

THE THIEF—HIS GENESIS, EVOLUTION AND MISSION TO MANKIND.

(For the Review.)

By EDMUND CORKILL.*

The nativity of the Thief is enshrouded in mystery. One of the oldest records gives his birthplace as the Garden of Eden and the crime as the stealing of an apple. It is somewhat difficult to fix the actual and relative guilt in this quaint old story—the creator—a sophistical snake, a man and a woman—being mixed up in a case worthy of our modern law courts. The man (as usual) blamed it on the woman, and she laid it on the snake, but the man half apologized for peaching on his pal by insinuating that the blame ought to be placed higher up, for, said he, "The woman that *thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." Now, although this is probably an allegory, there is much that is intensely human in the various characters—the unselfish devotion of the woman—the cowardice of the man, and the cunning of the serpent, whose plausible insinuations and unscrupulous lying stamp him as the lawyer in the case—in fact, he was the original prototype of the average modern lawyer, as is shown in the fulfillment of the sentence passed upon him: viz., that he should from that time, crawl and eat dust for a living. Everybody knows that he can crawl and that he goes for the dust all the time. I am inclined to go farther back than 6,000 years for the origin of the Thief. Geology shows that long before the Eden of the Theologians, conditions prevailed that were highly favorable to the evolution of predatory tendencies. We, who are enjoying the conveniences of civilization, have to think hard before we can realize the risks and difficulties that our prehistoric ancestors had to encounter in their incessant struggle to obtain necessary food and shelter. Think of those primeval conditions—the wild, tangled growths on the uncultivated ground, the total lack of tools and other means of production—constant exposure to the ever-changing elements, and the fierce monsters that roamed the trackless forests in search of prey or lurked in the dark depths of the Jungle. Later on, the discovery of fire and iron was turned to account by the ingenuity that grew out of the bitter experience that nature used to drive those rude beings on towards higher and better things. But in their savage and semi-savage state is it to be wondered at that they should struggle with each other for food that might come their way? Men struggle now with each other for the food they need—despite the vastly increased facilities for its production—how much more probable is it that they should struggle with and even slay each other then? Doubtless, the Thief was born in just such circumstances, thrust into human society by the birth-pangs of poverty.

Whether the so-called "Criminal Class" originated in some such way or not, certain it is that the Thief has harassed the march of progress from the first record of his existence right up to the present, and during that long period

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has appeared in so many disguises that the limits of this paper make it impossible to do more than call attention to a few of the more conspicuous instances in his career.

Going back to the generation succeeding the Cave Dwellers, we see mankind growing in numbers and intelligence, their perceptions sharpened by experience and muscles hardened by exposure to the elements and by constant exercise in war and the obtaining of food. At this stage of the game, Clubs were trumps, the strongest man was the hero of the hour and the weaker man was his slave. This is the age in which Roosevelt ought to have been born, but as the Republican Party was not then on hand, that important event had to be postponed until the present, for which disarrangement all who enjoy the amazing spectacle of this modern Samson smashing all the Trusts (with a Jaw-bone only) ought to be truly thankful. The ancient hero was often but an idealized prototype of the later Thief, for he stole the liberties of his weaker fellows and planted the seed of that form of thievery that ultimately grew into a gigantic tree that produced Kings, Queens, Aristocrats, and politicians. It has taken the life blood of millions of human beings to furnish sap to keep that tree alive ever since.

With the growth of intelligence and skill came the desire to segregate into groups for mutual protection or predatory aggression, these groups doubtless merging into larger groups or tribes under the leadership of some one stronger, wiser or more crafty than the rest, and often it was the Thief who led. No wonder then, that such a leader, knowing that the free use of the soil was necessary to life and liberty, forcibly took possession of his neighbor's land and thus committed the crime of the ages—a crime that has been responsible for long centuries of injustice and suffering among the peoples of the earth.

It is interesting to note how the old admiration for brute force and the heroic, reasserted itself at a later period, making heroes of the Highwaymen and Banditti of Europe. We have not to look far for reasons for this sentiment. Some of those thieves had robbed the rich to give to the poor, and this appealed to the crude sympathies of the people, who indiscriminately accepted the charity as more than an offset to the dishonesty, this sentiment being strengthened by their admiration for the daring or cool gentlemanly style in which the robbers relieved the victim of his valuables. The achievements of Robin Hood, Dick Turpin, Jack Sheppard and other celebrated "Gentlemen of the Road" are familiar to all of us. As with the ancient heroes, the garment of romance that time has woven around their history hides the real character of these men—the hero became a God—in the "Penny Dreadful" and the old plays of the Jack Sheppard type we have the apotheosis of the Robber. The common people everywhere took an extraordinary interest in these criminals, and found much to admire in their farewell appearance on the scaffold, for at that period society knew of no better way of checking thievery than that advocated by certain politicians of our own time in dealing with the Indians, and acted on the theory that the only harmless robber is a dead one, so they undertook to *stamp out* the Thief—with what success we all know. By the by, if that policy were consistently carried out to-day we would need a vigorous application of Roosevelt's population remedy to save the country! The moral effect of the stamping out process is strikingly shown in the scenes attending the public executions of the popular criminals.

The graceful exit of the Scotch robber, McPherson, from this stage of existence is thus described in an old English ballad—"Sae rantingly, sae wantonly, sae dauntingly gaed he, He played a spring and danced it round, Beneath the gallows tree." The behavior of the crowd who came to see the show was quite in keeping with the spirit of the reckless victim, and the whole scene

would need the pencil of Hogarth to adequately describe its disgusting depravity.

Perhaps the most popular of old time thieves was Bold Robin Hood, who, with his merry men, clad in Lincoln green, roamed Sherwood Forest, the dread of the rich and the idol of the poor. The few virtues this thief possessed have brought him more praise since his death than they would have brought him while living, had he been an honest man. But we are glad to remember that he was kind to the poor, and respectful to women, which is more than can be said of the modern thieves, who rob the widows and orphans of their little all in the Savings Bank or the Insurance Company.

The tendency to a morbid, indiscriminate hero-worship among the masses was never more marked than in their treatment of the thieves of a still later period. As late as the beginning of the 18th century a learned French Abbé, living for some time in England, says that he continually met with Englishmen who were not less vain in boasting of the success of their Highwaymen than of the bravery of their troops. Tales of their address, their cunning, or their generosity were in the mouths of everybody, and a noted thief was a kind of hero in high repute. He adds that the mob in all countries, being easily moved, look in general with concern upon criminals going to the gallows; but an English mob looked upon such scenes with extraordinary interest; they delighted to see them go through their last trials with resolution, and applauded those who were insensible enough to die as they had lived. The Abbé, in one of his later letters, gives some particulars of the methods employed by the robbers of his time and a little earlier, that are especially interesting to us in our advanced social conditions. He says "It is usual in travelling to put ten or a dozen guineas in a separate pocket, as a tribute to the first that comes to demand them; the right of passport, which custom has established here in favor of the robbers, who are almost the only highway surveyors in England, has made this necessary, and accordingly the English call these fellows the Gentlemen of the Road, the government letting them exercise their jurisdiction upon travellers without giving them any great molestation." When I read this description I instantly seemed to recognize it and almost instinctively felt for the half sovereign that I slipped on a certain occasion into the insinuating hand of a gentle being—with deep, yearning eyes—and pockets, who took a great interest in my belongings and all he could get besides—that was in the year 1874, and the place was called Castle Garden. Dear me—how history does seem to repeat itself!

The Abbé continues—"About fifteen years ago, these robbers, *with the view of maintaining their rights*" (when I read this I thought of Harriman and the Railroads) "fixed up papers at the doors of rich people about London, expressly forbidding all persons of whatsoever quality or condition from going out of town without ten guineas and a watch about them on pain of death." It is interesting to compare this high-handed combination with the attitude of certain corporations who serve us in a similar capacity to-day.

For the sake of comparison and contrast with what will come later, it is worth while taking a few more notes of our light-fingered ancestors. Dick Turpin will always be remembered because of his wonderful ride to York. Some of his distant relatives vie with each other in wonderful rides to-day, not necessarily on a "Black Bess," but possibly on a "Red Devil," and the rides are much more dangerous to public safety than over Turpin's was. He seems to have been a compound of generosity and cruelty—at one time putting a woman on a fire to force her to disclose the hiding-place of her money, at another time generously returning part of the stolen cash to his needy victim, and there is little doubt that had he met some famishing creature he would not

have hesitated to satisfy hunger with anything that might be available—an order on a wood-yard or even a share in a public library.

Jack Sheppard was noted for his brutality and daring. He escaped from Newgate with the shackles on his limbs more than once and his adventures were immortalized by the pen of the poet—the brush of the painter and the genius of dramatist and actor. The clergy also made use of his career “to point a moral” as witness the following extract from a quaint sermon delivered in the streets of the City of London.

After showing how much more care men took of their bodies than their souls, the preacher illustrated his argument thus—“We have a remarkable instance of this in a notorious malefactor, well-known by the name of Jack Sheppard: What amazing difficulties has he overcome? What astonishing things has he performed! And all for the sake of a stinking, miserable carcass, hardly worth the hanging! How dexterously did he pick the chain of his padlock with a crooked nail! How manfully did he burst his fetters asunder—climb up the chimney, wrench out an iron bar—break his way through a stone wall, make the strong door of a dark entry fly before him, till he got upon the leads of the prison! Then, fixing a blanket to the wall with a spike, he stole out of the Chapel! How intrepidly did he descend to the top of the Turner’s house—how cautiously pass down the stair, and make his escape to the street door.” Here’s where the pathos comes in—“Oh, that ye were all like Jack Sheppard! Mistake me not my brethren, I don’t mean in a carnal, but in a spiritual sense, for I purpose to spiritualize these things. What a shame it would be if we should not think it worth while to take as much pains, and employ as many deep thoughts, to save our souls as he has done to preserve his body! Let me exhort ye then to open the locks of your hearts with the nail of repentance, burst asunder the fetters of your beloved lusts, mount the chimney of hope, take from thence the bar of good resolution, break through the stone wall of despair and all the strongholds in the dark entry of the valley of the shadow of death, raise yourselves to the leads of meditation, fix the blanket of faith with the spike of the Church; let yourself down to the Turner’s house of resignation and descend the stairs of humility—so shall ye come to the door of deliverance from the prison of iniquity and escape the clutches of that old executioner, the Devil.” Generally, great men have to die to be appreciated. It was so with Jack Sheppard. Although he had attracted considerable attention during his eventful life, it was after his death that he became really celebrated. His career was narrated in three volumes—his picture, by Cruikshank, became familiar from John O’Groats to Land’s End. He lived again upon the stage in the glamour of romantic chivalry and ennobled by virtues which he never possessed while living.

We cannot leave this part of our subject without a glance at the Italian Banditti. What would the popular stage and Penny Dreadful literature have done without the assistance of these spectacular rogues? A reckless, dare-devil crowd they were and so numerous that the French Duke of Guise raised an army of them to help him in his plot to seize the throne of Naples. Here is his own description of them. “They were three thousand five hundred men, of whom the oldest came short of five and forty years, and the youngest was above twenty. They were all tall and well made, with long black hair, for the most part curled, coats of black Spanish leather, with sleeves of velvet, or cloth of gold, cloth breeches with gold lace, most of them scarlet, girdles of velvet, laced with gold, with two pistols on each side, a cutlass hanging at a belt suitably trimmed, three fingers broad and two feet long, a hawking bag at their girdle and a powder flask hung about their neck with a great silk riband. Some of them carried firelocks and others blunderbusses. They all

had good shoes with silk stockings, and every one a cap of cloth of gold or cloth of silver; of different colors, on his head, which was very delightful to the eye."

The Duke spoke as he felt. All that glitter and show, the flashing gold and silver, mingled with the attractive colors and the fine muscular development of the men, and their well-known daring made the scene one of great interest to the adventurer who had bought their unscrupulous service. Such displays are always pleasing unless we catch a glimpse of the hideous spirits of rapine and murder which lurk in the background. Somehow we cannot think of such men following the ideal patriot Garibaldi, who fought for the liberty of others without reward. Yet these organized cut-throats received the applause of the unthinking masses as well as their wages, and the story book and the stage by picturesque exaggeration, idealized the rascals and enshrined them permanently in the popular memory.

In following the Thief through his devious course, we often find him assuming a lofty bearing, wearing a crown, or perhaps a cocked hat. In these pretentious characters he had seldom any trouble in fooling the people and perpetrating crimes that would have speedily closed his career had he been a less pretentious thief. As it was, the nature of his crime was covered up by ambiguous phraseology. Stealing from his own subjects was known as "Levying taxes." Robbing a weaker nation of its territory and killing a number of them in order to do that was described as "victory" and "conquest." Despite the boasted advance of what people have agreed to term civilization, many still applaud the military hero and are only too willing to help him steal territory and benevolently assimilate the occupants thereof and so "develop the resources of the country."

But we pass over the sanguinary phase of the Thief's career to notice a most ingenious disguise in which he has bamboozled the multitude in more modern times. In this he appears in the role of Captain, but not in the military sense. The title was given to him in a kind of poetic sense by the *Morning Blower* and *Evening Bluffer* whose yellow pages frequently glowed with fervid eulogiums upon the men who have—as this newspaper put it—reached the top of the ladder of success and thus shown the way to wealth and power. Young Americans were told that these men had reached the top by their own industry and that there was always room for industrious men and women right there. Between you and me, the Captain was too shrewd not to laugh in his sleeve at all this bluff, for he knew that if it had depended upon his own unassisted efforts he never would have got there. In the first place, he and his confederates fixed the ladder where the land was high and so had not so far to climb. Some applied a kind of sliding apparatus called a tariff to the ladder, which gave them quite a lift, while others went quite a distance up in balloons filled with dollar and other gas. Anyhow they got there just the same, while the poor devils who believed the Bluffer's bluff fought each other to get inside the fence round the foot of the ladder, where there was a big sign whereon the words—Private Property—were painted in big letters. I need not tell you how these Captains of industry obtained their fabulous wealth, nor how the laborer was robbed to help supply that wealth. But the monopolists are not all bad. Like their progenitor who paid his victim's way home, the Highwayman, they have earned a world-wide reputation for generosity by returning as much of the wealth as will enable the laborer to produce more wealth for them. Robin Hood, you remember, robbed the rich to give to the poor. His commercialized successors have dropped such invidious distinctions and afford the poor an opportunity to contribute to the wants of the rich. They are also delicately considerate of the spiritual necessities of the poor and generous in

their gifts of Sunday School addresses on the simple life and duty to our neighbor. During the great coal strike one of the principal Captains of industry, in a sudden burst of sympathetic generosity to everybody concerned, divulged the stupendous secret that ages ago, he and his partners had been chosen by the Almighty to take entire charge of the coal beds that he had prepared for the use of mankind in the land of Pennsylvania millions of years before these Captains of industry were born, and that they were to dispense it on such terms as might be agreeable to themselves. Of course, some irreverent persons scoffed at that revelation, and even went so far as to characterize it as a Baer-faced lie—But Mr. Baer and his partners are still weighing out coal to the poor at about 6.50 a ton. Some of the scoffers actually insinuated that these so-called Coal-Barons were confederates in the same old gang that had been stealing the land everywhere, and that at the very time of the strike, when the poor were freezing for want of coal, the Barons had 60,000 acres of coal lands lying idle in the state of Pennsylvania! The Captains of industry do not seem to give themselves any great concern about these insinuations. Corporations, Trusts and Mergers flourish on all hands, taking untold wealth out of the pockets of the people, and by controlling the necessaries of life, making it more and more difficult for the laborer to live. But the trouble does not stop here. The dishonesty, like a moral leprosy, has spread to the masses of the people; and this is only natural. On the principle that "Familiarity breeds contempt" the constant thieving by those in power, debauched the consciences of those who were robbed, so that, in time comparatively few regarded the robbery as serious crime, and grew, by habit, to accept it as the inevitable outgrowth of the ever-changing methods of the business world. So it was not at all surprising that many who became tolerant of those methods, gradually slid into the use of them when it was convenient and profitable to do so. Thus the avenues of trade—the stores—the marts of business everywhere, became so crowded with thieves that honest people never could be sure that they were getting what they paid for. If they asked for fresh eggs, they got them often fresh from cold storage. If they saw some fine apples in a newly opened barrel and bought a small measure of them, it was ten to one that on opening the bag at home, they would find a couple of the fine ones and the rest poor and small. If they complained to the grocer, he laid the blame on the farmer, who with true modern business instinct had shrewdly covered his barrel of ordinary fruit with a layer of splendid samples. So in order to make as large a profit as he could out of the whole barrel, the grocer carried the fraud one step farther, and so the demoralization spread until a thief stood behind almost every counter, assuring the buyer that the article sold was the best in the market, and so losing all sense of real comparative worth in the universal claim for the superlative. Thus the big thieves supplied the lesser thieves with an excuse for their dishonesty and the whole series of thefts were condoned by the plea of "Business" which, like Charity, covered a multitude of sins. But the buyer did not escape contagion. How often has the purchaser tempted the seller to sell his goods for less than they are worth? But you are all familiar with these every-day facts, so familiar that you would be surprised if you did not constantly meet with them. Is it then, too much to say that the general apathy towards this shockingly immoral state of the business world, is one of the saddest facts in our social life? We have become so accustomed to these conditions that the common adulteration of the food we eat, arouses but a few spasmodic protests, and nothing short of the disgusting details of the Chicago Stock Yards seems to be powerful enough to drive the people to take action against such evils. If you need additional proof of the extent to which dishonesty has spread in our own immediate neighborhood, you have but to stroll

through the newer residential sections of the Greater New York and inspect the kind of materials and workmanship of which the houses are composed. Every competent mechanic and disinterested critic will agree with me in the assertion that many of them; in fact, the majority of them, are a disgrace to our city. This is not always the fault of the builder. He builds the houses that sell. The boom in land and real estate in the suburbs of our large cities is largely responsible for these results for it gave the Thief just the opportunity he wanted and he has got in his fine work—with the aid of the Building Inspector—to an extent that only practical mechanics can fully appreciate.

My allusion to the Building Inspector naturally leads to the remark that the Thief is very much in evidence in the municipal affairs of the Greater New York. But we are hopeful that with the infusion of some Single Tax blood into that system, we may have in the near future a more healthful condition of things—and this will certainly be so—if the Single Tax officials don't catch the disease.

We have now seen more than enough to suggest the genesis of the Thief and something of this evolution in society. You can fill in, at your leisure much that I have been compelled to leave out, if you so desire.

To sum up briefly, as far as we have gone—we have seen that the Thief was cradled in poverty and reared in strife. In the primeval struggle for existence, the natural elements and his rugged environment were against him; yet, doubtless, the efforts provoked by those difficulties were in some measure conducive to the upward progress of the race. But still the struggle was very bitter, more bitter, probably, than we can conceive, and progress was very slow. Even after the development of natural opportunities and his own powers had made it easier for him to obtain the necessaries and some of the comforts of life, and thus lessened the provocation to take that which belonged to his fellows, some of his more avaricious and powerful neighbors arbitrarily deprived him of those beneficent and ennobling opportunities, thus driving him back to the predatory state. A very large number of people in all nations are still in that semi-barbarous condition and will remain at that stage of evolution, physical and moral, until they get back to the land that contains the natural complement of their necessities.

A word as to the various plans devised by legislators and others for the suppression of the Thief. A belief in the deterrent power of pain seems to have been universal. Confiscation of property, and degradation of various kinds have also been favorably regarded by the legal authorities. Men have racked their brains to invent methods of torturing the criminal, and the relics of those infernal devices are exhibited in our day as examples of barbaric cruelty, and thus affords us the opportunity of comparing them with our own police practice of the *third degree*, and the incarceration of men, women and children in cells beside which a pig-stye would be clean. To all who have given attention to these facts there is no question as to their influence upon the criminal who is so unfortunate as to get caught. The rich thief, by a judicious use of his means, has generally contrived to escape the more painful and degrading punishments to which his poorer brother has been subjected, for, among the crowd of lawyers who swarm around the Courts of Law, looking for prey, it is easy to find men ready to defend, and if possible to protect, a rich client, however vile and guilty they may know him to be. This is perfectly consistent with evolution, for the courts of law are but the natural outgrowth of the same conditions which gave birth to the criminal. The old saying—"Set a thief to catch a thief" seems to fit in right here, for the system of law as practiced to-day, is largely conducted on that plan. Many wise people are chary of going to law, or of employing a detective, for fear of falling out of the frying pan into the

fire. I may be wrong, but my experience and observation lead me to regard our legal institutions as part of the great political plan to enable a large number of parasites to live and enjoy themselves at the public expense, and further—I have no hesitation in saying that the courts, with their technicalities and quibbles and vexatious delays, so far from being aids to administration of Justice, are among the most effective hindrances to it, fostering and perpetuating the very evils they were ostensibly created to check.

I had prepared some interesting matter relating to the conduct of our prisons and the moral effect of the general system of treatment therein (which, with two notable exceptions, was far from favorable) but have been compelled, for want of space, to omit it. Our own Raymond St. Jail was included in these, but we have hope that under the enlightened management of our present Sheriff, we may have all the improvement that is possible under the circumstances. A noted man, a lawyer at that, now dead, once said—"Degradation has been thoroughly tried, with its maiming and brandings, and the result has been that those who inflicted the punishments became as degraded as their victims. Only a few years ago, there were more than two hundred offences in Great Britain punishable by death. The gallows tree bore fruit through all the year, and the hangman was the busiest official in the kingdom—but the criminals *increased*. "There is no reformation in degradation. To mutilate a criminal is to say to all the world that he is a criminal, and to render his reformation substantially impossible, whoever is degraded by society becomes its enemy. The seeds of malice are sown in his heart, and to the day of his death he will hate the hand that sowed the seeds." We will very briefly consider the mission of the Thief.

As every effect has its cause, to understand the pressing problems of the day we must trace them to their fundamental inception. All human beings are not born thieves, but all are born with the instinct of self-preservation—the love of life, and the desire for food. These instincts, with others, developed later, and quite as strong—at times stronger, have much to do, in conjunction with the peculiar environment and natural, possibly inherited tendencies of the human individual, with the formation of his character and the shaping of his destiny. The gardener knows how imperative it is that he should plant the seed in congenial soil and under conditions favorable to healthful development. At times dishonesty will spring up in the midst of plenty, but if you analyze the soil you will find ample reasons for the anomaly, and will still have to admit that crime finds congenial soil in the poverty and degradation of the slums, and in so far as these conditions spread into the social life of men and women, so far will they become criminal. Time was when there were no such conditions in our country as exist to-day. In that invaluable book "The Menace of Privilege" the case is thus clearly put—"Jefferson said that within the space of ten years he had not heard of a single highway robbery in any of the states, except in New York and Philadelphia immediately following the departure of the British army, some of the deserters from which infested those cities for a time. How odd this now sounds, when tramps are scattered all over our country, even through the newest of our States, and thieves infest our city, when every manner of crime known to poverty is to be met with in our legal procedure, and when special courts have been created for child-offenders."

Time forbids to quote further, but the reader's own experience and observations will complete the impressive picture. And so Evolution rolls on. Poverty and crime keeping pace with the monopoly of natural opportunities, and all this as the working out of natural law. Altho' the rude children of the prehistoric age were ignorant of such law, it was none the less operative on that account. What we have been accustomed to regard as violations of

the law of justice, were followed then, as now, by resentment, anger and hatred, which, as all wrongs do, bred misery or cruelty or death. The dim consciousness of the right of possession of what had been earned, prompted self-defence in case of attack. To be robbed of his food, his mate, his offspring or his property, awoke the spirit of revenge in the breast of the primitive man. The combining of a number of unscrupulous men for predatory purposes, drove the weaker ones together for mutual protection. In those wild awakenings of the aggressive and predatory tendencies we see the initial steps in the march of monopoly and oppression and the beginnings of the military power that has deluged the earth with blood. The Thief—be he pick-pocket, sneak thief or burglar, is but a cheap imitation of the Monopolist, Frenzied Financier, or Insurance Fraud—and these all have a message or mission to mankind. What is it? It is the demonstration of an eternal truth—a truth that men have found it hard to learn and still harder to reduce to practice—the truth that to be permanently prosperous and happy we must be *just* in all our relations with each other. The pitiable parasites that crawl upon the wealth producers, have by unconscious necessity been preaching this truth in object lessons more or less severe for centuries, and as they have grown bolder and more reckless, swept along by their own impetuous passions and lust of wealth and power, their warnings have been correspondingly portentous. Yet the money grubbers and the dull, toiling masses saw and heard not the signs of the coming storm. It was so in 1793. The same causes threatened the same results. The nobility lifted the finger of warning to the starving people, but for a long time, only a few took heed. The nobles held one-half of the soil of France and were exempt from military service and almost all taxation. The Church also paid no taxes and enjoyed an annual income from one-sixth of the whole land of 32,000,000 dollars. It required 250,000 officials to collect the taxes from the suffering masses. At last these warnings grew so loud that sleep was no longer possible and the giant awoke to the fact that he must fight or die.

It may not be probable that those terrible events should repeat themselves in these United States, but if it be still true that certain results follow adequate causes, our present social conditions seem to make such a repetition possible. Under the disguise of Benefactors, the predatory combinations of this age may be the unconscious prophets of approaching calamity, and the ignorance, stupidity and frivolity of the masses may not always keep them deaf to the solemn message. Why then, should we blame and abuse the Rockefellers, the Morgans, the Ryans, or the Carnegies. They are but the culmination of a long series of mistakes made by the people themselves. They have stumbled and spilled their milk—why should they cry? The child learns to walk by stumbling and bruising his limbs. The human race has been falling over all manner of obstacles through all the centuries they have walked the earth, and they did so because they were blinded by ignorance and superstition—often by the tears of suffering, yet, at times, the light of dawning truth shone through those tears and cast the rainbow of hope upon the hearts of the few honest and good men and women, who, as far as they could, labored to remove the stumbling blocks out of the path of human progress. It is written—whether myth or fact—matters not here, that when Jesus of Nazareth walked the earth, He gave sight to a man who was born blind by anointing his eyes with moistened clay from the ground on which he stood. So must the eyes of the morally blind to-day (many of whom have been *born* blind) be opened to the light of liberty by anointing with the truth concerning the land. It has been well said that no great monopoly can stand unless its feet are on the ground, so, if the people are to regain their lost natural opportunities they must remove the monopolies and get their own feet back upon the land. But to accomplish this, as we all well know, time and

patience and untiring effort on the part of those who see the truth clearly enough to make them work for its progress will be needed. Happy are the men and women who are conscious that they are keeping step in the great march of Evolution—that they are intergral parts of the Universe—that while they are brothers or sisters to the worm, they are also akin to the stars. Tho' the clouds be heavy and dark, here and there we see a rift through which the light of full liberty is breaking—and when the Monopolist, the Landlord—the Captain of industry and all the varied forms of Thievery shall have accomplished their educational mission, and mankind has learned the lessons and mystery of poverty and pain, they will be ready and able to rebuild the Democracy that once made this favored land the hope of the world.

In that blessed time, in spirit, I stand and take the hand of the Thief in mine and say—Good-bye, old friend, your day is over, you were always interesting, you had such a taking way with you, and now you are taking yourself away, I am sorry and yet glad—Farewell—and I see him fading—fading—until he is lost to sight in the advancing glory of the new day of Justice—*Love*—and unbroken *Peace*.

PROGRESS AND POLITICS.

(For the Review.)

By FRANK C. WELLS.

If the last quarter has been marked by no triumphs for enlightened democracy, in any quarter of the globe, it has by no means been wanting in interesting happenings. To begin at home, there seems a chance at last that New York City, may find out who it elected Mayor two years ago. The Legislature passed the recount bill that Governor Hughes indorsed, and unless fresh interference from the courts should prevent, the ballots will be recanvassed. Mr. Hearst as Mayor might, or might not "make good" but if he was elected democracy can "make good" only by seating him. The persistent fight against a recount waged by the *de facto* Mayor has been most discreditable to him. If the recount shall show that his opponent was elected Mr. McClellan will leave office a disgraced man. If it shall establish his own right to the place he will retain it a disgraced and an absurd one. In either case his career will be at an end. He himself signed his political death warrant when, receding from his first declaration that he would take no office that was not his by right, he threw every possible obstacle in the way of Mr. Hearst's efforts for a recanvass of the vote. In this stand Mr. McClellan has had the approval, open or thinly disguised, of the plutocratic press. Who can doubt the nature of the influence back of it?

This recount bill was perhaps the most noteworthy act of the State Legislature that after an abnormally long session dissolved in a wretched tangle over the reapportionment that the unconstitutional gerrymander of the preceding Legislature had made necessary. Not the least of the advantages of the proportional system of representation is that it would render nugatory the partisan redistricting by which in every state the dominant faction seeks always to intrench itself; but such really democratic solutions of political problems make no headway in New York State. They commend themselves as little to the Gradys, McCarrens and Olivers who disgrace the minority party by their leadership, as they do the Raineses and Wadsworths of the party in power.

The Governor succeeded in getting his public utilities bill made a law, and we shall see what of public benefit it will bring. The enormous powers it places