

Aristotle long ago made this wise observation: "Every form of government must be matched by a corresponding education; for it is only when the body of the people preserve those characteristics which originally determined their form of government that that form can maintain itself. For example, the persistence of democracy depends upon the persistence of the democratic spirit." Now, our government is, in theory and ideal, a democracy, and owes its origin to the democratic spirit. If it is to be maintained, the democratic spirit must be carefully cultivated, and this can be done only by education.

When we use the term "education," we are apt to think only of that instruction which is imparted in schools and colleges. But of the education which preserves a political or social spirit, only a very small portion is given or received in such institutions. The main part of it is, at the present day, derived from reading; and as the great body of our people read only the cheap current literature, that literature must be regarded as the chief agent in the preservation or destruction of the democratic spirit among us, and, hence, of our form of government. If the literature which the people habitually read be democratic and independent in tone, the spirit of democracy, and democracy itself, will be preserved; not otherwise. Now, the essential elements in the democratic spirit are a willingness to acknowledge and respect the dignity of humanity in every human being, an appreciation of all genuine worth, wheresoever and in whomsoever it may appear, and an abhorrence of all social distinctions and privileges conferred otherwise than by personal merit. The democratic spirit detests not only the man who exploits another for his own ends, and the man who pusillanimously allows himself to be so exploited, but also the man who arrogantly claims precedence of, or respect from, another on any ground but that of personal character, and the man who servilely admits such claim. If, then, the true democratic spirit is to be kept alive among our people, it must evidently be embodied in, and give tone to, that literature by which the mass of them are educated and by which their political and social leanings are determined.

Thousands of American young men, of fair education and excellent possibilities, captivated by the pictures of English aris-

tocratic life drawn in English novels, are learning to despise the simple, rational, useful life of the worthy American citizen, and to court consideration and vulgar popularity by adopting the habits, and leading the useless lives, of English lords. As is usual in such cases, the copy is a caricature of the original. The untitled American lord proves usually to be a vulgar creature, having to assert his self-conferred lordship by all that is most unattractive, most inhumane, and most un-American—and it is a good deal—in the English aristocrat. In England, aristocracy has no need to display or to obtrude itself; in America it can exist only by display and obtrusion. For this reason the American would-be nobleman must necessarily court attention and try to strike the vulgar imagination by the mere accidentals of aristocracy, such as any boorish Dives can command—houses, horses, turn-outs, yachts, opera boxes, and the like. And the vulgar are impressed by such things, bow down in servile reverence before them, and do their best to make a similar display.

If the effect of English popular literature upon the young men of America is injurious, rendering them unpatriotic and contemptible, its effect upon the young women is even more so. The extent of this injury it would be almost impossible to over-estimate. For many of them the novel-drawn pictures of English social life, wherein every one bows down to birth and title, and lords and high-born ladies are spoken of as if they were divinities whose recognition and favor were the chief prizes of life, are utterly demoralizing, inspiring them with an impatient contempt for the simplicity of American society, in which personal worth and charm can make them queens, and with a longing to enter, even as humble suppliants, the enchanted circle where birth and title rule, and where personal worth hides behind a mask. Women thus demoralized become utterly unfit to be American wives and mothers. Their chief effort is to shape their lives on the English model; if they are poor, toadying to the rich and would-be aristocratic; if they are rich, playing the arrogant English duchess to the best of their ability. Not a few of them even render themselves contemptible to men and gods, by toadying or buying (at what a price sometimes!) their way into English aristocratic circles, by shivering attendance for hours at royal

receptions, in order to do obeisance to what their country has nobly repudiated; or, worse than all, by buying husbands, renouncing their birthright of freedom and equality with the best, and sinking down into subjects, liable to be called on to act as "ladies in waiting," that is, as chambermaids. If all the sacrifices which degenerate American fathers and mothers have made to buy titled husbands for their daughters were recorded, they would form a revelation so ignominious that it would not be believed; and, after such a revelation, patriotic Americans would hardly dare to look foreigners in the face. But even without such a revelation the conduct of many of our countrywomen abroad, and especially in England, is enough to make every self-respecting American hide his head for shame.

These are but a very few of the sad results due to the dissemination of English popular literature, especially novels, among our people. It would be only too easy to add indefinitely to their number.

In order to rouse public indignation, we require a new race of literary critics, honest, fearless, independent, inspired with profound loyalty to American ideals, thoroughly acquainted with the literary needs of their country, and resolute in their purpose to discredit and put down all literature that threatens to corrupt the spirit of democracy and humanity. When these come to the front, publishers and authors will learn that they cannot be permitted to demoralize the American people with sub-humane, undemocratic, servile literature, whether of foreign or of native manufacture, and that our country imperiously demands a literature embodying its spirit and calculated to educate the whole body of the people up to its ideal. Then, and only then, shall we be truly patriotic at heart. Then, and only then, will the democratic spirit be fostered, and democracy be safe.

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FINANCIAL.

FREE SILVER COINAGE—WHY NOT?

THE government rightly assumes the function of coinage in order to give absolute assurance that each coin contains a certain quantity of gold measured by weight in grains, or a certain quantity of silver measured by weight in grains. A little alloy is added to harden the coin. If people who own silver bullion bring it to the mint and ask to have it coined into pieces of metal named "dollars," why should not the silver be coined into silver dollars? If other people bring gold bullion to the mint and wish to have it coined into dollars or multiples of dollars made of gold, why should the bullion not be coined into gold dollars? There is no reason why as many round pieces of silver called "dollars" should not be stamped by the government as any one wants; there is no reason why as many round pieces of gold called "dollars," or "eagles," or something else, should not be coined as any one wants.

The danger of free coinage is not in the free coinage itself. All that is needed to make free coinage safe, and to enable the mints of the government to supply all the dollars of either kind that any one is willing to buy with bullion, is a slight amendment in the act of legal tender.

The value of gold and of silver in the markets of the world is a matter that it is wholly without the power of the government to control or to regulate. The value of the silver in the silver dollar has ranged lately from seventy-six to eighty cents in gold. If the law enables any person who has made a bargain to pay dollars, to pay either in silver dollars or in gold dollars at his own choice, without giving the creditor the same choice, then any one can cheat the man whom he employs or the man to whom he owes money, by availing himself of a law under which any one to whom dollars are owed is forced to take silver dollars whether he wants them or not, or whether he has agreed to take them or not.

Amend this act so that it shall correspond to the laws and the customs relating to pounds-weight. Bargains are made every day to buy and sell so many pounds of cotton, wool, hides, and every other kind of useful goods, except gold and silver bullion. The law says that any man who sells a pound shall deliver a pound avoirdupois of seven thousand grains, unless he has agreed to sell gold or silver bullion. If the bargain relates to bullion, the seller can deliver troy pounds of fifty-seven hundred and sixty grains. But the law does not require the kind of pound to be named in every bargain and sale, either of goods or of

bullion. It is not necessary to name the kind of dollar in every bargain or sale. Amend the legal tender act so that any man who has promised to pay simple "dollars" for anything except gold or silver bullion, without any other word describing the kind, shall be under the obligation to pay dollars of gold; but also permit him to make his bargains for any kind of goods in silver dollars, provided he says or names silver; then the free coinage of either kind of dollars will be perfectly safe. All can then have all the dollars that they want, of either kind, that they can afford to pay for. Why not?

There is no international act of legal tender. If any one contracts to buy goods and to pay in pounds sterling in London, he must pay in gold or fail. There is not even any coin named "pound sterling." The coin which corresponds to the weight of gold designated "pound sterling" is called a sovereign; that is its lawful name. Conversely, any man who sells corn, or cotton, or wheat, or beef, on a contract to be paid in pounds sterling, can collect his debt in gold. No act of legal tender can deprive either the purchaser or the seller of his rights.

Gold is the standard of the world's commerce. We cannot cut ourselves away from it if we would, and we would not if we could, because it is the safest and surest standard that we can tie up to. The price of the entire crop of wheat and grain, and of everything else that our farmers produce in excess of our own wants, is fixed at the gold standard by what the surplus will sell for in the home market for export. That price of the surplus establishes the price of the whole crop; on matter what kind of money may be legal tender in the United States—whether it be silver dollars worth eighty cents, depreciated notes or what-not—what the farmer gets is, and always will be, just what his crop is worth in gold.

If the free coinage of silver dollars were authorized without a change in the act of legal tender, there is no class of men who would be so badly cheated, or, in the vernacular, "so badly sold," as the farmers who are said to want it. The farmers are beginning to find this out, and it will not be very long before those who advocate the free coinage of silver dollars without a change in the legal tender act, will find themselves so feeble, in number and in every other sense, that they will not count for much in either influence or votes.

This may not be the kind of free coinage that the owners of the silver mines want; it may not be the kind of free coinage that men want who desire to pay their debts at a discount. Is it not the only kind of free coinage and the only act of legal tender that any honest man can advocate or sustain?

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