

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER FACED BY A SOCIAL CRISIS

REV. WASHINGTON GLADDEN, D.D.
(Congregationalist), expressed himself as follows a little time ago:

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"It is idle, it is fatuous to hide from ourselves the fact that we are facing here in the United States of America a social crisis. The forces which are at work mean destruction.

"The swollen fortunes that many are gloating over are symptoms of disease. They are not the reward of social service, they are the fruit of plunder. We have made them possible only by permitting the gate of opportunity to be made narrower and the burden of toil more unrequiting for millions of people. They exist only by our acts. A society which tolerates such conditions cannot live.

"It is because we have begun to have some dim conception of this truth that we are moving now toward the correction by law of these great injustices. We must exterminate them; that is the fight in which there must be no faltering. If we would not be destroyed we must destroy the destroyer. This is the truth which our brave President, by word and deed, is always enforcing upon us, and he is entirely and everlastingly right about it.

"What has the Christian Church been doing while the powers of piracy and plunder have been gathering their forces and spreading their net and heaping up their spoils? Where was the Christian Church when the grafters were ravaging the cities, and the rebaters and the frenzied financiers and the insurance sharks

were getting in their work? For the most part she has been standing by and looking on, winking her eyes and twiddling her thumbs, and wondering whether she had any call to interfere. Indeed she has gathered into her communion many of the most conspicuous of the perpetrators of the injustices – they are nearly all church members – and has made herself a pensioner upon their bounty, and has been content with preaching to them the simple gospel that such men always love to hear.

"The fact is plainly apparent that the Church has lost its grip on the world, and she is not going to regain it until she finds out what is her real business in the world. Let her address herself to that with faith and courage and she will soon find her resources returning."

DEMONISM ATTRIBUTED TO SUPERSTITION

We must not blame intelligent people for considering witchcraft, spiritism, clairaudience and clairvoyance to be merely products of superstition and imagination. We, too, would have been so inclined but for the Word of God on the subject and various corroborating experiences. And herein lies a part of the danger. When the unbelieving are suddenly made aware that there is really an intelligent occult influence at work, they are amazed that *they* have been favored to have demonstrations of and to appreciate a *truth* of which so *few* know. They delve into its mysteries as they would not have done had they not previously considered it all a fake – especially if the proofs reach them along innocent, amusing or ludicrous lines. Note the testimony of our home city, which is doubtless paralleled in other cities. The extract is from *The Pittsburg Post*:

A WAVE OF SUPERSTITION

Superintendent Bell, of the Humane Society, made the startling statement that he is daily besieged with requests to arrest and punish supposed sorcerers who have cast "spells" about their victims and are driving them to the verge of lunacy.

It is to be expected that with such a great cosmopolitan population as Allegheny enjoys, superstitions transplanted from faraway lands would flourish among the foreign and negro elements. The negro and Latin races will probably always be inclined to superstition. Traces of the doctrines of the voodoos or witch-doctors of Africa, the legends and folklore of Europe and the fantastic superstitions of the Orient are to be found within the very shadows of our churches and in the midst of our civilization. Even educated Italians are to be found who believe profoundly in the influence of the "evil-eye," and almost every race has its pet superstition, but it is neither the negroes nor foreign classes who have alarmed the officials by appealing from the evils of superstition, as the many cases which have been brought to the attention of Superintendent Bell are almost without exception native-born white persons.

Mr. Bell said:

"It seems almost ridiculous to talk of persons being literally ruined by 'hoodoos' and evil 'spells' cast upon them by mysterious conjurers in these enlightened times, and if I had not the evidence of my own eyes I would doubt the truth of many of the cases which are to be found upon our records. Never before in my long experience in the Humane Society have I known evil superstition to be so prevalent and to have [R4159 : page 100] such alarming results. The epidemic is growing worse every day and it is time for some radical action to be taken.

"One of the first cases called to my attention seemed to me to be particularly distressing, as I had known the victim of the delusion before she came under the 'influence' of some alleged evil spirit. An attractive young woman and exceedingly capable stenographer who had been employed for years by a well-known alderman came to me and told me that she had been forced to give up her employment, as she could not work on account of a 'spell' having been cast upon her; she said that voices came to her while she was at work, calling upon her to 'come, come, come,' and whispering strange things in her ears, driving her to distraction.

"I laughed at the girl when she asked me to stop the people who were hounding her, but she came back again and again, and as she seemed to be a nervous and mental wreck from harping on the one subject and brooding over the ever-present spirit voices, I resolved to investigate the case and if possible arrest and make an example of the person who had so worked upon her mind as to wreck her life. She said that she had been to spiritualistic circles and a certain medium had cast the spell upon her. My investigation secured no evidence, as every person she mentioned professed entire ignorance of the matter.

PUZZLING CASES COME TO LIGHT

"The affair puzzled me, as I saw that the girl was really seriously affected by the delusions. She was unable to keep any position, not even where only the simplest housework was involved, and she is today sinking lower and lower in the social scale. Other cases which have been brought to my notice in great numbers during the past few months are just as puzzling. Although such investigations are really outside of my jurisdiction, I am willing to make every effort to have a test case of the prosecution of the persons responsible for this deplorable condition of affairs if I can secure the evidence. Positive proof must be secured, however, that some person is responsible for the

wrecking of a life in this manner. An attempt to try a case with little evidence would only result in failure, as such a case is sure to seem ridiculous to the skeptical. In no one of the many cases has such evidence been produced, but still the victims come with their complaints, and they are increasing in number every day.

"Not only women, but men come to me, and one and all complain of being mesmerized, hypnotized or enchanted in some manner by persons who wish to persecute them.

"Just last week a nice little woman and her husband came to me and asked that I stop the people who had cast a spell over them and were hounding them to death by sending spirits constantly about with them wherever they went. The man was a big, husky fellow, and I inquired particularly if he drank. I thought it might be some other kind of spirits which was annoying him, but they stuck to their story and seemed to believe firmly in the delusion.

"Persons of all walks of life are among the complainants, [R4160 : page 100] but the majority of them have been attending spiritualistic circles and associating with mediums before the 'voices' begin to bother them. One man who was a solicitor was forced to give up his work, as a 'voice' constantly whispered to him, and it apparently was not the 'still, small voice' of his conscience.

"Probably the saddest of these cases which I have had called to my attention was that of a young girl whom I had aided years ago when she came under my jurisdiction. She was a healthy, strong girl then, but when she came to my office the other day she was a physical wreck, nervous, shivering, with fear depicted in her every expression. I was told by the people whose home she was leaving that they did not care to have her there any longer, as she imagined that someone was talking to her all the time. In her tearful story she told me the 'voices' never leave her."

ARE NOT ANARCHISTS DEMENTED?

The most charitable view of the following news item from the public press is to suppose the writer and his friends demented. Of foreign birth, born under unfavorable conditions, their minds seem to be poisoned. And yet many Socialists feel aggrieved when we point out that the end of Socialism will be anarchy! Unsuccess, want and hopeless despair will eventually produce just such dementia in very many. The item reads:

Court action will probably follow the publication of a "call to arms" printed in *LaQuestion Sociale*, the leading organ of the anarchists in Paterson, N.J., and given wide circulation. The attention of Prosecutor Emly has been called to the article and he said today that he is looking up the law to see if legal steps can be taken against the editors because of the publication.

Among other things the article says:

"We invite everybody to get together and arm themselves. Seventy-five per cent. have only a knife in the house which will cut only onions. It will be a good thing for everybody to have a gun. When we are ready the first thing to do is to break into the armory and seize rifles and ammunition. The next thing is to get help of the police station and then the chief of police will ask for soldiers.

"Even at that the dynamite is easy to get. Twenty-five cents worth will blow a big iron door down. We don't want to forget that dynamite will help to win. Two or three of us can defy a regiment without war. We will start when no one is thinking anything about it. Then we can beat them man for man.

"At that time show no sympathy for soldiers. As soon as we get hold of the police-station it is our victory. The thing is to kill the entire force. If not, they will kill us."

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