

The Meyersdale Commercial

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IDLE ACRES

This is from Successful Farming, with a circulation of more than a million:
 The loss of each food ship is a tragedy. But the idle acres of America could grow more food per year than all of the enemy's ships can destroy. **Every idle acre helps the enemy.** Hinder rations and you hinder victory. Cultivate every available acre or land. Don't let labor shortage hinder you.
 No, Mr. Hoover didn't say that. Nor did President Wil-

son or Secretary Houston. A big powder company has been saying it in advertising which you may have seen. It is worth repeating, not for the sake of helping the advertiser, or helping the food supply, but to call attention to another matter that everybody ought to be thinking about—the idle acres.

Speculation in land is doing more harm in food production than all the stumps and rocks and all the swamps. Blowing them out, or draining the land does not relieve the conditions created and maintained by fictitious values. Speculative values create an overhead expense that is far greater than the presence of stumps and boulders, or swamps.

We urge the taxation of all land values for the purpose of eliminating the idle acres by doing away with land speculation.

A mind not to be changed by time or place,
 The mind in its own place, and in itself
 Can make a heaven of hell, and a hell of heaven.
 —Milton.

RELIGIOUS NOTICE.

Amity Reformed Church, April 21, 10:45 a. m., special service for men and women; men's choir; number of short addresses.
 7:30 p. m., The Significance Of Ordination—the Value of Friends.

ON THE OPEN ROAD

With BRUCE CALVERT.

"Silence is the soil in which thought grows." And the writer might have said, "in which the soul grows." It is good for man to be alone—sometimes. There is a certain spiritual adjustment, or orientation, of the soul that a man can find only in solitude. Not for nothing have the great prophets, sages and saints of all ages sought the sheltering quiet of the cloister or the great silences of the desert, the mountains, the woods and caves. In these retreats far from the disturbing vibrations of the noisy crowd the greatest revelations ever given to man have been received.

We do need, now more than ever, in this age of pragmatism gone mad, to be alone once in a while and to get acquainted with ourselves. Shut up in the crowd, we lose perspective. Little, inconsequential things assume undue proportions. We become submerged in the petty banalities of life. The mechanics of living obscure the real meaning of life itself, as a penny held close to the eye blots out the sun, moon, stars and all the solar system. We need to get away from the clatter and clutter of business—away from the soul-killing grind of routine that corrodes the heart and gives us mental ankylosis. We need especially to get out into the great open. We each ought to take to the open road for a season as often as possible for the preservation of our sanity and our very soul's salvation. The greatest disinfectants known are sunshine, fresh air and the newly upturned earth of the elds. For the mind as well as for the body is this true. There is nothing like the wild, free winds of heaven to sweep the cobwebs from our brains. Nothing like the woods or mountains to steal away that earth weariness that presses upon us in the crowd and to restore our mental balance. Away from all human contact, alone with nature, we come to an understanding with ourselves. The silences of the open become populous with our own thoughts, and every bush, tree, bird and flower vocal with our own reflections.

The concentration of people in the great cities, with the inevitable bitter struggle for existence, is destructive to character. The cities always have been the sink holes of iniquity. Filth, disease, poverty, crime, ugliness, always have flourished in the crowded places of the earth. From Hellenic cities down to New York this is true. The city does not represent the highest in man's nature. Its life is artificial, feverish, neurotic, erotic. Instead of the quiet deeps of peace wherein the soul expands, the city breeds unrest, fear, pain, brutality. Greed, indifference, selfishness, fill that place in the human heart from which should flow sympathy, neighborliness. There isn't enough air and sunshine to go round; not enough of the very essence of life itself for all. Some one has to suffer. We cut our souls to fit the size of the flats we live in. God help the basement dweller! Our wretched civilization is stamping itself upon our very features. We have the factory face and the business face. The former is pitiful, the latter vulpine.

Men's deepest and holiest experiences come to him only when his feet are firmly planted on the soil. Soil and soul come from the same root word. Noble deeds are inspired, great poems born, splendid dreams dreamed in the open and of the open. There isn't room enough for them in the two-room soul, the spiritual tenement of the crowded cityite. What has the mob to offer, really? Drunk with its own effluvia, the crowd sees nothing, hears nothing, feels nothing but its own misery. It will trample upon you and crush you into the dust and never hear your cries of agony! What chances has a human being in it?

Yes, let's take to the woods. There's beauty and nobility in the great solemn, religious woods that expands the heart and lifts the soul to the highest in nature. In the whispering of the leaves born upon the evening breeze you hear the voice of the Infinite, and under the cool and silent stars your troubled spirit finds people. Take to the woods?

WHAT'S SO AND WHAT ISN'T

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No, the struggle between human beings for a bare animal existence is not necessary to progress.

It is a great barrier to progress.

Benjamin Kidd, in his Social Evolution, has tried to make out that in the Socialist commonwealth the human race will degenerate because of the removal of the fierce struggle for a bare animal existence. And there are many other enemies of Socialism who agree with him.

He lays it down as an absolute and invariable rule that every quality possessed by humanity is developed and maintained by conflict, by competition, by ceaseless struggle of human beings with each other. And he draws from his false premise the conclusion that Socialism, by removing the competition for a bare animal existence, will degenerate and destroy all of the qualities of the human race.

It is emphatically false that competition is the only factor in developing and maintaining human qualities.

But I shall not enter into that question just now. For the present moment I will grant, for the sake of argument, that Mr. Kidd is right when he says that competition is the only factor in developing and maintaining human qualities. Does it logically follow from this that Socialism will work the degeneracy of the human race.

On the contrary, it follows logically that Socialism will remove the causes which are producing the bad qualities of the human race, and will continue and develop the causes which are producing the good qualities of the human race.

The trouble with Mr. Kidd is that he has committed a glaring error in logic.

Not only are his premises erroneous, but this conclusion is too big for his premises. I have agreed to overlook the falsity of his premises for the present, but I want to call attention to his too big conclusion.

His mistake in logic may be illustrated in this way. It is as if Mr. Kidd had said: "A river cannot have any water in it unless it has tributary streams flowing into it. The sewers of the cities are tributary streams. Therefore, if the cities burn their sewage instead of letting it flow into the river, the river will dry up."

But, there are other tributary streams besides the sewers.

Socialism does not propose to cut off any of those tributary streams which are bearing pure water into the river.

It merely proposes to burn the sewage, and thus purify the river.

Socialism does not propose to abolish competition.

It does propose to abolish competition for a bare animal existence.

It does not propose to abolish competition for excellence, superiority and pre-eminence in the myriad of higher human activities.

Competition in these myriads of higher activities is so much more humane than the brutal competition for a mere animal existence that it might more properly be called emulation. But I will stick to Mr. Kidd's word and call it competition.

It used to be quite customary among human beings to compete with each other in physical strength. The stronger man killed the weaker man. That kind of competition developed blood-thirstiness. But blood-thirstiness is an undesirable quality. To do away with that quality is to develop, not to degenerate, humanity. Consequently, it was a good thing for the human race when that custom largely passed out of existence.

It is now a custom among human beings, forced upon them by the capitalist system, to compete with each other for enough money to buy the necessities of life. The man who possesses more of the qualities necessary to succeed in this competition gets the money, while the man who possess less of the qualities necessary to succeed in this competition either starves to death, or at least starves mentally, morally and spiritually. That kind of competition develops greed, graft, dread, fear, hatred, jealousy, pride, vanity, narrowmindedness, ignorance, pessimism, hopelessness, meanness, stigness, cowardice, craftiness, sealth, and other kindred qualities.

But these are undesirable qualities.

To do away with these qualities is to develop, not to degenerate, humanity.

Consequently, it will be a good thing for the human race when these qualities are destroyed by the abolition of capitalism and the introduction of Socialism.

Socialism will remove the brutal and desperate competition for a bare animal existence. It will thereby give men a full and free opportunity to compete with each other for pre-eminence in such things as making products, managing industries, inventing machines, curing disease, developing any and all of the many arts and sciences, writing books, painting pictures, and the thousands of other things which these suggest.

In other words, Socialism, by abolishing the brutal and desperate struggle for a bare animal existence, will give men a full and free opportunity to compete with each other for pre-eminence in all of the industrial arts, all of the fine arts, and all of the liberal arts.

It will even give men a full and free opportunity to compete with each other for pre-eminence in moral and spiritual things.

It will even give men a full and free opportunity to compete with each other for pre-eminence in doing good in the world, for excellence in altruism, for excellence in unselfishness.

It is perfectly evident that these species of competition,

to which Socialism will give a free field, are of such a nature that each competitor, by competing, instead of dragging his fellow men down, must necessarily assist and elevate them. For, by doing any of these things better than other people can do them, he is doing other people a good turn.

It is also perfectly evident that these special of competition, to which Socialism will give a free field, are of such a nature that they will develop manual dexterity, mental acumen, broadmindedness, enlightenment, good-will, cordiality, brotherhood, happiness, generosity, courage, honesty, magnanimity, liberality, kindness, buoyancy, gladness, hopefulness, optimism, cheerfulness, purity, self-possession, love, and other kindred qualities.

But these are eminently desirable qualities.

To develop them is to improve, not to degenerate, humanity.

Consequently, even if Mr. Kidd's rule that competition is the only factor in the development of human qualities were correct, it would necessarily and inevitably follow that Socialism, instead of degenerating the human race, is absolutely necessary to the development of the human race, because it alone can abolish those kinds of competition which develop brutal and undesirable qualities, and it alone can give men a full and free opportunity to engage in those kinds of competition which develop higher and eminently desirable qualities.

Thus, the desperate and hard pushed enemies of Socialism are convicted out of their own mouths.

In so far as competition is a factor in the development of human qualities, Socialism will strip it of its villainous and degenerating features and turn it to good advantage.

But, as a matter of fact, competition is not the only factor in the development of human qualities.

It is not even the chief factor in the development of the higher human qualities.

It has been the chief factor in the development of the brutal and undesirable human qualities.

But it is only a minor factor in the development of the higher human qualities.

Co-operation is the dominant factor in the development of the higher human qualities.

Competition is one of the vital principles of the universe.

But it operates chiefly in a comparatively low sphere; at a comparatively low stage of progress.

Co-operation is also of the vital principles of the universe.

But it operates chiefly in a comparatively high sphere, at a comparatively advanced stage of progress.

However, just as we need a mild form of competition in operation in the higher spheres, so also we find a mild form of co-operation in the lower spheres.

I am only repeating what has already been pointed out by others when I say that we find co-operation in the animal and vegetable worlds and even in the so-called inorganic world.

What is it, for example, that keeps the earth in its orbit?

Why, if the stars and planets did not co-operate with each other to hold it in its place, it would go crashing through space and be shivered into countless fragments by contact with some larger sphere. This is co-operation in the so-called inorganic world.

Almost every plant has a flower with bright, beautiful petals. These plants attract the bees and other insects. These insects help to distribute the pollen, thus insuring fertilization and reproduction. This is co-operation between the vegetable and animal worlds.

Among the lower animals, those which survive in the greatest numbers are the ones which co-operate with each other. In other words, those which go in droves or herds, like the elephant, the buffalo, the deer, the antelope, the wild-goat, the sheep, the wolf, the jackal, the reindeer, the hippopotamus, the zebra, the hyena, and the seal.

Among men, we owe all the civilization we have to co-operation.

If we did not co-operate at all we would have stark anarchy.

The trouble is that we have not carried co-operation far enough. We are permitting it to remain imperfect and incomplete.

We must carry it to its logical and natural conclusion.

We have come to a point where we can not make any further progress unless we do.

We are socially marking time, because we are ready for Socialism and yet capitalism is still hanging on.

Capitalism has outlived its usefulness.

It is now a detriment.

It is a barrier in the way of progress.

THE WHITE COMRADE
 Far out upon the battlefields
 In watches of the night,
 'Tis said the wounded soldier
 sees
 A Comrade robed in white.
 He bends upon each sufferer
 A look of tender grace,
 Ineffable compassion lights
 His marred but kingly face.
 He touches dying brows, and
 lo!
 The fear and pain are fled,
 And smiles of joyful wonder
 wreath
 The faces of the dead.
 He bends above the wounded
 With strength and sympathy;
 "Courage! I, too, was wounded—
 I suffered this for thee."
 He lifts His hands all bleeding,
 Nor robe, nor sandals, hide
 The print of nails upon His
 feet,
 The spear-thrust in His
 side.
 Oh, if 'tis true, I know not,
 Or a vision of the night,
 Formed by the fever-tortured
 brain—
 The Comrade robed in
 white.
 Well might the agony of earth
 Have called Him once again
 To mingle in His human form
 Among the sons of men.
 Seen or unseen, He walketh
 Within the place of pain;
 Let not the Great White Com-
 rade
 Call to your soul in vain.
 — Carroll Loupe Fisher.
 Turtle Creek, Pa.