Ford Hall Forum Folks newsletter, vol. 1, no. 8, 02/16/1913

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STIRRING UP THE CHURCHES.

A professor in one of our theological seminaries says that, notwithstanding all the blessings which the Ford Hall meetings have brought to those who attend them and the indirect benefit to the community at large, he believes that perhaps their greatest service has been to the churches themselves. He notes a marked change in the attitude of the churches hereabouts, during the last five years, and attributes a great deal of it to the influence of the Ford Hall meetings. He thinks the churches are rapidly coming to a better understanding of their relation to the great social, economic and industrial movements of the day. There are certainly many facts ready to hand that bear out such a statement.

I could name a dozen churches in and around Boston that have come to see the advantage of holding a popular meeting for the free discussion of the great questions that are stirring the public mind today. Let me call particular attention to one of these gatherings most recently established. Six or seven of the Protestant churches of Newton proper, including the orthodox and liberal wings, have united in a popular monthly Sunday evening meeting. All these churches give up their own regular Sunday evening service (there are two that do not have any) on the Sunday that the popular meeting is held. This is very interesting and significant, but a great flood of light is thrown on the situation by this additional fact. These churches, so I am told, do not meet at their separate Sunday evening services, held each in its own place, an attendance exceeding three hundred altogether, whereas at the popular union meetings, held once a month, the attendance rises to seven hundred, and more than that number turned out last Sunday night when Professor Rauschenbusch spoke.

It is very difficult in a quiet, homogeneous, suburban residential district to get the people out to church Sunday evening. Few churches are able to solve that problem. But the popular forum idea seems to appeal in such a community not only to those who are in the habit of going to church, but also to a good many who ordinarily avoid church attendance.

It is exceedingly curious that the Ford Hall meetings, which were organized especially and exclusively for those who are more or less estranged from church, cathedral and synagogue, should all unwittingly point the way whereby the forces of organized religion may quicken the lagging interest of many of their adherents.

NEXT SUNDAY'S SPEAKER.

Dr. O. P. Gifford, the brilliant Brookline Baptist, speaking on "The Social Value of Free Speech," strikes us as a pretty strong attraction for the Fifth Anniversary program of the Ford Hall meetings. Mrs. Lionel Marks (Josephine Preston Peabody), reacting her poem, "The Singing Man," is a great card also, not to speak of Russell Kingman's string quartette and the anniversary letters which Mr. Coleman will read. Moreover, Brother Coleman will be bound to make a speech when we present him with that book. And he knows how to make speeches!
THE PRAYER.
(Preceding Mr. Filene's Address.)

We plead with Thee, O God, for our brothers who are pressed by the cares and beset by the temptations of business life. We acknowledge before Thee our common guilt for the hardness and deceitfulness of industry and trade which lead us all into temptation and cause even the righteous to slip and fall. As long as man is set against man in a struggle for wealth, help the man in business to make their contest as far as may be, a test of excellence, by which even the defeated may be spurred to better work. If any man is pitted against those who have forgotten fairness and honesty, help him to put his trust absolutely in the profitability of sincerity and uprightness, and, if need be, to accept loss rather than follow on crooked paths.

Establish in unshaken fidelity all who hold in trust the savings of others. Since the wealth and welfare of our nation are controlled by business men, cause them to realize that they serve not themselves alone, but hold high public functions and do Thou save them from betraying the interests of the many for their own enrichment, lest a new tyranny grow up in a land that is dedicated to freedom. Grant them foresight, patriotism to subordinate their profits to the public weal, and a steadfast determination to transform the disorder of the present into the nobler and freer harmony of the future. May Thy Spirit, O God, which is ceaselessly pleading with us, prevail at last to bring our business life under Christ's law of service, so that all who share in the processes of factory and trade may grow up into that high consciousness of a divine calling which blesses the world.

THE GROWING PAINS OF DEMOCRACY.
(Address of Edward A. Filene of Boston at the Ford Hall Meeting, February 9, 1913.)

I think that we shall agree, all of us, that we are face to face with most momentous political, industrial and social changes. I think we shall also agree that inasmuch as these changes predicate the need of greater justice, we should feel ourselves under obligation to see that they are brought about with fairness to all interests concerned and with due regard for the conservation of all in the present order that is worth conserving. I think we may also agree that the most immediate changes needed are those dealing with big business and those making for greater justice between employees and employers. I do not think that such just relations come about from the mere statement of abstract principles, but must come rather from the working out in our everyday life and in competitive business of these principles. If that is true and the great questions that underlie the coming changes are business questions, then we shall require the best leadership and the best business leadership that we can get. Now that seems to be a self-apparent truth, an axiom, and yet of all these mistakes that we people make, perhaps none is so constantly made as the mistake in choosing leadership. What may be the right leadership at the beginning of a great movement may, by its very virtue and strength, become bad leadership as the movement progresses. To bring out this point Mr. Filene quoted a conversation he had had, when in Japan, with Prince Ito, in which both of them agreed that great generals do not necessarily become great statesmen. I therefore thought of Grant and of Dewey, who would have been President if he had not stopped it himself. We did not stop Dewey. (Applause.) Therefore, we ought not to outlaw the great captains of industry unless we are sure that they cannot be used at this critical stage for the cause of the common good. My experience teaches me that they can be so used. As I study the situation, it seems to me that nine out of ten of the captains of industry who have failed, have failed as the result of the system and the environment and the pressure for which people, are as much res in they are. (Applause.) I must admit that if we grow only of our democracy last fifty years.

We need leadership from experience, and if that is needed now is the time that helps men settle the big business and of belief between the employer and employee, then that leadership and leadership and not preacher or the prophet. I am not making a plea. Life seems to me too short a period for it to work (applause) and allowances to allow me such feeling. But we in that because the demand is right, that therefore it is of itself. Now what I do not get good, right lead democracy needs leadership much as aristocracy—who pen will be a reaction that whole movement back permanently, because there is the world or in the heavy stop the onward progress (Applause) but will for many years. And human enough to want glimpse of the promised land—die. (Laughter and applause.) I am going to try and try this evening, some of the results that have led up the phrases of the presentments of our democracy great social and political today, trying to share with hope and faith in the future. Many men, seeing the past and political troubles, great, but I find myself grown more optimistic. This is forced to believe that the democratic institutions of but the scan rising from process, like the scan with the purifying of bronze at responsive. The hand a working toiler is not as pr of the non-working dude, regiment returning from covered and dust-covered covered. So democracy, and fighting out the great common justice and the co is not always pretty to too the people failed, have failed, it is a shame because through Ha dust a and its wounds, shines
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ment just at the point where it had accomplished its greatest good. It was inevitable that it should go beyond the point of the greatest good or the point of safety, even as the swiftly-moving train cannot be instantly stopped. And so the great movement for individual rights has produced over-individualized men, men who accomplished its greatest good. It was all enduring train cannot be instantly inevitable that it should go beyond the point of safety, even as the swiftly-point. of the greatest good or the for individual rights has produced lent just at the point where it had ac-

men of their freedom. (Applause.) But this type of man, inevitable as he is, is an impossible type because the greatest sum total of freedom for each man together with the greatest sum total of freedom for all men, are possible only as each man is limited in his individual freedom to an amount that will not interfere with or unduly deprive his fellow-men of their freedom. (Applause.)

During the last twenty-five years, especially, this great battle for individual rights has been accompanied by the greatest industrial development the world has ever seen. The forces of men have been doubled and quadrupled by great inventions and by great advancements of science. Capital and opportunities have been centralized and in part monopolized. Opportunities and centralization grew faster than men grew to take charge of them. The men at the head of these great undertakings could only keep their places by getting results, without much regard to the means employed, however good their intent. They were a good deal like the man in the midst of a herd of stampeding cattle. As long as he keeps his seat he is just as safe there as anywhere else. But let him try to drop off and immediately the herd will trample him out of existence. And if their larger vision kept them free from using bad means means that infringed upon the rights and liberty of their fellowmen, yet in most cases they had to depend upon subordinates from whom they had to insist on results; and these subordinates, in most cases with an even smaller vision of historic and of real values, and often with still greater pressure upon them proportionately for results, had often less opportunity or desire to study and select the means employed to get those results. The shortest and easiest methods, therefore, were too often used, even if they were unethical or unlawful. In most cases, I believe there was no direct bad intent. Speaker Cannon said the other day to a friend of mine, "Men are conditioned by their environment and their activities. I am what I am on that account, whether it be good or bad." I do not agree with Mr. Cannon that this is a proper excuse for unwise or bad action, but it is true that it does account for much bad action done without evil intent, and this lack of evil intent is one of the causes which makes me optimistic as to the future. Our undesirable citizens become undesirable, as a rule, not through wickedness but by being limited in their Individual free-

The great captains of industry during this great rush of commercial and industrial progress in the last twenty-five years were men so overburdened with work that their lives moved in very small circles. They worked and played and were almost always in the same kind of environment, the environment of their work and of their fellow captains. Almost surely such men are bound to make fundamental mistakes in working out their problems in a democracy. This is a type of man who will be less and less fit for the management of great businesses in the future. The great cry is not for opportunities and capital, which are not scarce in this country, but for men who know all kinds of societies and centralization grew faster than men grew to take charge of them. The men at the head of these great undertakings could only keep their places by getting results, without much regard to the means employed, however good their intent. They were a good deal like the man in the midst of a herd of stampeding cattle. As long as he keeps his seat he is just as safe there as anywhere else. But let him try to drop off and immediately the herd will trample him out of existence. And if their larger vision kept them free from using bad means means that infringed upon the rights and liberty of their fellowmen, yet in most cases they had to depend upon subordinates from whom they had to insist on results; and these subordinates, in most cases with an even smaller vision of historic and of real values, and often with still greater pressure upon them proportionately for results, had often less opportunity or desire to study and select the means employed to get those results. The shortest and easiest methods, therefore, were too often used, even if they were unethical or unlawful. In most cases, I believe there was no direct bad intent. Speaker Cannon said the other day to a friend of mine, "Men are conditioned by their environment and their activities. I am what I am on that account, whether it be good or bad." I do not agree with Mr. Cannon that this is a proper excuse for unwise or bad action, but it is true that it does account for much bad action done without evil intent, and this lack of evil intent is one of the causes which makes me optimistic as to the future. Our undesirable citizens become undesirable, as a rule, not through wickedness but by being limited in their Individual free-

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industry during commercial and the last twenty overloaded moves moved in y worked and always in the rent, the end, and of their surely such fundamental that their problem is a type and less fit the great cry in and capital, this country, all of the men, that do other men because of the men for re that the end some of the evil of society and com the at, it is said, business by to exact con interests by their proper way, big busi last and easiest cause of the men for re the end some of the evil of society and com the at, it is said, business by to exact con interests by their proper way, big busi last and easiest.

Our education had not prepared us directly for life. Until now our common schools have been developed in all kinds of subjects that all scholars were to go to college or to a university instead of on the basis of the fact that only a very small proportion go beyond the grammar school. It has even been denied that true culture can come from vocational education, a training for life work. Our educational institutions have been largely in the hands of an intellectual aristocracy (applause), which may be as dangerous to true democracy as an aristocracy based on inherited wealth. (Applause.) For that men who work and play with only one kind of men are unsafe as leaders in a democracy as is true of preachers and teachers as it is true of the business man. (Applause.) On the part of the teacher or the preacher such isolation results in a super-refinement which is infini
cal to true democracy. “Art for art’s sake,” as it is commonly interpreted, is treason to democracy. I am emphasizing these weaknesses only because they have and still have a very important bearing on education, which after all, is the fundamental remedy and comes nearer a panacea for our present evils than any other thing. I have spoken so far of two causes, over-individualization being the first and unsuitable education the second. The third is class distinction. As we grew richer we moved our families into a better locality where there was more superabundant air, more play grounds, more parks. We used the schools and clubs and churches of the new neighborhood into which we had not found our names. Then class religious and racial prejudices sprang up, to which the selfish politician seldom appeals in vain. We fought the troubles we had moved away from!

But Tammany staying. The Tam
many leader who moves away from life district loses his job. The Tam
many leader in the over-present friend. He knows the troubles of his neigh
bor. It is his business to help them in time of trouble and to take part
with them in their time of joy. In it any wonder that men so helped will give their votes to the men who helped them? Tammany and Tam
many men, whose life is in every city and not in New York alone, can never be beaten until we realize that we can never safely escape the troubles of the masses by moving away from them. (Applause.) Until we realize that the only way to beat Tam
many’s selfish friendliness is by un
selfish and ready to help us. We realize that in a democracy we are part of one another and must help each other, and that we cannot escape this even if we would.

Another means which might have helped to save us from errors was education through our public press. But here again the owners and publishers have failed to get the support that was necessary that they in turn might have strength sufficient to resist the great current of materialism and over
individualization which swept our country. The history of the evolution of our public press is that of a busi
ness proposition, and a private busi
ness proposition at that. Of course there are many papers whose owners and editors and publishers believe that they have no right to exist except as they serve the common good and who resist the pressure from special or financial interests or ad
vertisers. It is one of the great helpful signs of the time that, as a rule, such papers are among the most prosperous in the country. And this would naturally be because the value of the paper to its advertisers lies in the fact that the paper has the confidence of
FORD HALL FOLKS

The paper whose readers have learned to have confidence in its methods of handling the news, and in the disinterestedness of its editorial opinions, is by far a greater help to the advertisers than one which has the opposite reputation.

We must not forget, however, that the attempt to print truthfully all the news that is fit to print is a difficult one. The pressure to suppress news or to color it is endless and takes an endless number of forms. Sometimes it is that of a city trying to suppress news of a yellow fever or a typhoid fever outbreak or an earthquake or a strike. At other times it is that of a group of men trying to suppress news which they think will hurt their interests. We retailers are not the least of sinners in this. Almost all the papers in this and all cities suppress the news of accidents in our shops and stores and have been suppressing stories of arrests for shoplifting in our stores because they know we do not like it. (Applause.)

Now before attempting to point out the remedies for these wrong conditions I have been describing, I want to glance briefly at the attitude of different men to whom the proposed remedies must be traced.

First there are the prophets and preachers, men who think their main duty lies in emphasizing and preaching an abstract principle of right, however impossible it be of immediate adoption as a whole by the masses.

Then there are the conservative men who believe that there is no promised land, that the only roads which are safe are the old ones. Besides these there are the over-individualized men and the opportunists.

I said in the beginning of my talk that the more I understand the ills of our democracy, the more optimistic I become. The reason for this lies with the remedies which are simple and within the reach of all. It has been well said that the remedy for the evils of democracy must be traced.

In a democracy, we as individuals have no right to exist except as we serve the common good. A railroad has no right to exist except as it serves the common good. A newspaper has no right to exist except as it serves the common good. A business has no right to exist except as it serves the common good. (Applause.)

The best rule for business is the golden rule. Men who love their neighbors and therefore can handle and lead men, are the coming leaders of business. The only road to success and happiness for any of us is to conform to the great current of democracy of which we are a part, and to do with a will our share of work for the Common Good. (Prolonged applause.)

JUST A FEW OF THE QUESTIONS.

Q. Doesn't the socialistic press serve the common good?
A. I do not know—I do not read it.

Q. What is your opinion of a municipal newspaper?
A. It is one of the panaceas. I have no objection to seeing it tried, but what is more needed is that we, the public, should hold our newspapers accountable for presenting the news fairly and impartially and to recognize that there is nothing more sensitive to public opinion than the average commercial newspaper. (Applause.)

Q. Does the rum business serve the common good, and shall it go on serving it?
A. There is a difference of opinion about that. The last vote of this Commonwealth said that it did and that the people want it continued.

Q. Inasmuch as Commerce does not produce anything but exists for the sake of distribution, has it any right to exist? (Laughter and applause.)
A. I have said we have no right to exist except as we serve. If commerce serves it has a right to exist. If you can imagine production, without commerce to distribute it—if you can imagine one day of your life without the service of commerce then commerce has not any right to exist.

Q. What hope do you hold out of equal opportunity to the small employer compared with the large employer?
A. Very little. No business has a right to succeed except as it serves the common good. It is our duty to see that opportunities are kept open; under these, then, if the small business ought to survive, it will survive.
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survive, it will survive.

If it ought not to survive, big busi-
ness should do the work.
Q. What do you think of the single
tax?
A. I think well of it. I think it is
good, I do not believe in the final
radical program of it. But I think the
tax will come more and more on the
land and less on production.

USHERING AT FORD HALL.

You are familiar with the old query,
"Had you rather be on the outside
looking in, or on the inside looking
out?"—that's the choice a fellow
makes when he joins the Usurers'Corps at Ford Hall, for we really have
two corps—and neither is pro-
nounced "corps" either! Both are
much alive.

In the normal course of events the
event ushers who are now assisting in
lining up the early comers on the
sidewalks "two by two, the elephant
and the kangaroo," would never get
into Ford Hall—at least on the
more popular evenings—unless some
special provision were made for them,
and they welI deserve a reserved seat
after their hour's work in shooing
mavericks from the faithful flock. So
the ushers "on the inside" reserve a
sufficient number of seats for those
who, in the street, have borne the cold
winds and the icy eyes of the non-
elect. Few realize the service these
outside men render in thus warding
off potential dangers to women
and the infirm in the lines at our doors,
from such rushes and stampedes as
have disgraced many such a moment
in other less civilized folk!

On the inside the usher has other
problems—he must find every avail-
able seat, and try to have it occupied
democratically, "Ladies First, Please;"
he passes his programs; he reminds
the forlorn ladie that the law treats
all hats alike, whether worn by voters
or not; he acts as a buffer to the
junior from the assaults of the fresh-
air crank in the center and the gent
at the left, whose gilded dome feels a
draught; he reminds the thoughtless
that whispering during a musical num-
er annoys others and is a breach of
good manners,—and he is rewarded
for his service with so many covetous
stances at his selected seat near the
door that he had rather stand as a
doorkeeper in the house of the Lord
than sit in the presence of his friends.
Try standing at "Attention" your-
self for three hours and you will feel
entitled to a Carnegie presidential
pension! But the usher gladly does
all these things for the joy of know-
ing he is doing a very necessary and
valuable service for the fifteen hundred
persons who week after week, enjoy
the educational and inspirational
treats at Ford Hall.
It's a thousand times better these
days to be a volunteer at Ford Hall
than to own an office on State street!
J. P. ROBERTS.

HELP PASS THE "RED LIGHT"
INJUNCTION BILL.

By writing to your representative
at Washington those of you who be-
lieve in the work Clifford Roe is doing
can help pass the Iowa Red Light In-
junction law in Washington, D. C.
This law has worked with notable
success in several states besides Iowa,
and that it is greatly needed in Wash-
ington the following communication
ably shows:
"If adopted in the District of Co-
lumbia, the bill will be a precedent for
all states. Such legislation is needed
here to close scores of elegant, public
brothels, flaunting their shame in the
district of Columbia is governed: Con-
tinuous were about 20 more brothels
with music, dancing, singing, liquor-
selling and the painted women in the
doorways. The men and boys were
coming to or leaving this section at
the rate of about 20 per minute. This
protected iniquity exists in five or
more districts of the city, and borders
two sides of the capital grounds.
I sent to Commissioner Rudolph the
street numbers of 61 brothels within
three minutes' walk of his office build-
ing. He politely acknowledged my
communication, but did not question
its correctness. This "red light" in-
junction bill passed the Senate unani-
mously on Jan. 17 and now pressure
on the House is needed."

FORD HALL FOLKS
SUFFRAGE AND LABOR.

Not every suffragist can go and do picket duty with the girls and women who are out of work on principle these cold winter days, but everyone can read over again "The Working Girl's Prayer," which was offered three times a day by the girls strikers of Kalamazoo last year on a similar occasion. Because I believe this prayer is typical of the working girls of America and is true to their woman's spirit, I offer it here to indicate how close are the aspirations of the suffragists of the country to those of working women far and near:

The Working Girl's Prayer.

O God, our Father, you who are generous, who said, "Ask and ye shall receive," we, your children, humbly beseech you to grant that we may receive enough wages to clothe all and feed our bodies, and just a little leisure, O Lord, to give our souls a chance to grow.

Our employer, who has plenty, has denied our request. He has misled the law to help him crush us; but we appeal to you, our God and Father, and to your laws, which are stronger than the laws made by man.

O Christ, thou who waited through the long night in the Garden of Gethsemane for one of your followers who was to betray you, who in agony for us didst say to your disciples, "Will you not watch one hour with me?" give strength to those who are now on picket duty, not to feel too bitterly when those who promised to stand with us in our struggles betray us.

O God, we pray you to give to the fathers and mothers of our strikers a chance to bring up their helpless little ones.

You who let Lot and his family escape from the wicked city of Sodom, won't you please save the girls now on strike? Help us to get a living wage.

O Lord, who knowest the sparrow's fall, won't you help us to resist when the modern devil who has charge of our work takes advantage of our poverty to lead us astray? Sometimes, O Lord, it is hard. Hunger and cold are terrible things, and they make us weak. We want to do right. Help us to be strong.

O God, we have appealed to the ministers, we have appealed to the public; we have appealed to the press. But if all these fail us in our need we know that you will not fail us.

Grant that we may win this strike, and that the union may be strong, so that we may not need to cry so often, "Lord, deliver us from temptation!" We ask this, Lord, for the sake of the little children, helpless and suffering; for the girls who may some day be mothers of children, and for those girls who dislike sin, but are forced into it through poverty.

O Christ, who didst die on the cross, we will try to ask you to forgive those who would crush us, for perhaps they do not know what they do.

All this we ask in the name of the lowly Carpenter's Son. Amen.—Woman's Journal.

Ally yourself when young to some great but unpopular reform and grow up with it into influence and honor.—Whittier.

THE MACHINE.

Helen M. Boardman.

The Machine is kept in a little hut not far from the factory. Each morning it propels itself over to its proper place in the factory. It is a wonderful Machine but it is not worth much. There are so many such Machines in the world.

As the sun peeps over the horizon, the factory whistles blow and the Machine starts out. Other gray Machines are borne through the early light to the same place. They are used to make hats. What would the world do without hats? Indeed, hats must be made.

One day the scream of the whistle is heard before closing time. The great wheels stop for a moment as something silent and gray is carried out and taken away in a wagon. A Machine is broken. Never mind, there are other Machines to be had at the same price. Toot, whistles! Turn, wheels! What if a few Machines wear out? Hats must be made!—The Survey.