

Iowa College.

PRESIDENT'S HOUSE.

Grinnell, Iowa, June 1st, 1897.

My Dear Dr. Tourgee:--

I have done very little public speaking the last three or four years in which I have not found occasion to speak at as great length as I could possibly command on what I believe to be one of the most outrageous notions in modern civilization, namely, to quote from your letter, that "unrestricted competition is the supreme law of civilization." I am glad to say that all our younger political economists, without exception so far as I know, are denying that and are putting ethics into their political economy. We have a few antiquarians left just enough to make it interesting; chief among these are Sumner of Yale and Laughlin of Chicago. The present and coming generation of political economists will have this matter all right in the schools but it will take of course another generation and perhaps more in view of the fact that human selfishness is dead set against it, to get the idea into our business civilization.

Your reference to Captain Kidd is very amusing and

very much to the point. I have repeatedly said that as for me give me Captain Kidd for my companion in all eternity rather than Jay Gould. Jay Gould was simply a Captain Kidd on land and although it went hard with the American people Mr. Gould did "better the instruction" of the Captain. The Captain was, at least if reports are correct, chivalrous to women and children but the choice victims of Mr. Gould were widows and orphans whose small investments were in railroad stocks, the value of which being wrecked into Mr. Gould's schemes, made his fortune.

But sometimes one asks what is the use. If the American people have not the slightest idea of building a nation on industrial and commercial righteousness. When men like Rockefeller and Yerkes can be published throughout the length and breadth of the land as great educational benefactors and the people love to have it so, the Kingdom of God will wait yet awhile if it depends upon the attitude of the American people to bring it in.

I prize very highly your estimate of my little tilt with the American Book Company. I send you herewith a paper which will show you what I am sure you will judge to be a noble decision of a careful Judge.

The sly wit at the end of his decision touching the supposition that the only man who has a right to the liberty of speech must be a multi-millionaire, is very rich. I think too I discover a little hit in the very last word of his finding, his selection of the word "criticism."

I wish very much you would allow me the use of that little story which you kindly told me. Of course I must not use it without your permission but it is one of the best things that has come to me. Please can't you let me use it? I do not take the Independent although it is in the college reading room. I shall hunt up the poem to which you refer.

I think I must have told you that the American Book Company has now brought suit against my publisher the Kingdom Publishing Company of Minneapolis, for one hundred thousand dollars damages. They have also appealed the injunction suit to the supreme court. In my opinion a good deal of that is pure bluff, but works well. It scares the newspapers so that they hardly dare do anything and I do not suppose there is a bookseller in America who would dare to put that pamphlet on his shelves. The commercial spirit is ~~very~~ so

apathetic and so cowardly that it will do nothing that will disturb its sales. Moreover the school journals throughout the country are of course all practically bought up by the large advertising which the American Book Company does in their pages.

I only wish we had money. Neither Mr. Gleason, the publisher, nor myself have anything so that the damage suit might be properly attended to. As it is I fear that the case must go by default. Competent lawyers tell me that it would very likely, considering the methods the American Book Company are likely to pursue in taking depositions all over the country.,, etc., require from two to ten thousand dollars properly to prepare for such a suit. Well, we have no such sum of money, consequently I see nothing for us to do but to meet the suit in a dignified way and say "Here is the book which speaks for itself. Here is the evidence on which it is written. Let the court or the jury judge for itself as to the competency of its evidence and the right of the book to exist." Of course American Book Company money can hire lawyers of marvelous ability insisting on picayune technicalities, but I can see nothing for us to do but to put ourselves upon

higher ground. We must simply say this work has been done not for private profit but for the public good.

If we must suffer for it then let us suffer; we might not be able to suffer in a better cause.

However I must not weary you with a longer letter.

You have done me great honor by writing me so freely and at great length and I prize the judgment and support of men like you more than I can say. Washington Gladden has written me a noble letter. With such men standing by I feel like going on with the work. If they put me in jail, the jail may furnish an excellent and leisurely opportunity to write some more pamphlets, material for which I assure you I have an abundance and it is coming to me by every mail.

It is among the remotest possibilities that Mrs. Gates and I may be able to call on you in your new home at Bordeaux provided you get there in season for us to do so in the month of August. Unless the American Book Company gets its lasso around my neck first we intend to sail on the nineteenth ^{of June} for three or four months.

Most sincerely yours,

George W. Gates,