

# The Independent.

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June 18

Lincoln, Nebraska, October 12, 1905

Number 21

## Survival of the Fittest is a Snare

In the training of love the home is the best educator. What tends to exalt the home must exalt humanity and human government. Practical politics cannot be divorced from social idealism. The first principle of all human politics is that the strength and worth of the state depends upon the purity of the home.

Economies are useful, but economists often ignore the power of love in human affairs. Economists place too much faith in the creation of their laws. They are apt to view too narrowly their doctrine of the survival of the fittest. The strong of one age are not the strong of a succeeding age. The fittest to survive under one set of conditions are not the fittest to survive under wholly different conditions. One of the conditions of civilization is human government and human government may be and often has been ruled by a spirit of love. The duty of the state is to protect all its citizens in their rights, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak. But love has a greater duty to the weak than to the strong by the very fact that the weak need protection more than the strong.

The survival of the fittest is a shifting law modified continually by changing circumstances, and it is imaginable that the future social and political conditions will weigh much less heavily upon the weak as a consequence of the growing influence to be wielded by the golden rule, an influence that will make the strong of tomorrow those who love their fellow men.

Among the lower animals there is no government to protect the weak from the strong and the survival of the fittest appears to be a rigid law. But when applied to the human race this law is found to have many absurdities. You will be told that under present conditions the captain of industry is the fittest to survive, and yet when a lunatic enters a bank and kills its president we must revise our doctrine and say that the lunatic is the fittest to survive. When the anarchist blows out the life of a president, king or minister of state, we are forced to say that the anarchist is the better exponent

of this material law. And as the economic realm if one captain of industry by some chance or some law took ruin and impoverishes another captain of industry we eliminate the element of accident and say that the survivor was the fittest. It seems, therefore, as though the law were more taken to mean that all who survive are the fittest, whereas it should mean that as a general rule those who live in best with existing conditions stand the best chance of surviving. And it should never be lost sight of that one of the main conditions of human life, and one that constantly tends to the improvement of the human race, is the element of love.

When we find the cruel and self-seeking the most successful in governing the wealth of the world we are apt to say in our bitterness that the law is the same among men as among animals, but no greater outrage could be imagined. The existence of laws to protect the weak, to restrain the strong, to guard the family, to promote the greatest good of the greatest number, is proof that among men a new element intervenes to change the law and make of it a new law that has almost no apparent resemblance to its effects. We borrow the lower law from the beast and apply it to man, and are thus able to excuse the most damnable and tyrannical.

Human government must ever be imperfect from the very nature of man, but nevertheless there has always been, and especially during the Christian era, an element of pity and charity that has modified the effects of greed and selfishness. In our own day we find this spirit growing stronger, the ruthless spirit of commercialism, whose chief goal is the plastic conscience and whose greatest law is the survival of the fittest. Alongside the spirit that estimates human life as less important than commercial expansion, that seized the Philippines and crushed out of existence two thriving republics in Southern Africa, we find the spirit that struck the shackles from the slaves, that gave liberty to the people of Cuba and ended the greed-horn war between Russia and Japan.

### Fable of the Highwayman

A Highwayman met a Poor and Honest Citizen one night at a lonely corner and said to him: "Your money or your life." To which the Honest Citizen replied: "Take all my money, but when I am dead return it to my Widow and Little Orphans." This strange request caused the Highwayman to be exceedingly merry, and he responded with a hearty laugh: "Every penny you have given me shall be returned to you or yours with interest." Whereupon the Poor and Honest Citizen went his way greatly pleased that he had fallen in with such a frank and agreeable Highwayman. The Highwayman, however, had not proceeded far when he met the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, who solicited him for a contribution. "Nay, but the money I have in my pocket is not mine own," objected the Highwayman. "It was given me in trust." But the Chairman said: "Are you not a defender of the national honor?" To which the Highwayman replied: "Sure, all thieves are defenders of the national honor." "Are you then indeed a thief?" asked the Chairman laughingly. "I am indeed a self-made and successful thief," replied the Highwayman, "but I must say that I do not see what my regard for the national honor has to do with my giving you this stolen money. In what way shall I receive benefit by making the contribution you demand?" To which the Chairman readily responded: "I am surprised that you do not perceive how your money would be returned if the business interests of the country were destroyed. The Rich and even the Poor and Honest Citizens will have no money but you to steal." The Highwayman was duly impressed and delivered to the Chairman a goodly portion of the money he had stolen from the Poor and Honest Citizen. After which he went his way rejoicing, and said: "I think that they I have had a share in saving the business interests of the country."

### Private Support Dangerous

Whether money be tainted or untainted it is an injudicious policy that leads regents of state universities to accept donations or endowments from individuals. Men will disagree as to whether money obtained by certain means is tainted or untainted and are apt to discuss this phase of the question so heatedly that they lose sight of an important principle. The university which accepts the donation of an individual shoulders something in the nature of an obligation to defend the methods by which the donor acquired his wealth or the methods he may adopt in the future.

In theory, perhaps, no obligation exists, but if the history of education in the last fifteen years teaches anything it teaches that universities, chancellors and other dignitaries recognize that practically the obligation does exist. In Nebraska we have the example set by the gifted Chancellor Andrews, who boldly takes up the cudgel for "tainted money." The obsequious and servile attitude of the University of Chicago professors is well known. Recently Mr. Rockefeller gave \$1,000,000 to Yale university, and shortly thereafter one of the Yale professors wrote a hair-splitting defense of tainted money. It is, therefore, "a condition and not a theory" that confronts the people of Nebraska in electing regents for the state universities. No line upon theories about the righteousness or unrighteousness of money obtained by suspicious means should prevail upon the voters in upholding the policy of private support for public schools. The principle is a bad one, and should be condemned at the polls. There are some who doubt the binding force of the moral law, but this fact should not impress the people of any state with a desire to pursue a policy of lying or stealing at a state university.

If the regents of the state university never solicit or accept money from individuals they will never be placed under obligations