

Current Comment

Ross Winn

1902

Our heroic Teddy, the champion of the strenuous life (and by the way, that is the only sensible idea Teddy ever championed), having become weary of exterminating trusts with oratorical ambiguities, has been prowling around in the Mississippi brush, looking for “bar.” I expect Teddy is a pretty good sportsman, and no doubt in that character he’s a jolly good fellow: but as a statesman he isn’t exactly a glittering success. It is not his falt that he is president, anyway. He was elected by the pistol of Leon Czolgoscz, and if he isn’t retired by the people in 1904, they will miss an excellent opportunity to demonstrate their capacity for self-government. What I had in mind to say was, that Theodore Roosevelt is a better man than the president. At the head of his soldiers in Cuba, or facing the mountain lions of Colorado, he showed great physical courage. But as a politician he is a cowardly poltroon, a truckling time-server. He would no doubt stand his ground befor the charge of a Rocky Mountain grizzly, but at the first growl of a wild trust from the Wall street jungle, he turns tail and sprints for cover like a mule-eared rabbit. The possession of office is the ruination of man.

While President Roosevelt was down in the wilds of Mississippi, “lost to civilization,” or to the newspaper reporters, which amounts to the same thing, the grand old American republic wagged sarenely on, as tho presidents were an utter superfluity. Didn’t a thing hapen; and my friend, Col. Tom Sanders, the old Sage of Yubadam, writes me to find out why, if things come out so well in America for a whole week without the presence of our strenuous president at the national capital, can not the people save Teddyboy’s \$50,000 salary, and do without him all the time? They could, Tom—only they don’t know it, you know.

The American people were pained with exceedingly great pain on account of the attempted assassination of King Leopold, of Belgium, and wept so many tears of joy at his fortunate escape that it started a boom in red bandanas, and generated a late fall freshet on the Mississippi water system. In fact our mingled grief and halarity was so great that it was reported direct to the Belgian embassy at Washington by Secretary of State Hay. The amount of affectionate interest

we Americans take in his gay old royal nibs, as told by dear Mr. Hay, must have greatly astonished the Belgians. In fact most Americans who stop to think of it, will be astonished also.

The political Socialists, who are just simply going to “take the world by sections” with the ballot, lack only some 6,000,000 votes of sweeping to the goal, so far as the United States are concerned. If they continue to gain in the same ratio as in former elections, we will have Socialism sure some day. But you and I, my son, will have been safely planted a goodly number of decades before the happy event eventuates. We were born a little too previous, I fear.

Dean Swift, in his satirical romance, “Gulliver’s Travels,” tells of a philosopher who spent a lifetime trying to discover a process for extracting sunshine from cucumbers, his plan being to bottle up the manufactured sunshine for use in cloudy weather. Humanity, for several centuries has been engaged in the effort to extract social happiness and personal benefit from legislation and government; and it hasn’t succeeded and better than the fellow with his cucumber sunshine experiment. Possibly this was Swift’s intended application of his satire.

Anarchy has got to be stamped out. The “Honorable” J. H. Bromwell, of Ohio, distinctly so proclaims. Having profoundly astonished the Universe with this bit of information, the “Honorable” J. H. Bromwell proceeds to unburden his ponderous thought reservoir of the secret of how it is to be done. Congress is to do it, like little George Washington fixed the cherry tree—with its little legislative hatchet. He wants a law enacted making it a capital crime to advocate the abolition of government. You can see at once the brilliant originality of his plan. The “Honorable” J. H. Bromwell is a statesman of rare intellectual attainments, and the profoundness of his profundity in elucidating this illuminating solution of the long-sought “cure for Anarchy” entitles him to all the cakes, with the bakery thrown in. Let him go up to the head of the class.

A job-lot of intellectual pin-heads who unfortunately have access to type, and who occasionally illuminate the editorial and other columns of the political party Socialist organs, have asserted with unblushing impudence that the Anarchists were in the pay of the capitalists, for the express purpose of scuttling the Socialist movement—a movement that is directed chiefly towards retrogression and compromise. Those who asserted this were not mistaken. They simply lied. But now comes the Chicago American, which has been often “pointed to with pride” by Socialists as being Socialistically inclined, and asserts that the Socialists themselves are in the pay of the plutocrats to defeat the Democratic party. And forthwith a howl goes forth from Androscoggin to Yubadam, intoned by every Tray, Blanche and Sweetheart of the very same scribbling pack who tirelessly tongued the same falsehoods about the Anarchists. They don’t like to have their own slander puked into their faces from the fetid columns of this plutocratic daily, but it’s their own medicine, and they should swallow it without making wry faces.

The editor of the Way, a theological weekly published at Bowling Green, Ky., asserts that the Bible commands woman “to be silent in the church.” That editor either doesn’t understand the Bible, or he is unacquainted with woman. As he presumes the Bible to be a book of inspired wisdom, he should know that its divine author would never have ventured the paradoxical opposition of omnipotence to impossibility. Woman has yielded much to man—guidance, rulership, dictation, and the blessed ballot—but she has always insisted upon being heard. The first recorded words of human speech were uttered by the mother of mankind, when she remarked to Adam that the early apple crop had best be harvested before the fall. The church itself maintained for twelve centuries that there were no women in heaven, because it was said, in the eighth chapter of revelation: “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was SILENCE in heaven about the space of half an hour.” The learned theologians contended that heaven never would have had half an hour of silence, if women had been of its population. However, I believe that woman is to be commended for refusing to hold her tongue. She has been too much silent on the occasions when she should have spoken. But her inferior position is due somewhat to the efforts of masculine pumpkin-heads like this theological scissors-manipulator, who thinks in his simple, childish way that his sex has a monopoly of God-sent wisdom. I would add, let woman be heard—but it isn’t necessary. She will, anyway.

That tireless champion of economical government, Mr. Edwin C. Madden, who is also third assistant postmaster general, is after the poor journalistic fraternity again. This time he advises an amendment of the postal regulations whereby all periodicals not issued as frequently as once a week shall be excluded from the pound rate of one cent and be placed under a separate rate of four cents a pound. Mr. Madden is no doubt influenced by the best of motives, but his plan for reducing the postal deficit is objectionable for several reasons. Why a legitimate publication of the second class should be forced to pay four cents a pound postage simply because its period of issue is once a month, while the daily and weekly papers are given the once cent rate, is unexplainable. Such a discrimination is certainly unfair. If Friend Madden really thinks it necessary to raise the rate, let it be done without discrimination, and all criticism will be disarmed. Let us have a square deal, Mr. Madden.

My friend Abe Isaak, Jr., of Free Society, objects because I referred editorially to Kropotkin as prince. It is true that title was long ago discarded by the great Russian, but it is retained by the public, to whom he is best known as Prince Kropotkin. By conventional usage, Prince Kropotkin has become a name and not a title, just as we refer to a man as general or judge, who is neither, simply because he once occupied the position to which the title belonged. Conformance to conventional usage, so long as no ill is wrought, is scarcely to be objected to with any degree of seriousness.

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Retrieved on 9th May 2023 from en.wikisource.org
Originally appeared in *Winn's Firebrand*, Vol. I No. 4, December 1, 1902.

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