible solution of the trouble is a bold seizure of the government by some representative of the capitalist class. The very men who have made our legislative bodies dens of thieves, are just the ones to make that corruption an excuse for seizing the government themselves; for be it remembered, it is not the kings of the lobby who will be held responsible, but the politicians—the legislators whom they have debauched.

Our government, from natural and inevitable causes, has got to be one of excessive powers. The maladministration of the federal power under Adams or Jackson was not of much account, so little were the people at large affected by its action; but now it is very different. The authority of the central government has grown so enormously large, that its action upon the business of the country has become vital. Hence the necessity of a more scientific government than that we had before the rebellion.

Let it be distinctly understood, then, that there is a class of thinkers in this country who are profound disbelievers in the whole republican or democratic theory of government. But we are not, therefore, either Imperialists or Monarchists. We do not advocate going back to any obsolete political institutions. Progress is our motto. There is something in the future as much better than republicanism as republicanism is better than monarchy, and that is the rule of wealth controlled by moral considerations; in other words, the capitalist in responsible authority, and he under the dominion of a wise, all-powerful public opinion.

Our King has come. He rules already, but it is in such hideous shapes as the Lobby—the Ring. Let us recognize, tame, ennoble him, so that he may serve the highest interests of humanity.

A SERIES of articles on Prostitution in the *Westminster Review* have deservedly attracted a good deal of attention. Without containing anything very new, they sum up the results of past inquiries, and seemingly set at rest several vexed social questions. Among the most important of the points brought out by Dr. Chapman, the writer, are the following :

1. Each new crop of prostitutes does not die out in from four to seven years, as is generally supposed. While it is true that the *personnel* of that class is replaced in that time, the women do not, as a rule, die of their riotous living, but are absorbed back into the community.

2. The amount of disease engendered by the illicit relation of the sexes is appalling. This is one of the most serious perils of modern civilization. While the danger to the women themselves in the matter of longevity has been absurdly overrated, the damage done to the health of the community by the prevalence of prostitution has scarcely been suspected.

3. Governments from time to time have attempted to suppress and limit prostitution, but have invariably failed. Every possible expedient has been resorted to, but the history of legislation and government action, though it extends over centuries, is a record not only of disappointment but disaster. Nor have they fared any better when recognizing and regulating prostitution. Notwithstanding the encomiums which have been passed upon the French and continental systems, it seems now to be tolerably well settled that recognition has led to widespread immorality, while as a check to the spread of disease, it has had less than no effect at all.

The remedy proposed by Dr. Chapman will hardly be deemed satisfactory. He says the public should get rid of the notion of sin or disgrace in connection with the illicit relations of the sexes or the diseases they entail, and that those sick of syphilis should have the same care and consideration as if the disease was typhus fever or dysentery. The best hospitals are now closed to persons afflicted with sexual disorders, and the woman who would readily seek medical advice for an ordinary illness, such as diarrhoea or rheumatism, is deterred from doing so when the disorder is venereal. So she punishes society for its non-recognition of the legitimacy of her business and its inhumanity to her in her affliction by plying her wretched trade when diseased, thus propagating to the innocent as well as to the guilty the most cruel contagion known to our civilization.

It is all very well to say that society ought to recognize prostitution as a legitimate because necessary business, and should treat the strumpet with the same consideration it does the decent women, but the difficulty is that society won't do anything of the kind. The truth is, prostitution is a part of the great sexual problem which science must yet solve ; all we can do at present is to furnish the data for the final settlement.—D. G.