

UNCLE RICHARD

MY DEAR TOM: Your determination to postpone your trip abroad pleases me. I agree with you that the times are critical and that it is the duty of good citizens to remain at their posts until the crisis is past. Europe can wait. . . . What you say concerning the political situation surprises me. Your father was one of the most devout Christians I ever knew, and I am sure a more earnest republican never lived. He was essentially a politician of the highest type. As you know, I was expressly prohibited in the terms of trusteeship and guardianship which I accepted, from seeking to influence you in any way in matters religious and political. It was your father's wish that you should do as he did, from your own opinions. You know how I have lived up to the conditions imposed upon me. I have never said one word to you on the subject of politics or religion. You selected your own college and followed your own inclinations in everything, so far as I can remember; and Tom, I was always willing to trust you to do the right thing. It is three years now, since you came of age and my trusteeship came to an end. I am no longer bound to keep silent, and as you ask me to speak freely, I gladly comply with your request.

Your statement that though you are, through your father's thrift, financially independent, you are none the less deeply interested in the serious problems of life, does you credit. I know you are sincere. I quote your letter:

"In my last two years at Harvard I gave much attention to sociology, and so far as possible kept up with contemporary discussions of the various problems relating to the condition of society. I have acquired ideas on this subject, but, strange as it may seem, I have as yet formulated no theories. I am still investigating. But I am continually reminded that we are in an age of oppression; that a few people are being enriched at the expense of the many; that the mass of the people is held in commercial or industrial bondage. I am forced to regard Mr. Carnegie, who makes his millions, while his employes get poorer every year, as to a certain extent, an enemy of society. I find in the much abused platform adopted in Chicago many things that I approve. Free silver seems to me to promise some benefit for a tremendously large number of people who, unfortunately, are badly in need of aid. You will believe me when I say that I am not an anarchist. I have only disgust and contempt for such men as Altgeld and Tillman, but I must say I am inclined to agree with much of the socialism that is ingrafted in the Chicago platform."

You are right in saying that there is oppression in the world. Some people appear to be having an easy time of it, while a great many more are laboring, and laboring hard, for small wages. It would be trite for me to say that you have run directly against the problem of human life, the question of all ages. A great many people are mixed in their ideas of proportion. They have incorrect ideas of perspective. They make the mistake of regarding the present as markedly worse than all the ages that have preceded. When Adam and Eve were pushed out of Eden the gate was locked. They never got back. Eden has always been in sight, but it has never been re-entered. Do you not think that in the days of the Pharaohs the people were oppressed? The children of Israel were held in bondage that was quite as hard to bear as any industrial or commercial bondage that any succeeding people has endured. Solomon was, I believe, more of a monopolist and certainly a harder taskmaster than Mr. Carnegie. A small part of Solomon's force of employes was "three score and ten thousand that bore burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains." And since then, there never has been a time when the elementary conditions of human society as they obtained in the earliest time, have materially differed. I believe the wise men generally agree that the tendency has been upward.

There is, as a philosopher has said, no today for mankind. With youth all thought is of tomorrow, with age, all thought is of yesterday. The present, when it shall have become part of the yesterday the past will show generally the same signs and features that have marked all other periods.

Your father, when he was twenty-five years of age, just one year older than you are now, was held in "industrial bondage." He worked with two other men on a rather large farm in Vermont for \$15 per month. I doubt if any \$4 a day employe of Mr. Carnegie works anything like so hard as your father did for 50 cents a day. Fifteen years later your father was, as you would say, taking it easy. He was employing two hundred men who worked hard every day and lived in small houses. He had a splendid house and had \$100,000 in the bank. One year later there came hard times. Your father struggled manfully. He tried to keep every man employed at the

usual wages. But he failed. He lost his \$100,000 in cash and all his other property. For eight years he had paid out to employes an average of \$120,000, furnished from one hundred to two hundred families with a good living. Was your father an enemy of society? At the end he had nothing. He went back into bondage, and he succeeded again. He was able in five years to resume his old business. Prosperity returned. It is possible under certain conditions that Mr. Carnegie might lose every dollar he possesses. When you balanced the millions that he has paid out to labor against his own poverty would you regard him as an enemy to society? "Wealthy manufacturers" often become financial wrecks.

Another thing: The lowest priced employe of Mr. Carnegie has pleasures and comforts of life such as your father when he was working at \$15 per month never dreamed of. I think if you will study the wage question, together with the cost of the necessities of life, you will find that never, in the history of the world, has labor received so large a compensation as now. I am speaking of conditions as they obtained in this country three years ago. Your philosophy must have taught you that it will never be possible for the human race to exist except with the condition that some lead and some follow. I think it is not necessary for me to say that every man cannot be his own Carnegie. If every man were left to make his own iron bridge or construct his own gold watch or raise his own grain there would be no iron bridges, no gold watches and very little grain. What would labor do if it were not for the Carnegie, the Armours, the Wanamakers and the like? History shows that great enterprises, construction, and development have only been possible when some one or set of men took the initial and directed the movement. Tell me, honestly, what you think would become of labor and wages if all these men whom you call the "enemies of society" were shut up in prison. It is, perhaps, natural for the man who is above to oppress those who are below, though there are many exceptions, and I do not deny that there is a great deal of injustice and suffering in the world. But it seems to me the thing to do is to seek to improve existing conditions, strive to teach the inter-dependence of mankind, appeal to the highest and best in man, rather than attempt to change the order of things that has existed since the time when the morning stars first sang together. Do you not think so? Look into the question of the condition of the workingman, the raise in wages, the treatment of employes, etc., and see if you do not find that nine-tenths of the benefit that has come in a generation has come through the political party to which your father belonged. There is another thing: the men of present wealth have, with scarcely an exception, risen from the "bondage" you speak of. Your father rose from the lot of a common laborer. The way is open. There is always the possibility of attainment. Men will go on rising and falling.

I have written at such length that I will have to defer the consideration of your other proposition. But, let me ask you, can you take the Chicago platform or the party that adopted it and leave the Altgelds and Tillmans? Is not the free coinage of silver at the false ratio of 16 to 1 fraudulent? Have you ever known a nation or a people to prosper permanently by dishonor and dishonesty? Excuse me if I seem blunt, but that you know is a characteristic.

YOUR UNCLE RICHARD.
Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 5.

Lincoln and "Our American Cousin."

Gen. I. N. Walker, commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, while at the Tacoma hotel on April 29, related the following striking coincidence. He was in Chicago at the time Mr. Lincoln received his first nomination. On the evening of May 18, 1860, the day the nomination was made, Gen. Walker was at the old McVicker's theater and witnessed a performance of "Our American Cousin," with Laura Keane as the leading lady in the cast. During the performance the rugged, kindly face of Mr. Lincoln was flashed by limelight upon the curtain, with the announcement of the nomination of "Honest Abe Lincoln" as the republican nominee for president. The audience went wild with enthusiasm for several minutes before the play could be resumed. Within a few days of five years afterward the same play was being given at Ford's theater in Washington, with Laura Keane as leading lady. On the evening of April 14, 1865, President Lincoln went to the theater, where he was killed by the assassin Booth.—Tacoma Leader.

FIRST OF AERONAUTS.

Blanchard Killed in Air Before Balloons Were Made.

Eighty-five years ago there died in Paris, Blanchard, the first man to gain celebrity as a balloonist, says the New York Mail and Express. He was born in 1738 and before the balloon was invented he had navigated the air in an atmospheric machine of his own invention, which was propelled with oars and which attained a height above ground of about eighty feet. Blanchard made his first ascent in a balloon at Paris, March 2, 1784. On January 7, 1785, he crossed the English channel in a balloon, accompanied by Dr. Jeffries. Under the circumstances it was a feat of great daring. The aeronauts the trip ended cast away everything but the basket under the balloon, and were about to cut it away when they were carried over the town of Calais and finally dropped in a forest. The officials of Calais gave Blanchard a dinner, presented to him papers of citizenship in a gold box, gave him \$1,200 for his balloon and a pension of \$125 yearly. The king of France also pensioned him. Blanchard boasted that he had risen 13,000 feet higher than any aeronaut of his time. He made sixty ascensions, the last one causing his death. His wife continued the business after him and was killed by a fall from a balloon in 1819. Albert of Saxony, a Dominican monk, is credited with having formed the first correct idea of building balloons early in the fourteenth century, but his ideas never took practical shape. While the scientists were working on the question in 1783 the brothers Montgolfier, paper makers, near Lyons, made and sent up the first balloon on June 5. This balloon was made of linen, was 315 feet in circumference and rose 1,600 feet. It was filled with heated air. About three months later Prof. Charles sent up his balloon, called a "Charliere." It traveled some miles from the starting and fell in a village. The peasants regarded it as a living monster, and fell upon it with pitchforks and flails and tore it to pieces, to the loss and disgust of its owner.

The first living things to leave the earth in a balloon were a sheep, a hen and a duck. They landed safely and the sheep was found grazing. The first ascent in a hydrogen balloon was made by Prof. Charles in Paris, Dec. 1, 1783.

The Karaim Jews.

The Karaim Jews number 3,000 or 4,000 and live principally in the Crimea. They speak a Tartar dialect among themselves, and ethnologically are much more like Tartars than Semites. Their own legends, in fact, permit the assumption that they were Khazars and were converted to Judaism in the eighth century. Their form of Judaism differs from that of the 5,000,000 or more orthodox Russian Jews in rejecting the talmud and traditional theology altogether and confining itself strictly to the Mosaic revelation. It has been a favorite amusement with the Russians for generations to pretend the greatest admiration and affection for this obscure little tribe. Mme. Novikoff had her joke on the subject here in London when she gravely assured an interviewer some years ago that there never had been a law of any kind issued in Russia against the Jews. When this amazing assertion was questioned she coolly explained that she referred to the Karaim Jews, as in Russia they did not consider the disciples of the talmud were Jews at all. Inasmuch as the Karaites constitute only a two-thousandth part of the Jewish race—if, indeed, it be conceded that they belong to it at all—the insolence of the Russian attitude toward them is peculiarly exasperating to Hebrews in general and the spectacle of their being brought forward at Moscow as the sole representatives of Israel will smart and rankle just as the genial Slavonic character deires it should.—Saturday Review.

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