

## "THE INVISIBLE PLAYMATE"

Address delivered by Richard L. Metcalfe at Wynka Cemetery, Lincoln, Neb., on occasion of the observance of "Printers' Memorial Day" by Typographical Union No. 209:

Faith, Hope and Charity—the least as well as the greatest of these—ring true within that realm where the children live, and love, and play. In this Kingdom-of-Make-Believe there is no pretense in the virtues that "exalt great Nature's favorites." In that domain friendship is the friendliest, truth is the truest, and love is the loveliest.

The best demonstration of that fraternity which ought to exist between all men living a common life and working to a common end is found in the relations between the little one of our own flesh and blood and the invisible child with whom we often find him prattling and playing. Listen to the story of these two comrades as told by the sweet singer of the Baltimore Sun:

All day in the swing of his fancy, the lit of his laughter, he goes,  
Whose life is a gleam in the sunlight, a lily, a pearl and a rose;  
And there to a phantom talking, with a phantom by his side,  
He moves with a shadow playmate, together they romp and glide.

I hear through the hours of his revel his little-tongue chatter away;  
Alone, but not lonesome, he follows the fairies that flit through the day.  
He shares with his dream and his phantom his blocks and his drum and his horn,  
And he talks to his dear little playmate, invisible there in the morn.

They seem such good comrades and friendly, and get on together so well;  
There's never a moment of quarreling and never a sorrow to tell;  
The phantom does just as he wants him, the shadow plays everything right—  
O beautiful playmates that revel light-hearted in realms of light!

They plan and they ponder together, the living locked arms with the dream;  
They sail on invisible waters and fish in a make-believe stream;  
They tunnel for coal in dream mountains and fight in invisible wars,  
And they hide in the walls of their fortress when the enemy's battery roars.

All day in the childheart splendor, a lad of the legions of fun,  
With a little invisible playmate, talks on as they laugh in the sun;  
And, happy and heartfree together, I lean and look down on them there  
And dream of my own vanished playmates, dear phantoms that float everywhere!

Ay, tender, invisible comrades, like children of old at our play,  
We dance in the dews of the morning and dance through the dreams of the day;  
And arm upon arm in the sunlight, with laughter and longing and tears,  
We move like an army of shadows far down in the valley of years!

The Invisible Playmate knows other paths than those leading to the nursery; nor is he always a child playing with a child; sometimes he hunts out those whose hair is turning gray; sometimes he seeks those whose eyes are growing dim.

How quickly the Invisible Playmate of some of the grown folks responds to the summons once fond memory brings the light of other days around us:

A rusty sword—a blade that never knew dishonor—and we go arm in arm with the father who, perhaps, gave to the world considerably more than the world ever gave to him; living again, with him, the life so full of tender memories; learning again, from him, the lessons of stern duty.

A picture spotted with the dust of time—and we stand within the very presence of the gentle one who gave us birth; feeling, almost, the clasp of her dear hand; hearing, almost, the sound of her sweet voice—taking, in truth, the benediction of her holy love.

A little shoe, frayed at the heel and punctured at the toe—and we feel around our neck the clasp of two little arms and hold against our wildly beating heart the "Little Breeches" of our home.

"Oh, the little white arms that encircle  
My neck in their tender embrace  
Oh, the smiles that are halos of heaven,  
Shedding sunshine of love on my face."

A scrap of paper—and we are drawn to the side of some old friend long gone beyond; and there the days of old are lived again—call it in "Dreamland" if you please—but lived again!  
Playmates of the long ago! Invisible all, but playmates every one!

"And arm upon arm in the sunlight, with laughter and longing and tears,  
We move like an army of shadows far down in the valley of years!"

Who says we must see before we believe? We forget that the unseen are the real forces. One note of music will bring a smile; another will draw a tear; a burst of song will set in motion all the memories and emotions of a lifetime. We know something of the marvelous things wrought by electricity, but with all of our progress we can not tell the whence or the whither of that great force. We know that love has well been called "the greatest thing in the world"—yet no man has seen it, while all men have felt it.

Parting is the sweetest sorrow, because meeting is of the force that was not born to die. Love proves immortality, because we would not part with the one great grief if by doing so we must forfeit the one great joy. In all this beautiful city of the dead, where "love is loveliest because embalmed in tears," there is not a grave which those who hold it dear would blot from out the realm of fact, if the memory for which it stands must be obliterated.

As love proves immortality, so sorrow proves the "Elder Brother." Our very ignorance suggests the God, our very helplessness demands the Christ. Out of our own night of grief we

look to Gethsemane; from under our own heavy cross we turn to Calvary.

We may obtain some idea of the tears that have been shed within this world, when we remember that within this silent city of one hundred acres, hardly an inch of soil has escaped the tears of those who have loved—and for the moment imagined they had lost. Men may think they have made progress when they dismiss, as unworthy of the consideration of practical people, the lessons taught by the mothers; but standing within the shadow that falls athwart our own home, we may realize that the inspiring story of the life and the mission of the Man of Galilee is history's solitary answer to the pathetic call that goes up from every vacant chair:

"Oh, into what bosom, I wonder,  
Is poured the whole sorrow of years?  
For eternity only seems keeping  
Account of the great human weeping;  
May God, then, the Maker and Father—  
May He find a place for the tears!"

"Beyond the smiling and the weeping, beyond the waking and the sleeping; beyond the rock waste and the river, beyond the ever and the never—love, rest, and home!" Love, rest, and home—and reunion with the playmates—big and little—of the olden time—playmates now invisible to the human ken but immortal in the law of love as they are immortal in the law of life!

Civilization has not vindicated itself in the presence of the thing we call death. These little birds singing their Te Deums from the tree-tops and these sweet flowers bringing reassurance of another springtime and asserting, through their green leaves and fragrant blossoms, the great eternal law of life and love are better settings for this calm and peaceful scene than the emblems of woe and hopelessness which give denial to our faith.

When one whom we love better than life itself passes through "Glory's morning gate" our heart will ache. But when the march of civilization shall sweep away the barbaric customs which at the bier of our loved ones only contribute to our woes then "that ancient Saxon phrase which calls the burial ground God's acre" will be in common use; then the smiles will mingle with the tears; the band of crepe will go, the wreath of flowers will come; and in that day the men and women of this world will know that what we now call death is really "God's great morning lighting up the sky."

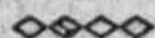
Night after night we go to sleep without the slightest fear, trusting to nature to bring us again to life and to duty; night after night we bid our loved ones adieu and wish them pleasant dreams in their journey to an unknown, but not, to tired men, a dreaded land—

"And why not then  
Lie down to our last sleep, still trusting Him  
Who guided us so oft through shadows dim,  
Believing somewhere on our sense again  
Some lark's sweet note, some golden beam shall  
break,  
And with glad voices cry, 'Awake! Awake!'"

### HOW?

In a burst of sarcasm and in an editorial entitled, "The Wall Street Anarchists," the Philadelphia North American says: "It was anarchical to fill this land with trusts, organized in Wall Street, for the subtle and perpetual robbery of consumers by means of inflated prices."

Referring to this editorial a Sewell, N. J., reader of The Commoner says: "I think it would be pertinent to ask the North American how it can logically combat tariff reform."



### DIRECT LEGISLATION

Ex-Governor Garvin of Rhode Island urged the passage of a joint resolution by the legislature of Rhode Island proposing the following amendment to the constitution:

Resolved, A majority of all the members elected to each house of the general assembly voting therefor, that the following amendment to the constitution of the state be proposed to the qualified electors of the state, in accord-

ance with the provisions of Article XIII of the constitution, for their adoption, to be denominated article — of amendments:

Section 1. Electors of the state, aggregating ten per centum of the number of those who at the last preceding elections voted for governor, may propose specific and particular amendments to this constitution by filing with the secretary of state, not less than three months, and not more than nine months, prior to any general election, a petition that the electors may, at such general election, cast their ballots for or against such amendments. Such propositions for amendment shall be published in the newspapers, and printed copies of them shall be sent by the secretary of state, with statements of the number of electors petitioning therefor, to all the town and city clerks in the state. The said proposition shall be, by said clerks, inserted in the warrants or notices by them issued for warning the next annual town, district and ward meetings at said general election; and the clerks shall read said propositions to the electors when thus assembled, with the statements of the number of electors petitioning therefor, before the election shall be had. Any proposition thus made shall be submitted

to the electors by the secretary of state at said annual meeting, and if then approved by a majority of the electors of the state present and voting thereon in town, district and ward meetings, it shall, ninety days thereafter, become a part of the constitution of the state."

This is in the line of direct legislation which is becoming more and more popular throughout the country. Certainly those who believe in the right of the people to govern themselves and to make their government represent their wishes, can not oppose so simple and effective a method of bringing the government under the control of the voters. Governor Garvin won an enviable reputation by proving conclusively that his sympathies were with the masses of the people, and it is gratifying to know that his interest in public affairs has not abated with his retirement from office.



The steel trust, seeing that it had a lemon in Mr. Schwab as president, traded him off for a huge chunk of citric acid in the shape of Mr. Corey. The steel trust is in need of an expert pomologist as well as an expert chemist.