

Not a "Tremendous Moral Revolution" But a Tremendous Disclosure of Terrible Facts

The Wall Street Journal says: "A tremendous moral revolution is taking place. Many practices which, ten years ago, five years ago, one year ago, and even six months ago, were in favor, public opinion having no condemnation for them, are now held to be odious and even criminal. This is, perhaps, the most notable development of the day, namely, the creation of a higher standard for the conduct of American business."

Ten years ago! That was 109 years after the American fathers agreed upon that great constitution which they declared was ordained to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

Ten years ago! That was 120 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Ten years ago! That was nearly 2,000 years after Christ walked the earth and taught those moral principles which, in other lands than our, are presumed to rule in the hearts of men!

Yet we learn from the Wall Street Journal that ten years ago the American people had not progressed far enough to know that it was wrong to steal and wicked to kill.

Ten years ago! That was in 1896. The Wall Street Journal's "tremendous moral revolution" notwithstanding, there must have been—even in 1896—some great moral principles at work in the hearts of many Americans.

It was in 1896 that it was charged by the representatives of the great democratic party in convention assembled in the city of Chicago that selfish interests were at work in the affairs of our government, and that the purpose of these selfish interests was to exploit this great nation for the benefit of a coterie of men and at the expense of the masses of the people. Then it was asserted that a tariff system which breeds trusts and monopolies is dishonest. Then it was said that an income tax whereby men pay for the support of a common government in proportion to the benefits they receive is in line with justice. Then it was claimed that the burdens of taxation should be equally and impartially laid; that differences between wage payers and wage earners should be settled by the peaceful method of arbitration; that railroads and other great corporations should be required to do justice to the people by whose law they were created; that public officers should be economical in handling the public money; that courts should not use arbitrary authority for the oppression of the weak and the helpless; that government should be administered for the greatest good to the greatest number.

Yet we are told by the Wall Street Journal—and this is but a fair sample of what we read in many republican newspaper today—that in 1896 the American people did not have the same conscience which prompts them to denounce the infamies that have been recently exposed.

There has been no moral revolution in the sense meant by the Wall Street Journal. There have been exposures and the very large number of people who were misled by republican newspapers and republican leaders now know that the charges made by the democrats in 1896 were true; that the special interests were even then preying upon the people and since then have taken advantage of their great victory in that year to impose upon the people—as though re-

publican victory meant license for these men to do their worst.

It is absurd for publications like the Wall Street Journal to talk about "the creation of a higher standard for the conduct of American business" or that the things which we now hold to be "odious and even criminal" were a few years ago really in public favor. Long before the editor of the Wall Street Journal was born men knew that theft was theft. While the men of our earlier days had their faults, it is safe to say that they would not have tolerated one-one-hundredth of the impositions to which the men of today have submitted.

If one-tenth of the facts revealed during the past six months had been known to the American people in 1896 the republican party would have gone down to an ignominious defeat.

Did the republican party win because the people were without morals? Did the republican party win because the people were indifferent to the schemes of trust magnates? No. These men who are now exposed as common rogues posed then as defenders of national honor. And republican editors—the editor of the Wall Street Journal among them—stood sponsor for the rascals.

When George W. Perkins, Richard A. McCurdy, James H. Hyde or another insurance magnate issued an interview in behalf of the republican ticket, we were told that that was the opinion of a successful man whose only concern was that the "business interests of the country be protected."

When the proprietors of the packing houses issued interviews in support of the republican ticket, we were told that these men were "captains of industry" and entitled to lead good citizens.

When Bigelow, the Milwaukee banker, and Andrews, the Detroit banker, spoke in behalf of the republican ticket, they were pointed out as disinterested patriots who would willingly shed their blood for the public interests.

Every speech delivered by Chauncey M. Depew, by Joseph R. Burton, or any of the other republican senators or members of congress was pointed to as the utterance of a far-seeing statesman who would as quickly desert his own party had his own party attacked the public interests as the democratic party was then charged with doing. And a considerable number of people really believed that these men were defenders of national honor. They really believed that they were men standing for the best course for the whole people. Several million men went to the polls and voted the republican ticket under the impression that that party was the "God and morality" organization, rather than the party of speculation and plunder—as they now know it to be.

Does any one believe that the things complained of in the Depews and the Burtons would not have been condemned by Americans ten, twenty, fifty, or a hundred years ago? Would the American people of the long ago knowingly have given their approval to conspiracies in restraint of trade, to monopolies in the necessities of life? Would Americans of the long ago have looked with approval upon an Aldrich did they know that he stood in the senate as the tool of special interests rather than as the representative of the people? Has there been a period in American history when men would not have

known that the embezzlement of depositors' money by the Bigelows and the Andrews was wrong? Has there ever been a time when Americans would not see the evil when United States senators accepted from private interests fees for their services in public affairs? During what particular period did Americans so far forget the simple rules of common honesty that they would have failed to recognize as stealing the appropriation of policyholders' money for the use and benefit of the republican party? During what period would they fail to detect iniquity in the bribes given by coal barons to railroad employes and officials in order that the coal trust might secure undue advantages? When did they ever look upon rebates as anything but unfair and dishonest both to the railroad stockholder and to the general public? Would the sight of a Rockefeller dodging officers of the law inspire greater admiration among the Americans of the long ago than it does among the Americans of today? Are the Americans of today so much brighter than their predecessors that they can more quickly detect wrong in the action of Walsh, who, as owner of the Chicago Chronicle advocated the election of the republican ticket, pretending his efforts to be in defense of national honor when, as we have reason to believe, they were in order that he might be better able to feather his own nest by the violation of the laws of the land and the rules of common honesty? There has never been a time when men did not know that wife abandonment, as indulged in by the head of the steel trust and other "defenders of national honor" is not "odious and criminal." There has never been a time in the history of the American government when men would not have known that it is a crime to deal out embalmed beef to the soldiers and the sailors, and a crime to feed the men, women and children of this land upon diseased meat. Would the men of the long ago have looked more lightly upon the immunity bath to which our trust magnates are treated than do the people of the present?

Don't be deceived, Mr. Editor of the Wall Street Journal. There has been no "tremendous moral revolution" as you employ the term. There have been tremendous disclosures of terrible facts. The hearts of the people are right today as they were right in 1896. They were fooled then as they were fooled before and as they have been fooled since. But once let the real awakening come; let them know that they are called upon to take their stand on the side of truth or on falsehood's side, and it will be very readily seen that by an overwhelming majority they will take their stand in line with those good old moral principles which they learned at the mother's knee.

If the newspapers would only tell the people the truth with respect to these public questions the popular verdict would be more nearly correct. Even now there are many honest republicans who really imagine that the foreigner pays the tax, and because of that false notion they are holding up the hands of the "standpatters." When the rank and file of the republican party learn the truth with respect to a republican tariff they will hold that policy to be "odious and even criminal."

Let the Wall Street Journal undeceive itself. The practices which the people vigorously condemn today they would have condemned in 1896 had they not been systematically deceived.

THE IOWA LUBRICANT

The St. Louis Globe-Democrat declares that Senator Allison is one of the most useful men in public life because "he is always ready with a can of oil to lubricate the turbulent waters of legislation." That is very good. The spectacle of Senator Allison pestivating around with an oil can in his hand, squirting oil on the troubled waters of legislation, is worth preserving in photographic form. The honorable representative of the allied oil and steel trusts angrily declares that the honorable representative of the allied coal and railroad trusts is not toting fair. Immediately there is a commotion of the senatorial waters and the public imagines for a brief moment that perhaps it will profit by this falling out of the representatives of selfish interests.

But it is all a well-rehearsed farce. Just before the honorable representatives come to blows, Mr. Allison appears with the oil of compromise, the honorable representatives subside, and the people are again let in the lurch. And every once in a while some senator who is old-fashioned enough to think that he represents the people introduces a bill in the interests of his constituents. Immediately the senatorial waters are troubled. Violent commotion rages for a time, and then Mr. Allison dawns upon the view with the ever-present can of compromise oil in his hand. In a short time the commotion subsides and again the people get the worst of it. The Globe-Democrat is eminently correct in its statement that Mr. Allison is one of the most useful men in public life. We note with regret, however, that our esteemed Missouri contemporary fails to specify. It falls to tell us that Mr. Allison's usefulness is all along the line of helping the corporation

interests. He is, indeed, a useful man to the corporations.

WHY?

In order to avoid the impositions due to the greed of the trust barons, the government has purchased abroad some of the materials to be used in the Panama canal work. In response to a hint from the executive department the senate committee on finance has reported a resolution directing that all Panama canal supplies be purchased in this country "unless the president shall in any case deem the bids or the tenders therefor to be extortionate or unreasonable."

Why not give the American people the same privilege which the government demands for itself? Why not protect the individual consumer from the greed of the tariff barons, even as the government seeks to protect itself? Why not refuse to let bad enough alone? Why not revise the tariff?