

# The Democratic Trend of Big Business.

BY DAVID GIBSON (The Public)

Everything done for the benefit of humanity is profitable business, good business, and big business.

I have watched the radical movement for a good many years; within the last decade I have been in a position that has given me good perspective, exterior and interior, on big business; and I have come definitely to the conclusion that democracy is not coming from the source of radical expectation.

It is coming from up down, rather than the other way around. It is coming as a matter of leadership from the private offices rather than from the mass of workers or people generally.

And when I say democracy I do not mean what the average socialist or anarchist wants it to mean. I do not mean self-employment.

Society in its habits and customs has become so complex, together with the business system by which its wants are supplied, that it is now impossible for one man of any class to employ himself independently of another man.

The business system is reciprocal, always has been and always will be.

The system involves so many kinds of ability, training, and temperaments that an interdependence of employment has grown up.

Above all, democracy involves efficiency, and efficiency involves order and system.

And speaking of the large aggregations of capital which we call big business, with all its shortcomings, I know of no other institution of society in which the elements of order and system are any more predominant.

I know of no less order and system, no more inefficiently conducted business than those with no concentration of capital—the farming industry, for instance, and the business of renting houses to the average city dwellers, and both of which are still in small units and under individual ownership.

And these two businesses are paid a larger percentage of profit on the individual transaction than any of those aggregations of capital which we call big business.

And bear in mind that so-called big business does not make its dividends from large individual profits on each sale, but rather from a large aggregation of small profits on many sales.

A large manufacturer can, for instance, make money producing several hundred thousand shovels, and at a few cents profit each, while a country hardware merchant who only sells a few hovels a year must make a billar's profit on each in order to live.

This is no defense of the alleged meat trust, which can be investigated and investigated; but if the now individual cattle raisers of the country were organized into a gigantic trust, and were making the same percentage of profit as a trust that they are now receiving as individuals, why, the public would rise up in their full might against them.

In considering a democracy I am of the opinion that too many of us have been feeling about it, rather than thinking about it.

Too many of us are trying to bring it about as an altruistic proposal rather than as a selfish proposal.

Bear in mind that selfishness has a place in democratic terminology; most of us have been confusing it with greed.

And altruism has no place in modern civilization.

Altruism was all right at a time in the world's history when there was not enough to go around, and when it was necessary to an efficiency, a democracy, that the man who should give up to the man who did not have.

Today, in the age of steam, there is enough to go around.

The application of steam and the ability to manipulate energy through mechanical, electrical, and chemical agencies have solved all problems of production.

Distribution of goods is now the problem of big business.

The democratic trend of big business is in raising the living standards of society, and in order to distribute more goods.

unit to distribute goods. He will be prospered for selfish reasons, rather than altruistic ones.

And this tendency will be found more and more with the increase in the machinery of production.

There is but one solution to the problem of distribution, and that is by increasing the standards of living and the purchasing power of more units of society, and by educational advertising even to the relief of community economical barriers through the exercise of political influence.

This will be done for the same reason that working conditions in the average plant have been improved,—because it pays.

Greed is graft,—getting something for nothing, and it will finally have no place in production or distribution,—the trend is against it; for it affects the market prosperity, or the general power to purchase.

There are two ways at arriving at a conclusion: one is thinking about it, to arrive at it from a selfish point of view; the other is feeling about it, to arrive at it from the emotional, altruistic viewpoint. While the results may be the same, yet as I said in the beginning we have been feeling about our problems rather than thinking about them; and the individuals who really do the world's work change their minds and act more quickly and continuously in their selfish interest than from any altruistic or feeling motives.

Right and truth and justice are not right for their own sake, but because they pay in pleasure and profit.

These measures are efficient,—democratic.

To illustrate how it is possible for any of us to come to the same conclusion by opposite processes, thinking or feeling, selfishness or altruism:

I have a friend, a poet, who is vegetarian, because he does not believe in killing animals. I am a vegetarian, because I believe that by not eating meat I will have better health, live longer, work more efficiently and earn more.

The poet arrives at his conclusion by feeling, altruism; I arrive at the same conclusion by thinking, selfishness, and the results are the same.

Mr. H. D. Norvell, of Cleveland, at the head of a corporation that controls the ice delivery system of several Central West cities, conceived the idea of placing ice stations at convenient points over all residential sections of these cities,—about like gasoline filling stations, now common everywhere.

A little boy with a toy wagon or a man with an automobile can get ice at one of these stations about fifty per cent. cheaper than the same amount delivered to a household refrigerator.

A lady remarked on noticing one of these stations: "What a humane thing this is,—a fine thing for the poor!"

Mr. Norvell did not have in mind the poor in conceiving these serve-self stations, although most of them are in the poorer districts; he did have in mind the sale of more ice, and whether his motives were selfish or altruistic the results are the same.

Every efficient thing is humane.

It used to take eight or ten men six or seven hours to reload an old type of open hearth furnace in a steel mill, and all the while they were exposed to a cruel heat.

A few years ago the Wellman-Seaver-Morgan Company, Cleveland, brought out a device by which two men could reload an open hearth furnace in twenty minutes, without being exposed to any heat at all.

Now this concern that brought out this device did not consider its humanitarian aspect at all, they invented it to save time, labor, money, but the humanitarian results were the same.

Nowhere in all literature is poverty any more dramatically treated, with any more feeling, than in the writings of Henry George. He arrives at the conclusion that the remedy for it all is in a tax on the site value of land only.

I know personally many manufacturers, in many parts of the country, enough to prove the tendency, that in seeking a means of relieving themselves from their tax burdens, freeing natural resources from the evils of speculation, and increasing the purchasing power of their

markets, they have come definitely to the conclusion that the remedy is in a tax on the site value of land only. I have even read intimations of this in The Wall Street Journal, and without a word on the subject of poverty.

It took about 108 years to change the argument in favor of prohibition from that of pure morals, feeling, to that of good economics,—thinking.

Safety First movement was started and carried out by the railroads of this country as an economic measure, not as a humanitarian one.

The railroads of this country have circulated millions of pieces of literature on "Courtesy" to their employes,—not courtesy for mere courtesy's sake, but because it paid.

The banks of this country started the savings movement not in any altruistic motives, but to get money out of stoves, bureau drawers, stockings, and fruit cans, and into their institutions as deposit, but it has had the effect of promoting thrift, prosperity, and happiness.

Through the alliance of the mechanic and the business man the average of us can afford a watch that only a king could have carried a century ago.

Through the alliance of the printer, photographer, and business man there is more possession and appreciation of the painter's art than ever before in history.

Again through the alliance of the mechanic and business man there is music in almost every home, truly not all of it good music, but there is truly more appreciation of real musical art than ever before.

And all these inventions and sales promotions were with the prime idea of profit on the part of the inventors and promoters.

All of these have been made possible in the age of steam.

Our older moral and economic

writers did not take this force into consideration, because it did not exist in their age. Some of our modern moral and economic writers have not taken it sufficiently into consideration; they are still thinking in man and animal power units, while the business world is acting in steam power units.

And most of our economic and moral progress has been since we have found the fact that it pays.

Reforms do not come at once, because we do not think in fundamentals.

Conditions improve by derivatives, because we think in derivatives. We are still out in the twigs and branches in our thoughts on the social system; we are not down as yet to the trunks and roots,—have not got to fundamentals.

Then, perhaps, it is well that it is so. Perhaps this is nature's program. Maybe this is the natural order of reforms, that they should come quietly, gently, like the changing seasons,—winter into spring, spring into summer, and summer into autumn.

Man will one day be master of his circumstances, his needs, and even every desire, so long as his desires do not conflict with the need of another.

Columbus Austin Bowsher, to whom I am deeply indebted for some of these observations, who has caused me to look at many elements from a new point of view, and of whom the business world is destined to hear more, says that the Golden Rule can be expressed in terms of selfishness: "Be selfish, but do not deny the selfishness of others."

This rule is for the perfect reciprocation of business, supplying one another's wants, and it is for a better order and system and the true democracy of which the dreamers of old have dreamed.

## Post-War Education.

By A. G. Keller (The Review)

There are those who expect too much from a crisis and talk of a new dispensation or a new world-order; and there are others who are without vision or who close their eyes to the signs of the times and clamor for "business as usual." It is folly to expect too much; the chemical elements of the earth and the laws of physical nature, the mind of man and the character of human nature, are not to be altered by that which, though it looks to the awe-stricken participator like a convulsion, is, in the infinite perspective of things, no more than a flurry. It is the same old world, even after the Great War. And yet it is not altogether the same, either. Things are never the same after such a stirring of what are, to our slight fathomings, the depths. However loud the cry for life-as-usual, life has not been as usual—not then, during the war, and not now, after the war. Indeed, it seems quite safe to assert that one phase of the life of this nation, not to say of human society in general, has passed and another phase begun.

Between has lain a transition period, as indefinable as that which separates youth and manhood.

The nation has sensed this change and it is recognized in the much talk about reconstruction. It is as if a great fire had wiped out part of a city and provided a chance for wider streets and better architecture. Or it is as if rigid forms had been broken down and dissolved into wet plaster, capable of being reshaped, if it can be kept stirred up until we can decide into what new forms to cast it. The idea of reconstruction has been pervasive. There are few social forms that have not been subjected to questioning scrutiny: economic relations, government, religion, even the constitution of the family. But it is the educational system, perhaps, that has come in for the most thoroughgoing criticism and prospective overhauling. This is natural enough if education is to be conceived of as an induction of a new generation into its responsible place in the general social order of the nation.

The crisis past, we naturally prize that which saved us. But what did save us? There has been a test as by fire, and certain sorts of knowledge seem to have come out of it resplendent. Why should we not feel that the next generation must concentrate more attentively upon that which preserved the nation and, indeed, civilization itself? The studies of the future, according to one clear-minded educationalist, are to be the physical sciences with

their applications, especially in engineering; the modern languages; history; and, perhaps above all, the social sciences.

On the face of it the chemist seems to have emerged from the late ordeal with the greatest acclaim; but he is closely followed by the physicist, the geologist, and all those specialists whose knowledge has made possible the better care of the wounded, the sick, and the under-nourished. In this "war of the laboratories" the physical scientists have had their chance to make a demonstration, and they have seized it. Also, the mono-lingual American has derived from his European contacts the realization that it is well to know another language, and he has come to be enlightened, particularly, as to the utility, present and prospective, of the other great tongue of the Americas. The world has compressed and drawn together during the recent struggle, and language-barriers to free communication, formerly pretty much ignored by us as distant and theoretical, are now seen to be nearer than was thought, and practical. We are more nearly in the situation of the smaller European nations at whose command of foreign tongues we have marveled in the past—we have lost our traditional position of isolation and self-sufficiency, and are crowded together closer upon our fellow nations.

It is not that we propose to practice the vindicated arts of war in preparation for other wars. Those of us who feared the inoculation of our nation with militarism have felt an ever deepening content during the post-armistice period, for if the last half year has shown anything it has shown the nimble recession of the American people from an enforced status of military. Chemistry does not possess its undoubted eminence as an indispensable to the art of war; it is cherished because of its promise, more sharply revealed during the exigencies of war, as fundamental for the arts of peace. For through all the ages the arts of war have thus transformed themselves into, or at least have contributed copiously, to the arts of peace.

The claims of history and the social sciences are a little less obvious than those of the physical sciences and the modern languages. It was not alone by our knowledge of chemical formulas, beneficent sera, or the laws of hygiene that we were saved. The faith that engendered morale rested its case upon the repeated verdicts of history and a perspective of the undiverted course of social evolu-

tion. This is implicitly recognized in the publishers' lists and in the records of libraries.

There seems to be a feeling that we had better know the past life of our fellow nations a little more intimately than we knew that of Germany, and that it is well to understand, in general, how this recent cataclysm came to be. The past has been brought nearer to the present in somewhat the same way as the nations have been thrown into closer proximity; barriers of time as well as of space have become subject to attrition. There is a practical side to all this. The war has revealed to us that there were many economic, political, and social phenomena under our eyes which we did not apprehend or understand, but which ought to have been seen and appraised; as a consequence of the war still other vital questions of the same order challenge us; and now we want the next generation to be better prepared to grasp and deal with them—not in view of war again, but under conditions of prospective peace, and with a view to an enduring peace.

It is doubtful whether any studies can aspire to much prominence unless they are seen to have a practical bearing on the art of living. The race has always been obliged to cultivate utilities, as a condition of existence. The popular studies of any nation have always been those that issued in utilities, or were thought so to issue. But if any one is listing evidences of design in the universe, he should note that studies which are plainly pursued in view of their practical product always carry with them unforeseen influences of a less material order. They both stimulate and satisfy intellectual curiosity, and every one of them leads at length to an insight into the nature of things that fathers sentiments of wonder and awe in the presence of power—of limitless force acting in orderly fashion under all-pervading law. Thus there are no purely practical studies at all; and even if the curricula of the future are to be limited to the subjects of science, language, and history, provided these are really studied, there need be no misgiv-

ing as to irreparable spiritual loss.

There are said to be certain studies which yield the immaterial satisfactions, but do not yield, or do not any longer yield, actual services in the art of living; Greek, for example, or astronomy. This is disputable, of course; if the happiest man is, as some one once defined him, the man with the greatest number of interesting thoughts, then, since no one can very well contend that happiness is not practical, studies like Greek can not be stripped of all utility for the art of living. For certain endowed and fortunate souls these less practical studies will always be the most practical.

But for the average citizen they can not be so. He can not work up into the empyrean because his life is irrevocably concerned with the immediacies. There is no convulsion of society that could conceivably arouse in him a taste for the remoter studies. In general, and more specifically, he gets what can be presented in the public schools, including, if he is better-to-do, the high school. He has always seen the value of the three R's. He has never seen the value of the studies, especially as they have been pursued, that educational reformers and pedagogists (who are not clear in their minds, though enthusiastic with the vision of half-knowledge, and wordy to the hypnotizing of school boards) have succeeded in foisting upon the schools. But now a crisis has revealed a popular interest in certain subjects—disciplines more advanced than the elementary ones, yet with a character sufficiently practical to be practicable. It is the acceptance and development of this lead, vouchsafed by the automatic out-working of things, that is indicated as a policy of educational reconstruction. The list of subjects used as a text in the foregoing may not be exhaustive, but is typical. The hint is unmistakable to any intelligence not prepossessed: it is time to drop out the educational fads and fancies and to develop those studies interest in which has been evoked by the revelations of the recent crisis.

## SHALL GERMAN BE BANNED? NO! CRIES FRANK HARRIS.

It is difficult, remarks Mr. Frank Harris in Pearson's Magazine, for a thoughtful or educated man to believe that such a question needs to be asked. "It is tantamount to asking, Shall I cut off my nose to spite my face? Mr. Harris goes on to say:

In England when things were at their worst, about Christmas, 1917, and the whole country was on short rations and in imminent danger of starvation, the question was raised, it is true; but was settled immediately in the only common sense way.

To have it seriously debated here in America would be comic were it not a sign of tragic and un-American stupidity. To the thinking man every language is another window with a new view of this miraculous world, and to shut one is simply to prefer darkness to light and vision.

Yet in Mount Vernon, we hear, the question is hotly debated; a Mr. Raynaud wants German banned from our schools, and he is supported by a Mr. Mitchell, who would like to tar and feather any teachers of German; in fact, "the lowest depths of hell are too good for them," he says.

I would not have noticed this nonsense were it not that the Roycroft Magazine for December publishes a Hymn of Hate by one Kenneth Duffield, which, it declares, has had "wide circulation." Here is one verse of it:

### Die beste Art.

Der berühmte amerikanische Philo- Joseph Drifon Sweet Warden schreibt in einem Aufsatz über den freien Sinn: Ein Freund von mir erzählt oft und gern, wie in seiner Kindheit der alte Hausarzt zur Familie kam: er war so lebendig, lustig und energisch, ein so formiges Lächeln lag auf seinen Lippen, daß man sich einfach schämte, krank zu sein. Die Luft im Hause wurde in dem Augenblick anders, wenn er ins Zimmer trat. Sein herzlichstes Lächeln schallte durch das Zimmer, er rief sich selberbenignigt die Hände vor dem Familienfeuer, und seine bloße Anwesenheit half uns mehr als alle seine Rillen und Salben. Ja, der große Gedanke, daß er nun kommt, nachdem wir zu ihm geschickt hatten, vertrieb schon das meiste, was uns

"I will not take a German's word— He'll break it if he can; There is no love in a German heart Or faith in a German man."

Such verses would make Elbert Hubbard turn in his grave; he would have known that our hatreds hurt ourselves. The sooner we get rid of them, the better for us; the longer we cherish and nurse them, the more we must suffer. And that is true even when the object of our dislike is in itself bad.

But it would be quite easy to prove that every language lives by the virtue in it, and German is among the three or four best languages in the world. As an instrument of abstract and accurate thought it has, indeed, been called "the best" by Carlyle, and its lyric poetry, in the hands of Goethe and Heine, is second only to the best English poetry.

To ban German from our schools would be to make ourselves ridiculous throughout the world; it would be cited against us all over Europe, like our lynchings and shootings and third-degree torturings. We cannot afford, as a nation, to make such a blunder. Like other blunders, it would be worse than a crime.

The old Latin proverb that it is well to learn from our enemies, teaches a higher wisdom; in banning the German language we should be going below paganism at its commonest; the mere proposal fills me with shame.

Die Welt spielt vielen Übel mit, Für die sie Lorbeer sollte streuen, Und mancher, der für andre trit, Muß leider für sich selber—schrien.

### Well-to-do.

Die Welt spielt vielen Übel mit, Für die sie Lorbeer sollte streuen, Und mancher, der für andre trit, Muß leider für sich selber—schrien.

Die Welt spielt vielen Übel mit, Für die sie Lorbeer sollte streuen, Und mancher, der für andre trit, Muß leider für sich selber—schrien.

## Whiskey—Bier—Wein

Komplette Assorte und Konfektionen, um die Gasse der Whiskey, welches Bier und andere Getränke herzustellen, einschließlich der Lieferung und Operation von Dampfmaschinen, Aufhängemaschinen, etc. etc. Die Fabrik im Jahre 1910 wurde mit dem besten Material und unter der Aufsicht von Spezialisten gebaut. Das Bier, welches aus dem besten Malz und Wasser hergestellt ist, hat den Geschmack von dem besten Lagerbier. Das Wein, welches aus dem besten Traubensaft hergestellt ist, hat den Geschmack von dem besten Wein. **Baltimore Terminal Company** Baltimore, Md.

Welches Getränk verleiht Welt oder Gesundheit? Whiskey, Bier, Wein, etc. etc. Die Fabrik im Jahre 1910 wurde mit dem besten Material und unter der Aufsicht von Spezialisten gebaut. Das Bier, welches aus dem besten Malz und Wasser hergestellt ist, hat den Geschmack von dem besten Lagerbier. Das Wein, welches aus dem besten Traubensaft hergestellt ist, hat den Geschmack von dem besten Wein. **Baltimore Terminal Company** Baltimore, Md.

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Erstklassige Monumente u. Marksteine. A. Broffe & Co., 4316 Süd 17. Straße, Tel. South 2370. ff

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Gebrauchte elektrische Motoren.—Tel. Douglas 1919. 24. Eron & Co., 116 Süd 13. Str.