

secret agreement was obtained under duress, and as it contradicts the Treaty of Portsmouth, signed by Russia and Japan, which pledges both nations not to place any obstacle in the way of measures for commercial development in Manchuria which apply equally to all nations, it cannot be regarded as binding.

So long as *The Outlook*, in common with others of its contemporaries, thought that this plan involved certain mutual obligations, not clearly defined, between the United States Government and other world powers, we doubted its expediency. For while we are not inclined to regard Washington's counsel against "entangling alliances" as though it were a Constitutional prohibition that cannot be disregarded in the changed circumstances of our time, neither are we inclined to discard it altogether. But, if we now correctly understand and have here correctly interpreted the plan, if it involves only a co-operation between the capitalists of various nations to enable China to build a much-needed railway to develop her undeveloped territory, and from our Government such protection to American capital involved as would be afforded to any American capital invested in Chinese territory, we can see no objection and much advantage. It would be of advantage to China commercially, both because it would develop a now undeveloped country, and because it would open a shorter route for her goods to Europe; politically and strategically, because it would give her a railway connection with Russia wholly in her own territory and under her own control. It would be of advantage to the United States commercially, both because it would give an opportunity to American capitalists for foreign investment at a time when the demand for American investment is lessening, and because it would open a great territory to American commerce on equal terms with other countries; politically, because it would constitute a new bond of friendship between the United States and China. By its terms it offers these advantages equally to the other Powers, including Russia and Japan. It would be of advantage to Russia in furnishing another railway to feed her Trans-Siberian Railway, and would be of disadvantage to Japan only in so

far as it deprived her of a railway monopoly which gives, or is supposed to give, her special advantages to which she is not entitled under that "open door" policy to which she has officially pledged herself.

We hope that we have here made it clear that Mr. Knox's policy is not a plan to promote the special interests of certain American financiers; it is a plan to give all countries equal commercial chances in China, and therefore to America an equal chance with other countries, and, what is even more important, to help China to develop her own resources and her own nationality.



THE CITY'S TOLL

Human history repeats itself, just because it is human. The old Greek tradition, which every one remembers, of the doomed youths and maidens who every year were chosen by lot from out the city of Athens to be sent as tribute to the Minotaur, who devoured them, is living history to-day. The modern city pays its toll—any city, every city, where conditions are wrong—and the toll is always in young and precious human lives.

Misgovernment is a word that at first suggests only abstract images of wrong. Streets that are not cleaned, money that is being wasted, fraudulent contracts, bosses enriched by municipal plunder—these are the things that the citizen thinks about when he thinks of a city ring. But the city's toll is never paid in these easy, impersonal ways. It is a toll, always in the end, of living bodies and living souls. A city misgoverned is a city where youths and maidens, men and women, must perish, year after year, in the maw of the monster. And the Minotaur, who asked for only fourteen lives yearly, was mercy itself compared with a modern city machine.

Politics cannot be set apart. Politics is the city itself, as the word "politics" proclaims in its etymology. Those who know the life of cities know how the politician controls every part. Misgovernment means typhoid in the tenements, the saloon dives preying on the poor, the protected criminal, the horror of the white slave. No man living in a misgoverned city need shudder at atrocities in Russia

or massacres in bloody Dahomey or cannibal rites in Africa or horrors along the Congo. Within the borders of his own community the agonies of death and worse than death are being inflicted on innocent bodies and souls. A city machine lives not by the comparatively praiseworthy atrocities of money misappropriation, waste, and graft. Not by such toll is the monster really fed. Tears of mothers, agony of fathers, hapless suffering of doomed victims, terrors and oppressions unmentionable, must glut its thirst. The kindest, the jolliest, the best-groomed, the most open-handed of ward politicians is only a mask upon the face of cruel death. The city pays in human lives for every alliance with vice, every saloon deal, every fraudulent inspection. Those rotten life-preservers on the General Slocum—how awful was the toll! Yet the sacrifice of those hundreds of innocent victims is more than exceeded every year and never realized, because it is done in the dark places of misgovernment and kept out of the sight of the people.

Not until every voter understands these things will misgovernment perish. But with each voter who learns to understand it good city government comes nearer. The city of the future is a city with no blood on its hands—a city paying no abhorrent toll to the insatiable powers of evil. As of old the Minotaur was slain, so here again will history be repeated and the living tribute cease to be paid into the hand of sin and death.



THOMAS PAINE

An admirer of Thomas Paine asks why so liberal a paper as *The Outlook* allows the centenary of the death of Thomas Paine to pass without comment. It might be sufficient to answer that *The Outlook* celebrates the anniversaries of the birth of great men, not the anniversaries of their death. That an admirer of Thomas Paine should wish to celebrate his death-day appears to us a curious anomaly.

But if the recent anniversary were that of Thomas Paine's birth, not his death, we should not commemorate it. For we do not share our correspondent's admiration for his honored hero. Thomas Paine was an able pamphleteer in an age when

pamphlets rendered the service attempted in our age by editorial and magazine writers. But we do not regard him as either politically or religiously a great leader. The "*Dictionary of National Biography*" correctly interprets at once the popularity of his writing at the time and its subsequent disappearance from the realm of influential literature: "He attributed to the power of his reasoning all that may more fitly be ascribed to the singular fitness of his formulæ to express the political passions of the time." Intellectually and religiously he was a child of the French Revolution, and, to quote again, "expresses with uncompromising sharpness the doctrine of political rights held by the French Revolutionists."

In his religious writing Thomas Paine was an iconoclast. He made no attempt to understand either the Bible or the reasons why it had for ages been regarded with veneration. When he wrote the First Part of "*The Age of Reason*" he rather ostentatiously stated that he possessed no Bible. There is nothing to indicate that he had ever even read one. All his knowledge of it, if it can be called knowledge, was derived at second hand. He supplied himself with a copy when he wrote the Second Part, not, however, to learn what it contained, but to attack it more effectively.

Many of Thomas Paine's criticisms on the literalism of interpretation current in his time are just, and some of his other criticisms concern certain fundamental tenets in the theology of that day. But it is quite evident that he was neither acquainted with the Bible nor endeavored to become acquainted with it. That the Ten Commandments form the oldest, simplest, and most comprehensive of all the world's moral codes; that the Hebrew Commonwealth was the first political organization to hedge about the powers of the king with constitutional restrictions; that it was the first to establish the three great departments of government—the legislative, judicial, and executive; that it was the first to create a popular legislative assembly, to prohibit a hereditary caste or class, to guard against land monopoly, and to make the priesthood dependent on the voluntary contributions of the people; that