

# The Bane of the South And Its Economic Causes

By A. TIERCE-BORS

Of late quite a number of articles and letters have appeared in the press concerning hook-worms and, like many of your readers, I was much interested in the article reproduced in your issue of Oct. 1st.

It is not my intention to detract from the importance of Dr. Stiles' discovery or investigations nor to in any way reflect upon his sincerity of purpose; my interest in the subject is chiefly an economic one, and it is on those grounds that I venture to criticize some of the statements and conclusions arrived at by Dr. Stiles.

For those who are afflicted with the hook-worm disease it is no doubt gratifying that a remedy has been discovered, but of what permanent benefit can the remedy be if the cause remains, and the supposedly cured patient is compelled to live in the environment which caused the disease?

We send convicts to sanitariums, criminals to penitentiaries, drunkards to inebriates' homes, and female prostitutes to reformatories.

When after a time they are seemingly either physically or morally patched up, with a flourish of trumpets for the success achieved, the unfortunate creature is sent back to the conditions which were the direct cause of their physical or moral breakdown.

Though beneficial to an extent, the remedy in question, like the above, is merely a so-called remedy for effects and not causes.

In this article we are informed that congress was appealed to; it is evident the promoters of that bill had never read the lines of the English poet, which say:

Some sell their soul for gold,  
Some sell their life for bread,  
Some seek the poor house mould,  
Some seek the river bed.  
Such is great England's (America's) way.

Where wealth may work its will,  
White flesh is cheap today  
White souls are cheaper still.

Whoever heard of a legislative assembly having time to consider, much less pass, bills for the saving of human lives unless absolutely compelled by pressure from without?

The idea is absurd; is it not of greater importance to save hogs and cattle which, being private property, represent so many dollars, than to appropriate public funds to save the lives of humans who cost nothing?

This, to say nothing of the fact that these self-same humans are taxed, robbed and exploited to contribute their share to the public funds.

That the bill in question would solve the labor problem is a fallacy. The low wages paid, the stupendous and no less shameful extent of child labor, and the number of people unemployed in the South are in themselves sufficient to disprove the statement. Then again, "that there will be no further need of child labor in the factories when the efficiency of the grown-ups is increased, now will the need of them be lessened, and the need of them for farm work?" Such a statement is not only fallacious, but perfectly absurd.

According to this it would seem that the children were more physically fit and efficient than the parents; this is a denial of the laws of hereditary tendencies (which, incidentally, are invoked later) and secondly is contradicted by the doctor's own figures which show that the disease is more prevalent in boys and girls of 15 years and under.

To those who are not blinded by class prejudice or vested interests, it is an irrefutable fact that children work in factories not because the grown-ups are inefficient, but the children of the South, like those of other states and of England, France, Germany and other countries go into these soul-destroying monsters of civilization because economic developments compel them to do so, and because their labor power is a cheaper commodity than that of their parents. It is through the same causes that Italian and Greek workers are brought here.

That the economic importance of uncleanliness cannot be realized by those who have not seen a district where the people are infected, I readily believe to be the case with many; the same is equally true about tuberculosis and, even though the connection between uncleanliness and tuberculosis and orthodox sophistry, it is gratifying to see the question raised on to the economic plane.

The economic basis of our social structure is the one and only starting point for any earnest investigation concerning the causes of our many social diseases, the latter being in their turn a manifestation of the effects of the economic conditions resulting from our present social organization.

It is obvious that in order that the hook-worm, like the bacteria or microbe of any other disease, may propagate certain conditions are necessary; in this case it is pollution of the soil, and general insanitary conditions. Give such conditions it is also necessary for the worm or bacteria to spread its disease, that the physical condition of the individual be such as to favor contagion or continuation. And, at this juncture, I will assert that poverty is the factor which makes not only uncleanliness, but tuberculosis, the physical, moral and intellectual deterioration of the masses of such economic importance.

It is because of a monument of ignorance. It is because of their poverty that these people and the masses have not the means to educate, feed, house and clothe themselves and families in such manner as to enable them to live human lives. It is because of their poverty that whole families have to herd in one room. It is because of their poverty that the masses are compelled to eat poor and inadequate food which lowers their vitality, makes their breeding grounds for all kinds of diseases, and consequently a menace to society at large.

It is quite true to say that it is far more important that these people should have good blood than book learning. Yet it is equally important for them to have both. Poor blood means a starved brain, and to cram book learning into a starved brain is casting pearls before the swine. But, before we can expect a generation with that good blood necessary to resist disease, these "poor whites," "sand-hillers" and "crackers," or workers generally must be placed in a position to afford a more hygienic and substantial diet than they are able to today in this great age of civilization, Christianity, shoddy and adulteration.

One noticeable feature of all such reports is the attempt to throw the responsibility upon the individual, and I consider it quite irrelevant to the subject to introduce early and consanguinous marriages as having any bearing on the case. Modern scientific investigations in the fields of pathology and anthropology go to show that, given proper conditions, these have not, as now and still is claimed by some, the deteriorating effects attributed to them.

With regard to the southern farmer, it seems to me from what I have read and seen, that not only may he become but actually is as good a farmer as his brother of the North. Their bonds are identical in character and effects, the one is at the mercy of manipulators or trusts of sugar, cotton and tobacco; the other is under the domination of elevator and packing house kings whilst both are in the grips of a relentless railroad monopoly.

Whilst we should by no manner of means neglect to do all that lies in our power to alleviate human suffering, even with makeshift remedies, we should, if we honestly desire to find a permanent cure, remove the cause. But in order to do this a complete transformation of the present social system is necessary and, not only is it necessary but it is inevitable. That such is the case is evidenced by the only too obvious facts that the conditions which brought about the fall of Greece and Rome are to be seen on every hand. On the one side of the social scale we find an unprecedented concentration of wealth, wanton luxury, extravagance and incontinence, on the other, poverty, misery and human degradation.

There is, however, no cause for despair and, though the present system within itself carries the seeds of its own destruction, its downfall will usher in a new era.

As mankind in the process of evolution has risen from savagery to barbarism, from barbarism to chattel slavery, from chattel slavery to feudalism, and from feudalism to capitalism, so it is now painfully and slowly, yet surely, rising to a higher plane. The day is near where poverty, ignorance and superstition will be a thing of the past; children will be at play and at school, instead of having their souls ground out in factories; women will cease to be playthings or beasts of burden; motherhood will be enshrined and men will cease to be the mere slaves they are today.

Men and women will sit as equals at the bounteous table of Nature, reaping the full reward of their services to society and, with an equal opportunity for every individual to attain the highest form of moral, physical and intellectual development, will vanish not only the bane of the South, but the bane of the world.

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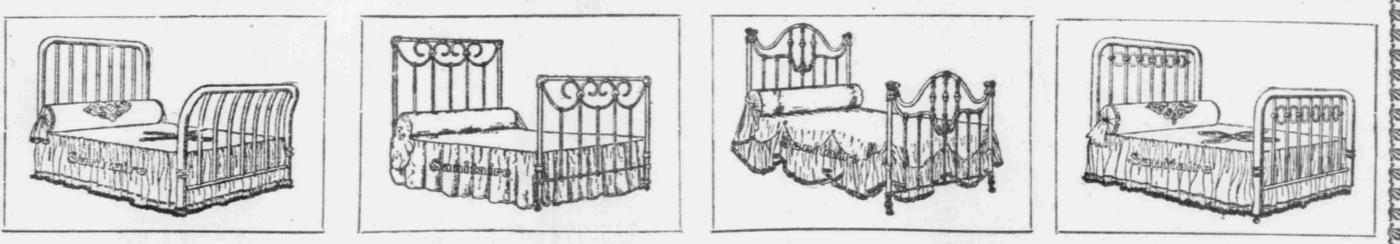
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## Hon. William Bailey Lamar Pleased With President's Speech

Following from the New York American of recent date will be read with interest by the many friends of the late William Bailey Lamar:

Perhaps there was no one in the United States more pleased over the railroad regulation speech in which President Taft made in Iowa than Ex-Congressman William Bailey Lamar, of Florida, who is at the Waldorf-Astoria with Mrs. Lamar for a visit of some weeks.

Mr. Lamar was a member of the house of representatives for six years, and during that time a member of the committee on interstate and foreign commerce. He was a central figure, along with Representative D. W. Shackelford, of Missouri, in the railroad bill fight in that committee.

In addition to reporting the Democratic caucus bill, a nondescript, whitewashing bit of prospective regulation, this militant pair insisted on reporting from their committee the railroad regulation bill introduced by William Randolph Hearst.

This report, a minority one, was made in December, 1904. At the next session, in December, 1906, John Sharp Williams, the minority leader, removed both Lamar and Shackelford from their important committee. This precipitated an angry debate on the floor of the house between Lamar and Shackelford and Minority Leader Williams.

Through both their speeches ran the thinly veiled accusation that the Democratic minority leader had removed them at the behest of the railroad interest. Mr. Williams said he removed the two men because they were not in harmony with the Democratic majority on their committee.

Mr. Lamar was for fourteen years attorney general of Florida prior to entering into his congressional life, and during that period conducted many strenuous fights against southern railroads.

It is this record, both in his home state and at the national capitol, that gives particular point to an interview which he gave an American reporter recently in his apartment at the Waldorf-Astoria. Mr. Lamar said:

"It was a notable speech that President Taft made in Iowa yesterday. His suggestions are far in advance of the Hepburn railroad rate bill passed by congress in 1906. The president's speech was not too advanced, nor was it radical, in the sense that railway men use that term."

"The general government has entered upon the much needed policy of regulation of interstate railroads. That regulation must be thorough and efficient, or it will be simply impotent and ridiculous. The latter result would begin a great national movement for government ownership of interstate railroads."

railroads. The essential features were as follows:

- 1. Power to find a given rate unreasonable or unjust and to prescribe a reasonable or just rate to be substituted.
- 2. Power to prescribe a joint rate.
- 3. Power to eliminate unjust discrimination.
- 4. Power to stop rebates and secret cut rates.
- 5. Power to regulate private cars and private car lines.
- 6. Power to regulate terminals and terminal facilities.
- 7. Power to regulate classification.
- 8. Power to compel the furnishing of equal facilities to all.
- 9. For facilitating a speedy conclusion of proceedings in courts and limiting litigation as far as the same may be done.

Some of these features of the Hearst bill were put into the Hepburn bill of 1906. But other valuable features were omitted. Among these were:

- 1. Power (on the part of the interstate commerce commission) to institute a complaint against a railroad for any abuse on its part without waiting for a complaint of a shipper.
- 2. The power (on the part of the interstate commerce commission) to control the unfair raising of rates by railroads, through the power over the classification of freight.
- 3. The railroad can now simply put an article in a different class that bears a higher rate, and thus raise the rate itself.

"A third vital power of the Hearst bill 1904-1905, yet to be enacted into law, is that no railroad shall charge a higher rate than the rate in present proposed increase has been first determined by the interstate commerce commission. This is the very citadel of railroad power at the present time."

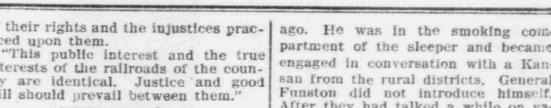
"President Taft assails the very inner fortress of railway abuses when he urges that the above power be made into law. All praise to President Taft, armed with the power and prestige of his great office, for taking up this great reform in railway regulation."

"But several of the very powers that the president now recommends were in the Hearst bill of 1904-1905. And the public should give Mr. Hearst his due credit of praise for introducing this legislation into congress years ago, and through his great papers educating the public into a knowledge

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of their rights and the injustices practiced upon them.

"This public interest and the true interests of the railroads of the country are identical. Justice and good will should prevail between them."

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**Funston is No Beauty.**  
Gen. Fred Funston, United States army, dropped into town for a few hours yesterday and went up to call on his old friend, Paul Gaylord, says the Denver Post.

The general told a laughable experience he had on a train a few days ago. He was in the smoking compartment of the sleeper and became engaged in conversation with a Kansan from the rural districts. General Funston did not introduce himself. After they had talked a while on various subjects the Kansan said:

"Say, you look a good deal like Fred Funston. He's a general in the army now."

"Do you know Funston?" asked the general.

"I should say I do. He's from our state."

"I've seen General Funston," said the army man seriously. "I'm a little better looking than he is, I'm inclined to believe."

"Oh, Funston won't ever take no prizes at any beauty show," said the Kansan, "but, just between you and me, mister, you won't neither."

The general changed the subject.  
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