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EDITORIAL

FALSE MORAL STANDARDS.

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THE “crack of the whip” in President J.G. Schurman’s anti-Socialist address to the Cornell Socialist Club on the 14th of this month was the closing sentence: “The self-interest of individuals has created all the capital in the world. . . . Even supposing the Socialistic state should do better than other states, it would never rival individuals animated by self-interest in accumulation of capital.” In other words, Self-Interest is more powerful than Collective-Interest.

We are not aware whether President Schurman is a specialist in any one department of learning; and, if he is, what that department may be. With the above passage of his speech before us, we conclude that history is not the forte of the President of Cornell, surely not classic history.

Which are the acts of heroism that the world most admires, and which are most extolled in the halls of education, where “the young idea is taught to shoot,” and the moral sense is fashioned? They, each and all, are the acts of the heroes of ancient Rome; and those acts of heroism were, each and all, acts of altruistic heroism. And what was the reward? Was it wealth? Was it acres and houses and chattels? No; the reward was the oaken crown, and that valueless reward, from the wealth point of view, was the dearest-prized possession of the olden Roman heroes. The decline in the one-time appreciation of the oaken crown was a symptom of Rome’s decline.

We should mistrust President Schurman as a teacher of morals. His horizon is bounded by the conditions of the social jungle. There, indeed, Self-Interest is the most powerful motive. It is made such. To preach the same as a canon of morality is to ignore the facts in the case, which none can ignore without reading himself out of the educational circle.

Self-interested, individual man, is a mutilated, an undeveloped, being. Wealth-production, for wealth’s sake, is not man’s goal. The well rounded being comes into

existence only through the collectivity. Collective man, as he alone can produce the needed abundance for civilized wealth, is the master of wealth, instead of himself being mastered by wealth.

Both in point of the abundance of wealth, and in point of the morality bred from wealth's subservience to man instead of as at present, his subservience to wealth, the Socialist or Industrial Republic will bear to President Schurman's ideal State the relation of a Shakespeare to a Cave Dweller.

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