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Goal of State Education Should be Character and Not Piling Up of Wealth

Those who make a profession of discontent almost always attribute their misery to lack of riches. They believe that wealth is the source of all happiness and when they think of something that will make them happy they naturally look for happiness in those objects that money can buy. Like Chancellor Andrews of the Nebraska state university they conclude that "after all the main thing is the piling up of wealth." They are accustomed to say "money will do anything," and they never seek happiness in those things that cost nothing.

To such men the beauties of nature make no appeal. Theirs is not the life that finds,—

tongues in trees,
Books in the running brooks, sermons in stones,
And good in everything.

The pleasures of the intellect and the imagination, the poetry of domestic ties and joys, the inspirations of self-sacrifice, the kindly services of friends, the mystery and enchantment of romance, sing a psalm of life they cannot understand. Whether they succeed or fail in their pursuit of wealth their spirit is locked in a prison from which escape is impossible. If they remain poor they cry out curses upon existence because they have not laid hold of the money that will satisfy their desires. If they grow rich it is still with this false ideal of happiness constantly shadowing their souls and shutting out the light of the higher life. Theirs is the saddest self-sacrifice the world knows, for they sacrifice the best that is in them for the worst of all delusions. This does not apply to all who strive for riches, place or power, but to those only who think that most of our misery comes from lack of gold. Any philosophy which teaches that the piling up of wealth is the main thing in the life of the individual or of society is founded upon a quicksand. If our university education holds this to be the sun and crown of wisdom then university education becomes a peril to the nation. It is true that all men must earn their bread in the sweat of their brows and that much labor must be expended in this world to provide food and raiment for all who have their being on the globe. But that should rather teach us that labor is the main thing and that the piling up of unwieldy fortunes that will benefit one family at the expense of ten thousand families is a great danger to society. The piling up of wealth is good only when it is accomplished by fair means, when it does not rob a million to enrich one, when it is not obtained by fraud and deception and when the one who seeks wealth seeks it for the good it will do his fellow men.

Only the riches that are distributed are good. In economics as well as in morals hoarded wealth is an evil, and so too is the wealth that is amassed by dishonest means. When we say that a billionaire is a benefit to society because he gives employment to thousands and produces wealth for millions we should not forget that these thousands would be employed and this wealth would be produced to more advantage if the capital involved were controlled by many humane millionaires rather than by one ruthless billionaire who founds a heartless system of finance the chief law of which is the survival of the fittest.

"Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice" is a better maxim than this modern saw which tells us that "after all the piling up of wealth is the main thing." If the pursuit of wealth be the chief object of all men then the world must continue to be a seething cauldron of discontent, for few men will gain wealth. A philosophy which teaches men to seek contentment is of vastly more value to the university student than the philosophy which commands him to amass wealth. The better philosophy will teach the youth to love liberty and hate oppression, to demand fair-dealing for his fellow man as well as for himself, to love virtue more than gold, and to love

his neighbor as himself. Then will he wish to sacrifice himself for the good of his fellow men and despise to sacrifice his fellow men to benefit himself.

If this were the guiding principle of state education in Nebraska a bribe of a few paltry thousands to silence criticism and to gain discriminating favors would be rejected with scorn.



Good of General Industry True Basis of Railway Rates

Whenever the people of this country have sought for means to check corporation abuses they have been confronted by threats. Intimidation has been a mighty weapon in the hands of corporate wealth.

A few days ago President Samuel Spencer of the Southern railway addressed the Newark Board of Trade on railway regulation. His main argument was that if the interstate commerce commission were given power to fix reasonable rates the time would come when all rates would be government rates and could not be changed until changed by the commission or a court. President Spencer declared that "slow but steady paralysis would creep into the industrial arteries," and that the "transportation systems would gradually become numb and rigid." He added:

"All rates would soon be machine made only and commerce and industrial centers now acknowledging no bounds for the ultimate distribution of their products would find themselves operating in narrower and narrower zones, finally circumscribed by governmental edicts as to where the wares should go."

President Spencer has here drawn a most discouraging picture of a nation paralyzed industrially by government regulation of railways. His argument recalls the threats made in other days, and still repeated, that a reduction in customs duties would close our great mills and render idle thousands of workmen in all lines of industry. Today we find our trusts founding branches in Europe because of retaliatory tariffs. Instead of lowering our tariff wall and thus inducing foreign nations to remove their retaliatory duties we maintain our tariffs intact with the result that our manufacturers establish European branches for the employment of foreign laborers, although under a lower tariff and the consequent removal of retaliatory foreign tariffs they would be able to expand their industries at home and thus afford more employment for American labor.

An examination of the railway rate question will reveal a striking parallel. It is, of course, admitted by all that the purpose in giving the interstate commerce commission power to fix freight tariffs is to lower railway tariffs. In what way would lower freight rates paralyze the country's business? Is it not a fact that high freight rates produce a restricted traffic and that low rates produce an expansive traffic?

At present the export business of the United States is seriously restricted by high freight tariffs. Lower freight tariffs would permit our exporters to ship goods from the central and western states to Europe and compete with European goods. Lower freight rates would expand our export grain trade and would stimulate the production of grain. Lower freight rates would also expand the area of grain cultivation, for the poorer lands would then be cultivated.

In only one way could business be restricted. Lower freight rates might mean less revenue for the railways. It would be rash, however, for the student of the railway question to leap at the conclusion that railway revenue would necessarily be less because of lower tariffs. There would, of course, be less profit on each ton