

the year. We are told by the statisticians of the Department of Labor of the United States that, notwithstanding this stupendous aggregation, there are a million American citizens, able-bodied and willing to work, who tramp the streets of our cities and the country highways and byways, in search of labor with which to buy their daily bread, in vain.

Mr. President, is it any wonder that this condition of things can exist without exciting profound apprehension? I heard, or saw rather, for I did not hear it—I saw in the morning papers that, in his speech yesterday, the senator from Ohio [Mr. Sherman] devoted a considerable part of his remarks to the defense of millionaires; that he declared that they were the froth upon the beer of our political system.

[Mr. Sherman: I said speculators.]

Speculators. They are very nearly the same, for the millionaires of this country, Mr. President, are not the producers and the laborers. They are arrayed like Solomon in all his glory, but "they toil not, neither do they spin"—yes, they do spin. This class, Mr. President, I am glad to say, is not confined to this country alone. These gigantic accumulations have not been the result of industry and economy. There would be no protest against them if they were. There is an anecdote floating around the papers, speaking about beer, that some gentleman said to the keeper of a saloon that he would give him a recipe for selling more beer, and when he inquired what it was, he said, "Sell less froth." If the millionaires and speculators of this country are the froth upon the beer of our system, the time has come when we should sell more beer by selling less froth.

The people are beginning to inquire whether, under "a government of the people by the people for the people," under a system in which the bounty of nature is supplemented by

the labor of all, any citizen can show a moral, yes, or a legal, title to \$200,000,000. Some have the temerity to ask whether or not any man can show a clear title to \$100,000,000. There have been men rash enough to doubt whether, under a system so constituted and established, by speculation or otherwise, any citizen can show a fair title to \$10,000,000 when the distribution of wealth per capita would be less than \$1,000. If I were put upon my *voir dire* I should hesitate before admitting that, in the sense of giving just compensation and equivalent, any man in this country or any other country ever absolutely earned a million dollars. I do not believe he ever did.

What is the condition to-day, Mr. President, by the statistics? I said that at the beginning of this century there was a condition of practical social equality; wealth was uniformly diffused among the great mass of the people. I repeat that the people are not anarchists; they are not socialists; they are not communists; but they have suddenly waked to the conception of the fact that the bulk of the property of the country is passing into the hands of what the senator from Ohio, by a euphemism, calls the "speculators" of the world, not of America alone. They infest the financial and social system of every country upon the face of the earth. They are the men of no politics—neither Democrat nor Republican. They are the men of all nationalities and of no nationality; with no politics but plunder, and with no principle but the spoliation of the human race.

A table has been compiled for the purpose of showing how wealth in this country is distributed, and it is full of the most startling admonition. It has appeared in the magazines; it has been commented upon in this Chamber; it has been the theme of editorial discussion. It appears from this com-

pendium that there are in the United States two hundred persons who have an aggregate of more than \$20,000,000 each; and there has been one man—the Midas of the century—at whose touch everything seemed to turn to gold, who acquired within less than the lifetime of a single individual, out of the aggregate of the national wealth that was earned by the labor of all applied to the common bounty of nature, an aggregate that exceeded the assessed valuation of four of the smallest States in this Union.

[Mr. Hoar: And more than the whole country had when the constitution was formed.]

Yes, and, as the senator from Massachusetts well observes,—and I thank him for the suggestion,—much more, many times more than the entire wealth of the country when it was established and founded. Four hundred persons possess \$10,000,000 each, 1,000 persons \$5,000,000 each, 2,000 persons \$2,500,000 each, 6,000 persons \$1,000,000 each, and 15,000 persons \$500,000 each, making a total of 31,100 people who possess \$36,250,000,000.

Mr. President, it is the most appalling statement that ever fell upon moral ears. It is, so far as the results of democracy as a social and political experiment are concerned, the most terrible commentary that ever was recorded in the book of time; and Nero fiddles while Rome burns. It is thrown off with a laugh and a sneer as the “froth upon the beer” of our political and social system. As I said, the assessed valuation recorded in the great national ledger standing to our credit is about \$65,000,000,000.

Our population is 62,500,000, and by some means, some device, some machination, some incantation, honest or otherwise, some process that cannot be defined, less than a two-thousandth part of our population have obtained possession,

and have kept out of the penitentiary in spite of the means they have adopted to acquire it, of more than one half of the entire accumulated wealth of the country.

That is not the worst, Mr. President. It has been chiefly acquired by men who have contributed little to the material welfare of the country, and by processes that I do not care in appropriate terms to describe; by the wrecking of the fortunes of innocent men, women, and children; by jugglery, by book-keeping, by financiering, by what the senator from Ohio calls “speculation,”—and this process is going on with frightful and constantly accelerating rapidity.

The entire industry of this country is passing under the control of organized and confederated capital. More than fifty of the necessaries of life to-day, without which the cabin of the farmer and the miner cannot be lighted, or his children fed or clothed, have passed absolutely under the control of syndicates and trusts and corporations composed of speculators, and, by means of these combinations and confederations, competition is destroyed; small dealings are rendered impossible; competence can no longer be acquired, for it is superfluous and unnecessary to say that if, under a system where the accumulations distributed per capita would be less than a thousand dollars, 31,000 obtained possession of more than half of the accumulated wealth of the country, it is impossible that others should have a competence or an independence.

So it happens, Mr. President, that our society is becoming rapidly stratified—almost hopelessly stratified—into the condition of superfluously rich and helplessly poor. We are accustomed to speak of this as the land of the free and the home of the brave. It will soon be the home of the rich and the land of the slave.

We point to Great Britain and we denounce aristocracy and privileged and titled classes and landed estates. We thought, when we had abolished primogeniture and entail, that we had forever forbidden and prevented these enormous and dangerous accumulations; but, sir, we had forgotten that capital could combine; we were unaware of the yet undeveloped capacity of corporations; and so, as I say, it happens upon the threshold and in the vestibule of our second century, with all its magnificent record behind us, with this tremendous achievement in the way of wealth, population, invention, opportunity for happiness, we are in a condition compared with which the accumulated fortunes of Great Britain are puerile and insignificant.

It is no wonder, Mr. President, that the laboring, industrial, and agricultural classes, who have been made intelligent under the impulse of universal education, have at last awakened to this tremendous condition and are inquiring whether or not this experiment has been successful. And, sir, the speculators must beware. They have forgotten that the conditions, political and social, here are not a reproduction of the conditions under which these circumstances exist in other lands. Here is no dynasty; here is no privilege or caste or prerogative; here are no standing armies; here are no hereditary bondsmen, but every atom in our political system is quick, instinct, and endowed with life and power.

His ballot at the box is the equivalent of the ballot of the richest speculator. Thomas Jefferson, the great apostle of modern democracy, taught the lesson to his followers—and they have profited well by his instruction—that under a popular democratic representative government wealth, culture, intelligence were ultimately no match for numbers.

The numbers in this country, Mr. President, have learned at last the power of combination, and the speculators should not forget that, while the people of this country are generous and just, they are jealous also, and that, when discontent changes to resentment, and resentment passes into exasperation, one volume of a nation's history is closed and another will be opened.

The speculators, Mr. President! The cotton product of this country, I believe, is about 6,000,000 bales.

[Mr. Butler: Seven million bales.]

Seven million bales, I am told. The transactions of the New York Cotton Exchange are 40,000,000 bales, representing transactions speculative, profitable, remunerative, by which some of these great accumulations have been piled up, an inconceivable burden upon the energies and industries of the country.

The production of coal oil, I believe, in this country has averaged something like 20,000,000 barrels a year. The transactions of the New York Petroleum Exchange year by year average 2,000,000,000 barrels, fictitious, simulated, the instruments of the gambler and the speculator, by means of which, through an impost upon the toil and labor and industry of every laborer engaged in the production of petroleum, additional difficulties are imposed.

It is reported that the coal alone that is mined in Pennsylvania, indispensable to the comfort of millions of men, amounts in its annual product to about \$40,000,000 of which one third is profit over and above the cost of production and a fair return for the capital invested.

That is "speculation," Mr. President, and every dollar over and above the cost of production, with a fair return upon the capital invested, every dollar of that fifteen or six-

teen millions is filched, robbed, violently plundered out of the earnings of the laborers and operatives and farmers who are compelled to buy it; and yet it goes by the euphemistic name of "speculation," and is declared to be legitimate; it is eulogized and defended as one of those practices that is entitled to respect and approbation.

Nor is this all, Mr. President. The hostility between the employers and the employed in this country is becoming vindictive and permanently malevolent. Labor and capital are in two hostile camps to-day. Lockouts and strikes and labor difficulties have become practically the normal condition of our system, and it is estimated that during the year that has just closed, in consequence of these disorders, in consequence of this hostility and this warfare, the actual loss in labor, in wages, in the destruction of perishable commodities by the interruption of railway traffic, has not been less than \$300,000,000.

Mr. President, this is a serious problem. It may well engage the attention of the representatives of the States and of the American people. I have no sympathy with that school of political economists which teaches that there is an irreconcilable conflict between labor and capital, and which demands indiscriminate, hostile, and repressive legislation against men because they are rich, and corporations because they are strong. Labor and capital should not be antagonists, but allies rather. They should not be opponents and enemies, but colleagues and auxiliaries whose co-operating rivalry is essential to national prosperity. But I cannot forbear to affirm that a political system under which such despotic power can be wrested from the people and vested in a few is a democracy only in name.

A financial system under which more than half of the

enormous wealth of the country, derived from the bounty of nature and the labor of all, is owned by a little more than thirty thousand people, while one million American citizens able and willing to toil are homeless tramps, starving for bread, requires readjustment.

A social system which offers to tender, virtuous, and dependent women the alternative between prostitution and suicide as an escape from beggary is organized crime for which some day unrelenting justice will demand atonement and expiation.

Mr. President, the man who loves his country and the man who studies her history will search in vain for any natural cause for this appalling condition. The earth has not forgotten to yield her increase. There has been no general failure of harvests. We have had benignant skies and the early and the latter rain. Neither famine nor pestilence has decimated our population or wasted its energies. Immigration is flowing in from every land, and we are in the lusty prime of national youth and strength, with unexampled resources and every stimulus to their development; but, sir, the great body of the American people are engaged to-day in studying these problems that I have suggested in this morning hour. They are disheartened with misfortunes. They are weary with unrequited toil. They are tired of the exactions of the speculators. They desire peace and rest. They are turning their attention to the great industrial questions which underlie their material prosperity. They are indifferent to party. They care nothing for Republicanism nor for Democracy as such. They are ready to say, "A plague on both your houses," and they are ready also, Mr. President, to hail and to welcome any organization, any measure, any leader that promises them relief from the profitless strife of politi-

cians and this turbulent and distracting agitation which has already culminated in violence and may end in blood.

Such, sir, is the verdict which I read in the elections from which we have just emerged, a verdict that was unexpected by the leaders of both parties, and which surprised alike the victors and the vanquished. It was a spontaneous, unpremeditated protest of the people against existing conditions. It was a revolt of the national conscience against injustice, a movement that is full of pathos and also full of danger, because such movements sometimes make victims of those who are guiltless. It was not a Republican defeat. It was not a Democratic victory. It was a great upheaval and uprising, independent of and superior to both. It was a crisis that may become a catastrophe, filled with terrible admonition, but not without encouragement to those who understand and are ready to co-operate with it. It was a peaceful revolution, an attempt to resume rights that seemed to have been infringed.

It is many years, Mr. President, since I predicted this inevitable result. In a speech delivered in this Chamber on the 15th of February, 1878, from the seat that is now adorned by my honorable friend from Texas who sits before me [Mr. Reagan] I said:

“We can not disguise the truth that we are on the verge of an impending revolution. The old issues are dead. The people are arraying themselves upon one side or the other of a portentous contest. On one side is capital, formidably entrenched in privilege, arrogant from continued triumph, conservative, tenacious of old theories, demanding new concessions, enriched by domestic levy and foreign commerce, and struggling to adjust all values to its own standard. On the other is labor, asking for employment, striving to develop domestic industries, battling with the forces of nature, and subduing the wilderness; labor, starving and sullen in cities, resolutely determined to overthrow a system under which the

rich are growing richer and the poor are growing poorer; a system which gives to a Vanderbilt the possession of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice and condemns the poor to a poverty which has no refuge from starvation but the prison or the grave.

“Our demands for relief, for justice, have been met with indifference or disdain.

“The laborers of the country asking for employment are treated like impudent mendicants begging for bread.”

Mr. President, it may be cause, it may be coincidence, it may be effect, it may be *post hoc* or it may be *propter hoc*, but it is historically true that this great blight that has fallen upon our industries, this paralysis that has overtaken our financial system, coincided in point of time with the diminution of the circulating medium of the country. The public debt was declared to be payable in coin, and then the money power of silver was destroyed. The value of property diminished in proportion, wages fell, and the value of everything was depreciated except debts and gold. The mortgage, the bond, the coupon, and the tax have retained immortal youth and vigor. They have not depreciated. The debt remains, but the capacity to pay has been destroyed. The accumulation of years disappears under the hammer of the sheriff, and the debtor is homeless, while the creditor obtains the security for his debt for a fraction of what it was actually worth when the debt was contracted.

There is, Mr. President, a deep-seated conviction among the people, which I fully share, that the demonetization of silver in 1873 was one element of a great conspiracy to deliver the fiscal system of this country over to those by whom it has, in my opinion, finally been captured. I see no proof of the assertion that the Demonetization Act of 1873 was fraudulently or corruptly procured, but from the statements that have been made it is impossible to avoid the conviction that it