

The Outlook

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An Open Letter from Lyman Abbott to the Doubtful Voter

YOU have not yet decided how to vote on November 5.

You believe, heartily believe, that the popular discontent is not without some justification. You recognize the existence of serious social injustice, and you are as earnestly desirous as any of your neighbors to see that social injustice righted. You do not believe that little children should be robbed of their childhood, and taken from the school and the playground and put into the mine and the factory. You do not believe that mothers should be compelled to leave their children and their homes to eke out the insufficient wages of their husbands. You know that the Supreme Court of the United States has decided, conservative as it is, that the long hours of labor in store and factory, to which young girls have been called by labor conditions, have unfitted them for the high offices of wife and mother, and you believe in protecting them from those too onerous conditions. You are not satisfied to see the Nation grow rich while tens of thousands of its willing workers grow poorer. The mob violence at Lawrence, Massachusetts, has not blinded your eyes to the conditions which excited that mob. You may not have personally suffered any very serious inconvenience from the high prices of living, but you know that some of your fellow-men are less fortunate than yourself, and you would gladly join in any rational movement which promised them relief. You do not believe in monopoly, whether in oil, or coal, or transportation, or land, or anything else. You are alarmed at the growing concentration of power in a few hands, due to great aggregations of capital, even though you do not sympathize with the

bitter denunciations which have been leveled against the men who possess that power. You have seen with increasing irritation the increasing power of the political bosses, and with increasing discouragement the mere transfer, by alternate elections, of political power from the bosses of one party to the bosses of another. You have perhaps tried to do something to right the social injustice, or at least to relieve its victims, by social settlement or other philanthropic work; and to rectify political abuses by sporadic political reforms, or by attending your party primaries, where you have generally found your single vote count for as little as it seems to you to count for in a general election.

But yet you are not quite prepared to join the Progressive party. It is new, inexperienced, untried. It was born only last August as a National party. To intrust it with the destinies of the Nation seems to you somehow extra-hazardous. Most of the men whose counsels you have been accustomed to follow are in one or the other of the old parties. The remedies of the new party seem new, and you are afraid to try so many experiments at once. You do not believe in the present high protective tariff; but a tariff commission is an experiment. You do not believe in social injustice; but labor laws limiting the hours of labor, limiting the liberty of contract, fixing a minimum wage, are an experiment. You do not believe in monopoly; but a Government commission to deprive the great corporations of the power which makes them a monopoly is an experiment. You do not believe in the old political machinery which has transferred political power from the people to the bosses; but direct primaries, refer-

dealing with the problem of immigration. Recently my fellow-citizens all over the country have paid me the compliment of listening to what I had to say concerning America as I found it, when I came here an alien, eighteen years ago. If in these exciting days they can recall what my story was about, they will admit that I am not unqualified to form an opinion on the immigrant problem. I am very sure that it is a bigger problem than most people think, that it affects not only the seaport towns, but every part of the country. Even if the restrictionists should have their way, there will still be thousands upon thousands of aliens pouring in from Europe every year. What effect they will have upon the country will depend largely on the attitude of the Government towards them. If they have hitherto herded in the slums, it is because the Government has allowed them to do so. The immigrant stops in New York because he has not been directed to go anywhere else. That he responds to direction has been recently demonstrated by private philanthropic agencies which have taken the matter in hand. But the United States Government ought not to leave to chance charities a matter of such importance. It is possible to send the immigrant where additional population would be welcome. It is possible to spare him some of the sufferings of transition that undermine his mental and moral strength, and so lessen his value as a citizen. It is possible to hasten his assimilation, for his own and for the country's good. The restrictionists could afford to hold their peace while the

Government tries out a logical method of dealing with the immigrant. It is hardly fair to call immigration a burden before a consistent National effort has been made to turn it into a resource. I call the attention of all naturalized citizens to the fact that the Progressive party is the only one that has any idea of what is due to the immigrant.

My closing word is to the pessimists, the grumblers, of whatever political persuasion. They are fond of dwelling on the mistakes we have made in our political and social life. They do not realize that most of the mistakes are experiments that have failed, and that need not be repeated again. What nation in the world's history has ever tried so many and such vast experiments in so short a time as America? Self-government, separation of Church and State, transcontinental jurisdiction, universal education, amalgamation of races—these are a few of our experiments. Does not the world owe us something for daring so much? And our principal experiment, at least, has not failed. We have realized the dream of the rule of the people. We have proved that for every tyrant democracy has a sword.

Here we are in the year 1912, the 123d year of the Republic, beset with sins that we abhor, grafted on the body politic by the selfishness of a handful of unscrupulous citizens. Are we, then, discouraged? Not in the least. We know that the machinery for National right-doing exists; we have only to set it in motion. We recognized the first whir of the mighty wheels when Jane Addams rose to second the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt at Chicago.

YOUTH IN AMERICA

BY TERTIUS VAN DYKE

I ask no easy living,
 With tithes of love and gold.
 This brave world owes me nothing,
 Nor shall when life grows cold.

Let some adventure take me
 In this forward-looking land,
 For my heart is fain of the battle strain,
 And the sword leaps in my hand.