

The Messenger.

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AMERICA'S CHIEF PERIL.

"Are we a nation of gamblers?" This question was asked by a retired merchant of high character and sterling integrity. His companion, the head of a great banking house, sadly replied: "I fear I must answer yes." They were conversing about the fluctuations of Wall Street, and about the corners that had been manipulated so frequently of late years. "Oh," said the first speaker, "the papers talk about our danger in case of foreign war, because we have no naval defences, and of the ease with which the great ships of even some of the South American States could compel our seaport cities to pay tribute to them; but perilous as it is to remain in this defenceless condition, it does not trouble me half as much as it does to see the demoralization of the public mind brought about by the great gamblers of the country."

There are good reasons for such gloomy forebodings as these. Gambling of every degree and kind is an evil, if not a crime. Every State has laws more or less repressive that represent the enlightened public sense on this subject, but all these refer to petty things, while in Wall Street and all the other commercial centers the evil increases, and has reached a magnitude exceeding anything this country has heretofore known. Railroad co-operations, transportation and telegraph companies, and even the food of the people, are at the mercy of the men who play for stakes almost as great as the wealth of the country. The honest investor no longer dares to buy stocks and bonds to hold for legitimate income. It is impossible to foresee how long it will be before the soundest and most valuable properties will be wrecked, not by misfortune or by "visitation of God," but by the selfish operators with more millions than consciences, who care only for their own aggrandizement, and are utterly reckless of the sufferings of their victims.

It is bad enough that the small investments in stocks and bonds upon which the widow and the fatherless are dependant for support should be made worthless, as they have been time and again by the manipulators of Wall street, but it is far worse that it should be in the power of one man, or any combination of men, to force the prices of food and fuel to a point that carries suffering to the laboring millions of this country. These things have and will be done until the public conscience is aroused and State and national law-makers are compelled to make all such evil acts, and crimes punishable by law. It has been said that this is impossible, but that is a mistake. The same principle that underlies the laws against lotteries, policy shops, and gambling houses, applies with equal force to these weightier evils. When men conspire together to advance the price of wheat or pork, or of any other thing that enters into general consumption, by creating an artificial scarcity, they do an evil thing that is easily to be proven, and that ought to be punished.

Thus far the south has escaped to a great extent the gambling mania that prevails in the north and northwest. Her main cotton and produce exchanges have been notably conserva-

tive in their business ideas and methods. Her people, like those of other sections of the Union, have suffered somewhat from the gambling operations elsewhere, and as industrial development goes forward and wealth accumulates, they will feel it still more. The *Manufacturer's Record* calls upon its readers to consider this grave subject, and to use their influence to arouse a public opinion against it. If this evil continues to increase in the same ratio it has for the last decade, it will demoralize all legitimate business, retard the Southern progress, and work untold mischief in all parts of our land. It is the chief peril of the country. Let us all join hands to suppress it. — *Record*

BOYCOTT, CHILD-LIKE AND BLAND.

We believe in boycotting when boycotting is just. We delight in boycotting when its object has committed a crime against the rights of his fellow-man, such as denying fair pay, honest pay, for labor skillfully and faithfully performed. We would rather, we admit, that there were no boycotts, which means that we would prefer to live in a world of people with men so honest, with employers so fair, that there would be no just occasion to wield that terrible, deadly weapon known under the outlandish name of "boycott." But perhaps that day will only come when fashion plates will be no more, and assencion robes, cut biased, become the universal garb. And we propose to boycott in such a manner that all the Snells and all the Worthingtons and all the agents of misquoted and ill-construed law cannot hold criminal. We propose to stand by our friends, by those who through just dealing show good claim to our friendship. That is all there is in it. If we desire to purchase a suit of clothes, it will be bought from one who employs union tailors and who closes at 7 o'clock. There may be others in the same line who do not employ union tailors and who do not close at 7 o'clock, but with them we have nothing to do. This is a great American Republic, where the eagle screams, and the Goddess of Liberty has her sanctuary, and the merchant tailor who so elects can employ the pauper labor to his heart's content, and he may burn the midnight gas to the glory of mammon and the profit of the Washington Gaslight Company every day in the year save Sunday. That is his great privilege guaranteed by the Constitution of our forefathers, and assured to him by the Judge of our police court. But that does not carry with it the right to compel us to purchase there. Oh, no; we buy from our friend. It may be ever so wrong to "conspire" to the detriment of one who would grind the faces of the poor, but it is right and just and lawful to give our friends the benefit of our patronage. And that is the way we shall boycott. And lest anyone feel concerned as to how we may ascertain who is our friend and who is not, we assure them that the working-men of our town have excellent facilities for ascertaining that interesting fact. — *Washington, D. C., Craftsman.*

Rev. Sam Small says in giving in his political experience: "I was born a democrat, raised a democrat. I studied its principles thoroughly. I worked for it. I have spent money for it. I have drunk whiskey for it. I have lied for it. I have stolen ballots for it. I have stuffed boxes for it. I did all it told me, and it took me within half a mile of hell."

A big pecan crop in Texas this year. At Brownwood the merchants paid farmers \$1,200 in one day for pecans at 6 cents per pound, and \$1,000 on another day. The crop is a great help to the farmers in that drouth stricken country. — *Cleburne, Texas, Tribune.*

POST OFFICE BANKS.

We have before spoken of the system of post office banks, recommending their adoption in this country. The benefits derived therefrom by the poor wherever adopted, and especially in France are set forth in an article upon the Parisian working class in Paris, in the *Forum* of September.

The bulk of the working class live in the top stories of fine houses in spacious thoroughfares, where they exist under far better sanitary conditions than the poor mechanic in overgrown British metropolis, who dwell in close foul smelling slums and courts, amid noisome emanations of unflushed sewers and reeking cess-pools.

Tangible proofs of their well being is afforded by the deposits in the post office saving banks, which have increased steadily every year since that institution was established five years ago, and by the still more telling fact that the great emmission of the Paris loan in May last for 22,000,000 francs was covered twenty times over by the sums paid into the various banks and financial agencies of Paris.

The greater part was furnished by the working classes, for most of the depositors purchased shares of small amounts, varying from twenty to three hundred francs. They heard their economies chiefly for investments of this kind, which are guaranteed by the state. These people were not in such a thriving condition in the earlier days of the existing regime, for we are told of a well known thief who was practising his industry at a meeting of that party which was held in those days, having been warned by a police who was watching him replied with a shrug of his shoulders:

"Don't talk to me about your republicans! have searched the pockets of over a hundred of persons in that crowd and could not find a single sou."

Those pockets are now well filled. This result has been brought about by the system of post office saving banks, where a deposit of form five cents to five dollars can be daily made and the government becomes the banker. — *Journal of Labor.*

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