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EDITORIAL

AUTOCRACY CONFESSED.

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MR. William Nelson Cromwell, the representative of the Harriman interests at a recent meeting of the Wells-Fargo stockholders, said of his chief: "He moves in a higher world, into which we may not enter." The imagery of the sentence is pretty, pretty its diction, less pretty, however, the fact that it reveals.

Democracy is not insanity. It does not imply the capacity of every individual to move in any "world." There are special "worlds" for special varieties of capacity. The "world" in which the poet moves is not the "world" that is the home of the mathematician; the "world" of the horticulturist is not the realm of the philologist. And so forth and so on. Each of these varying capacities has its own "world," into which it enters freely, nor would any seek to trespass into a "world" where he would feel as little at home as a cat in a strange garret. Is the "world" that Mr. William Nelson Cromwell referred to, as the "world" in which the plutocrat Harriman moves, and into which "we others may not enter," a "world" of that nature? Not at all! If it were, the statement would be superfluous. Seeing the statement was not superfluous, that "world" is a special one, and its exclusiveness a mark that, not democracy, but autocracy is the social system which capitalism breeds, and which the William Nelson Cromwells are the Cossacks of.

The "world" of the Harrimans is not a "world" of specialized genius. It is a "world" of "government." The Harrimans are public functionaries. They control production and distribution. Accordingly, they control the living of the people. At their will—often wisely, oftener unwisely—production is slackened or quickened, is turned into this channel or into that. At its best, the "world" of the plutocrat is the world of a benevolent dictator. The dictator idea is incompatible with popular individuality. Moreover, the benevolent dictator is the exception. Upon that the

world's history has expressed itself amply. While the order, implied by the dictator idea, may be a necessary starting point in civilization, democracy is the gate to civilized welfare. Capitalism destroys the democratic idea and reintroduces de facto autocracy.

Socialism has proved the fact. The arrogant Cossack William Nelson Cromwell, with the arrogance that ever marks the lackey of an autocrat, admits the fact boastfully and swaggeringly.

Fortunately, both Cossacks and their Autocrat masters are neither invulnerable nor yet invincible.

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