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EDITORIAL

THE UNFOLDING OF WILSON.

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WHILE the Administration's Currency bill is epoch-marking, in one way, the remarkable address delivered to Congress by the President in person on the subject, marks an epoch, in another way.

Two passages in the address deserve careful pondering over. They are:

“What will it profit us to be free if we are not to have the best and most accessible instrumentalities of commerce and enterprise?”

“If a man cannot make his assets available at pleasure, his assets of capacity and character and resource, what satisfaction is it to him to see opportunity beckoning to him on every hand, when others have the keys of credit in their pockets and treat them as all but their own private possession?”

It matters little to our purpose that the President is of the erroneous economic opinion that a drastically lowered tariff will snap the shackles of industrial slavery, the effects of which he seeks to abolish. It matters little that, justly considering the Underwood bill as good as law, the President contemplates in that the source of freedom. That which renders the first passage singular is the recognition of what will it profit a man to be free without the instrumentalities to make his freedom good.

—This is Socialist thought. We recall no bourgeois source in which any language like it has yet been used, or approaching to it. Abstract freedom goes for little, or nothing,—so teaches Socialism. The instrument of production, the material instrumentality, is necessity for freedom.

Again, it matters little to our present purpose that the President is of the erroneous economic opinion that the needed instrumentality for popular freedom is money. That which renders the second passage singularly remarkable are three dis-

tinct thoughts embedded in it.

The first thought is the need of capital for freedom.

The second thought is that the needed capital is held by people who treat the same as their own private possession.

The third thought is that such private possession is a social crime.

—These are Socialist thoughts. They are singularly different from the regulation bourgeois article. Socialism emphasizes the need of what is today “capital” for freedom. Socialism emphasizes the fact that the thing necessary for freedom should be the property of all, but is today the private possession of the few who hold it. Finally, Socialism pronounces such private ownership a modern crime.

Disengaged from the bourgeois originally superstition and present false pretence with regard to freedom being an abstraction, the President recognizes its being a concrete matter, possible only through concrete means; emancipated from the bourgeois to-the-bourgeois comfortable superstition that the private ownership of capital is a sacred thing, the President detects criminality in the private possession; absolutely emancipated from the trammels of bourgeois false teachings to the effect that the instrumentality whereby to enjoy freedom can be obtained by whomsoever is “worthy,” the President point-blank takes the opposite view, to the effect that the ownership of capital is the key to opportunity, and that the holding of the key by a few as a private possession cancels the assets of capacity and character with those who are stripped of the key; finally the President’s position plants freedom squarely upon the ground on which it belongs—material power, a power obtainable, not by prayer, not by wishing, not by formulas, but by wrenching the key from its private owners.

Woodrow Wilson still bears the earmarks of bourgeois economics. Money is a reflex of the private ownership of the key for freedom. Money implies private ownership of the key. Even if the Administration were to win out in the money-issuing contest between it and the Banks, the key to freedom remains tied to the string of private ownership, the key being the plants of production themselves.

Martyrologies describe the struggles of the pure to cast off the sin within themselves. Many a description on the list is elevating reading. Few sights offered by our generation will be as interesting watching as the sight of the strong and healthy

mind of Woodrow Wilson struggling with the sin of bourgeois economics, meeting failure as the result of the expectations that such economics falsely hold forth, discovering their falseness and seeking to cast them off.

Whatever the final issue may be—whether Woodrow Wilson will succeed to cast off the sin of bourgeois error, or not, the man deserves admiration, and applause,—and the thanks of the Socialist, seeing his struggles are confirmations of Socialism.

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