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The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth, so that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship. The conditions of human life have not only been changed, but revolutionized, within the past few hundred years. In former days there was little difference between the dwelling, dress, food and environment of the chief and those of his retainers. The Indians are today where civilized man then was. When visiting the Sioux, I was led to the wigwam of the chief. It was just like the others in external appearance, and even within the difference was trifling between it and those of the poorest of his braves. The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us today measures the change which has come with civilization.

This change, however, is not to be deplored, but welcomed as highly beneficial. It is well, nay, essential for the progress of the race, that the houses of some should be homes for all that is highest and best in literature and the arts, and for all the refinements of civilization, rather than that none should be so. Much better this great irregularity than universal squalor. Without wealth there can be no Maecenas. The « good old times » were not good old times. Neither master nor servant was as well situated then as today. A relapse to old conditions would be disastrous to both—not the least so to him who serves—and would sweep away civilization with it. But whether the change be for the good or ill, it is upon us, beyond our power to alter, and therefore to be accepted and made the best of. It is a waste of time to criticize the inevitable.

It is easy to see how the change has come. One illustration will serve for almost every phase of the cause. In the manufacture of products we have the whole story. It applies to all combinations of human industry, as stimulated and enlarged by the inventions of this scientific age. Formerly articles were manufactured at the domestic hearth or in small shops which formed part of the household. The master and his apprentices worked side by side, the latter living with the master, and therefore subject to the same conditions. When these apprentices rose to be masters, there was little or no change in their mode of life, and they, in turn, educated in the same routine succeeding apprentices. There was, substantially, social equality, and even political equality, for those engaged in industrial pursuits had then little or no political voice in the State.

But the inevitable result of such a mode of manufacture was crude articles at high prices. Today the world obtains commodities of excellent quality at prices which even the generations preceding this would have deemed incredible. In the commercial world similar causes have produced similar results, and the race is benefited thereby. The poor enjoy what the rich could not before afford. What were the luxuries have become the necessities of life. The laborer has now more comforts than the farmer had a few generations ago. The farmer has more luxuries than the landlord had, and is more richly clad and better housed. The landlord has books and pictures rarer, and appointments more artistic, than the King could then obtain.

The price we pay for this salutary change is, no doubt, great. We assemble thousands of operatives in the factory, in the mine, and in the counting-house, of whom the employer can know little or nothing, and to whom the employer is little better than a myth. All intercourse between them is at an end. Rigid Castes are formed, and, as usual, mutual ignorance breeds mutual distrust. Each Caste is without sympathy for the other, and ready to credit anything disparaging in regard to it. Under the law of competition, the employer of thousands is forced into the strictest economies, among which the rates paid to labor figure prominently, and often there is friction between the employer and the employed, between capital and labor, between rich and poor. Human society loses homogeneity.

The price which society pays for the law of competition, like the price it pays for cheap comforts and luxuries, is also great ; but the advantages of this law are also greater still, for it is to this law that we owe our wonderful material development, which brings improved conditions in its train. But, whether the law be benign or not, we must say of it, as we say of the change in the conditions of men to which we have referred : It is here ; we cannot evade it ; no substitutes for it have been found ; and while the law may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department. We accept and welcome, therefore, as conditions to which we must accommodate ourselves, great inequality of environment, the concentration of business, industrial and commercial, in the hands of a few, and the law of competition between these, as being not only beneficial, but essential for the future progress of the race . . .

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1937. Flood victims from Kentucky queuing for Red Cross relief. (Credit: Peter Newark's American Pictures).

In Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *The Settling of North America, The Atlas of the Great Migrations into North America from the Ice Age to the Present* (McMillan, 1995) p. 150.

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He looked as if he were going to break down, but the next moment he had himself in control.

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"Besides, this food," he went on. "It is a sad case. It is terrible. She is an old woman. I must take it to her at once. She is suffering from want of it. I must go at once. You understand. Then I will return. I promise you."

"Let me go with you," I volunteered. "Is it far?" He sighed again, and surrendered.

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"Only two blocks," he said. "Let us hasten."

Under the Bishop's guidance I learned something of my own neighbourhood. I had not dreamed such wretchedness and misery existed in it. Of course, this was because I did not concern myself with charity. I had become convinced that Ernest was right when he sneered at charity as a poulticing of an ulcer. Remove the ulcer, was his remedy; give to the worker his product; pension as soldiers those who grow honourably old in their toil, and there will be no need for charity. Convinced of this, I toiled with him at the revolution, and did not exhaust my energy in alleviating the social ills that continuously arose from the injustice of the system.

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I followed the Bishop into a small room, ten by twelve, in a rear tenement. And there we found a little old German woman—sixty-four years old, the Bishop said. She was surprised at seeing me, but she nodded a pleasant greeting and went on sewing on the pair of man's trousers in her lap. Beside her, on the floor, was a pile of trousers. The Bishop discovered there was neither coal nor kindling, and went out to buy some.

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I took up a pair of trousers and examined her work.

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"Six cents, lady," she said, nodding her head gently while she went on stitching. She stitched slowly, but never did she cease from stitching. She seemed mastered by the verb "to stitch."

II

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"For all that work?" I asked. "Is that what they pay? How long does it take you?"

"Yes," she answered, "that is what they pay. Six cents for finishing. Two hours' sewing on each pair."

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"But the boss doesn't know that," she added quickly, betraying a fear of getting him into trouble. "I'm slow. I've got the rheumatism in my hands. Girls work much faster. They finish in half that time. The boss is kind. He lets me take the work home, now that I am old and the noise of the machine bothers my head. If it wasn't for his kindness, I'd starve."

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"Yes, those who work in the shop get eight cents. But what can you do? There is not enough work for the young. The old have no chance. Often one pair is all I can get. Sometimes, like to-day, I am given eight pair to finish before night."

I asked her the hours she worked, and she said it depended on the season.

"In the summer, when there is a rush order, I work from five in the morning to nine at night. But in the winter it is too cold. The hands do not early get over the stiffness. Then you must work later—till after midnight sometimes."

"Yes, it has been a bad summer. The hard times. God must be angry. This is the first work the boss has given me in a week. It is true one cannot eat much when there is no work. I am used to it. I have sewed all my life, in the old country and here in San Francisco—thirty-three years."

"If you are sure of the rent, it is all right. The houseman is very kind, but he must have his rent. It is fair. He only charges three dollars for this room. That is cheap. But it is not easy for you to find all of three dollars every month."

She ceased talking, and, nodding her head, went on stitching.

"You have to be very careful as to how you spend your earnings," I suggested.

She nodded emphatically.

"After the rent it's not so bad. Of course you can't buy meat. And there is no milk for the coffee. But always there is one meal a day, and often two."

She said this last proudly. There was a smack of success in her words. But as she stitched on in silence, I noticed the sadness in her pleasant eyes and the droop of her mouth. The look in her eyes became far away. She rubbed the dimness hastily out of them; it interfered with her stitching.

"No, it is not the hunger that makes the heart ache," she explained. "You get used to being hungry. It is for my child that I cry. It was the machine that killed her. It is true she worked hard, but I cannot understand. She was strong. And she was young—only forty; and she worked only thirty years. She began young, it is true; but my man died. The boiler exploded down at the works. And what were we to do? She was ten, but she was very strong. But the machine killed her. Yes, it did. It killed her, and she was the fastest worker in the shop. I have thought about it often, and I know. That is why I cannot work in the shop. The machine bothers my head. Always I hear it saying, 'I did it, I did it.' And it says that all day long. And then I think of my daughter, and I cannot work."

The moistness was in her old eyes again, and she had to wipe it away before she could go on stitching.

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"I am not impeaching anybody, but I do want to talk straight. I am the representative of an Irish stock; I am the representative equally with any other member of the same stock of people who have suffered through the terror in the past. Our grandfathers have suffered from war, and our fathers or some of our ancestors have died of famine. I don't want a lecture from anybody as to what my principles are to be now. I am just a representative of plain Irish stock whose principles have been burned into them, and we don't want any assurance to the people of this country that we are going to betray them. We are one of themselves. I can state for you a principle which everybody will understand, the principle of "government by the consent of the governed." These words have been used by nearly every Deputy at some time or another.

II

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Are the Deputies going to be afraid of these words now, supposing the formula happens to go against them? I have heard Deputies remark that their constituents are in favour of this Treaty. The Deputies have got their powers from their constituents and they are responsible to their constituents. I have stated the principle which is the only firm principle in the whole thing. (...) Now, summing up—and nobody can say that I haven't talked plainly—I say that this Treaty gives us, not recognition of the Irish Republic, but it gives us more recognition on the part of Great Britain and the associated States than we have got from any other nation.

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Again I want to speak plainly. America did not recognise the Irish Republic. As things in London were coming to a close I received cablegrams from America. I understand that my name is pretty well known in America, and what I am going to say now will make me unpopular there for the rest of my life, but I am not going to say anything or hide anything for the sake of American popularity. I received a cablegram from San Francisco, saying, "Stand fast, we will send you a million dollars a month." Well, my reply to that is, "Send us half-a-million and send us a thousand men fully equipped." I received another cablegram from a

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branch of the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic and they said to me, "Don't weaken now, stand with de Valera." Well, let that branch come over and stand with us both (applause). The question before me was were we going to go on with this fight, without referring it to the Irish people, for the sake of propaganda in America? I was not going to take that responsibility. And as this may be the last opportunity I shall ever have of speaking publicly to the Dáil, I want to say that there was never an Irishman placed in such a position as I was by reason of these negotiations. I had got a certain name, whether I deserved it or not. (Voices: "You did, well"), and I knew when I was going over there that I was being placed in a position that I could not reconcile, and that I could not in the public mind be reconciled with what they thought I stood for, no matter what we brought back,—and

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if we brought back the recognition of the Republic—but I knew that the English would make a greater effort if I were there than they would if I were not there, and I didn't care if my popularity was sacrificed or not. I should have been unfair to my own country if I did not go there. (...) Deputies have spoken about whether dead men would approve of it, and they have spoken of whether children yet unborn will approve of it, but few of them have spoken as to whether the living approve of it. In my own small way I tried to have before my mind what the whole lot of them would think of it. And the proper way for us to look at it is in that way.

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There is no man here who has more regard for the dead men than I have (hear, hear). I don't think it is fair to be quoting them against us. I think the decision ought to be a clear decision on the documents as they are before us —on the Treaty as it is before us. On that we shall be judged, as to whether we have done the right thing in our own conscience or not. Don't let us put the responsibility, the individual responsibility, upon anybody else. Let us take that responsibility ourselves and let us in God's name abide by the decision (applause)."

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III

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1. *pleb.* This Caesar was a tyrant.  
 3 *pleb.* Nay, that's certain.  
 We are blest that Rome is rid of him.
2. *pleb.* Peace, let us hear what Antony can say.  
 5 *Ant.* You gentle Romans,—  
*All.* Peace, ho ! let us hear him.  
*Ant.* Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears ;  
 I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.  
 The evil that men do lives after them,  
 10 The good is oft interred with their bones ;  
 So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus  
 Hath told you that Caesar was ambitious.  
 If it were so, it was a grievous fault,  
 And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.  
 15 Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,  
 (For Brutus is an honourable man,  
 so are they all, all honourable men)  
 come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.  
 He was my friend, faithful and just to me;  
 20 But Brutus says he was ambitious,  
 And Brutus is an honourable man.  
 He hath brought many captives home to Rome,  
 Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:  
 Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?  
 25 When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;  
 Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:  
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,  
 And Brutus is an honourable man.  
 You all did see that on the Lupercal  
 30 I thrice presented him a kingly crown,  
 Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?  
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,  
 And sure he is an honourable man.  
 I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,  
 35 But here I am to speak what I do know.  
 You all did love him once, not without cause;  
 What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?  
 O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
 And men have lost their reason. Bear with me.  
 40 My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,  
 And I must pause till it come back to me.
1. *pleb.* Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.  
 2. *pleb.* If thou consider rightly of the matter,  
 Caesar has had great wrong.  
 45 3. *pleb.* Has he, masters?  
 I fear there will a worse come in his place.  
 4. *pleb.* Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown;
- Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.  
 1. *pleb.* If it be found so, some will dear abide it.  
 50 2. *pleb.* Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping.  
 3. *pleb.* There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.  
 4. *pleb.* Now mark him; he begins again to speak.  
*Ant.* But yesterday the word of Caesar might  
 Have stood against the world; now lies he there,  
 55 And none so poor to do him reverence.  
 O masters! If I were dispos'd to stir  
 Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,  
 I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,  
 Who, you all know, are honourable men.  
 60 I will not do them wrong; I rather choose  
 To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,  
 Than I will wrong such honourable men.  
 But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar;  
 I found it in his closet; 'tis his will.  
 65 Let the common hear this testament,  
 Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read,  
 And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's  
 wounds,  
 And dip their napkins in their sacred blood,  
 70 Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,  
 And, dying, mention it within their wills,  
 Bequeathing it as a rich legacy  
 Unto their issue.
4. *pleb.* We'll hear the will. Read it, Mark Antony.  
 75 *All.* The will, the will! We will hear Caesar's will!  
*Ant.* Have patience, gentle friends; I must not read it.  
 It is not meet you know how Caesar lov'd you.  
 You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;  
 And being men, hearing the will of Caesar,  
 80 It will inflame you, it will make you mad.  
 'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;  
 for if you should, O, what would come of it?
4. *pleb.* Read the will! We'll hear it, Antony!  
 You shall read us the will, Caesar's will!  
 85 *Ant.* Will you be patient? Will you stay awhile?  
 I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it.  
 I fear I wrong the honourable men  
 Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar; I do fear it.
4. *pleb.* They were traitors. Honourable men!  
 90 *All.* The will!— The testament!  
 2. *pleb.* They were villains, murderers! The will! Read  
 the will!  
*Ant.* You will compel me then to read the will?

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, January 25, 1961.



*» Just five days after taking office, the President holds his first news conference, televised live from the State Department auditorium. His easy going style and quick wit instantly endear him to many reporters and to the American people watching at home. »*