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EDITORIAL

WEALTH AND POVERTY.

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MR. Charles M. Harvey has a most optimistic picture entitled "Our Growth in Wealth: The Immense Expansion in the Value of The Country's Property in the Past Half Century", on exhibition in the current issue of *The World's Work*. Mr. Harvey, with a few strokes of the brush, depicts the growth of wealth in this country as proceeding with leaps and bounds, being only 7 billions, or a per capita of \$308, in 1850, and 110 billions, or a per capita of \$1,325, in 1905. In order to heighten this, the central idea of his pictorial composition, Mr. Harvey throws it into relief by "working in", as the artists say, the necessary effects, in the form of increased farm values, savings banks deposits, the number of millionaires, the alleged improvement in working class conditions, etc.; handling the whole with consummate artistic skill. The little effect "worked in" in regard to working class improvement is worth special mention. It is as follows:

"The American laborer's condition has advanced step by step with the country's growth in wealth. The ordinary wage-worker has better command of the world's products than kings had in Washington's time. His standard of living is constantly getting higher and higher. Though working fewer hours each day than he did in 1860, he gets more dollars for his work, and every dollar buys more commodities and services than it did then. He wears better clothing, lives in better quarters and has more leisure. In 1904 he spent twice as much for newspapers and twice as much for the education of his children as he did in 1880. He spent double as much for sugar in 1904 as he did in 1890."

Those conversant with art, will notice that Mr. Harvey plies his brush broadly, i.e., he lays on the colors in masses, in order to get the desired results. He is, technically speaking, an impressionist. F. Hopkinson Smith, the famous artist, lecturer, critic and author, once defined an impressionist as an artist on an express train, who seeing a clump of trees at close range paints them as hemlocks, only to

find that, when he gets off and goes back to look at them, they are a dirt bank. Mr. Harvey is painting dirt banks as hemlocks. His per capitas exist only as impressions on his artistic retina. Chas. H. Spahr has shown that in this country one per cent. of the families hold more wealth than the remaining 99 per cent. These families are composed of capitalists, who own the land and machinery and can, through them, exploit the non-capitalist classes. Mr. Spahr is not an impressionist. Nor is Mr. Robert Hunter. Both are painters who lean towards the realistic school, with its regard for details and actualities. We commend their methods to Mr. Harvey. Especially do we commend to him a study of Mr. Hunter's painting *Poverty*. There is a detail in this work that forms such a striking contrast to Mr. Harvey's depiction of the improvement in working class conditions, that we deem it advisable, for the sake of truth, to give it here, as follows (P. 337):

“There are probably in fairly prosperous years no less than 10,000,000 persons in poverty; that is to say, underfed, underclothed, and poorly housed. Of these about 4,000,000 persons are public paupers. Over 2,000,000 workingmen are unemployed from four to six months in the year. About 500,000 male immigrants arrive yearly and seek work in the very districts where unemployment is greatest. Nearly half of the families in the country are propertyless. Over 1,700,000 little children are forced to become wage-earners when they should still be in school. About 5,000,000 women find it necessary to work and about 2,000,000 are employed in factories, mills, etc. Probably no less than 1,000,000 workers are injured or killed each year while doing their work, and about 10,000,000 of the persons now living will, if the present ratio is kept up, die of the preventable disease, tuberculosis.”

Could any man have painted such a detail in the national picture of 1790 or 1860? Was the material for it at hand then? “The American laborer's condition” is far from advancing with “the country's growth in wealth”, as Mr. Harvey will learn when he drops his impressionistic methods and sees dirt banks where hemlocks are supposed to exist; and capitalist concentration and exploitation where he believes per capitas and wealth diffusion prevail.

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