

ARE MEN NOW HONORED FOR "THEFT"

The New York World recently asked a number of New Yorkers if it is true, as freely charged, that "the rich man is honored for thieving and that the man who has the wisdom to steal a million avoids the miserable fate of the dabbler in hundreds." The World also asked if it is true that the laws are radically deficient and that the authorities allow existing laws to lie idle on the statute books. The World says that these questions were answered in the negative by every person interviewed.

It is not true that the rich man is honored for thieving. It is true, however, that there are many men in this country who are highly honored by a large number of people in spite of the fact that the methods of these men, if properly described, would come under the head of thieving.

The man who steals a million dollars or any considerable sum of money and takes to his heels is very liable to find the authorities in hot pursuit. We have in the case of Banker Stensland of Chicago an example that the law is enforced against men who steal considerable sums of money and then decamp. There are also a number of bankers now doing time in prison, and all because their wrongdoing came so plainly under the head of "thieving" that they were treated as the common rogue is treated. The mistake these men made was in indulging in their wrongdoing in a vulgar, coarse way. They should have stood "pat."

The New York World need not have gone to the trouble of interviewing a considerable number of men on this proposition; it might have

gone to the records of District Attorney Jerome's office; it might have reproduced some of its own editorials showing the impunity with which rich and powerful men violate the law. The World might have recalled the disclosures of the past year; there it would have obtained several valuable reminders. It would have learned that for the conspiracies in restraint of trade; for the trusts organized in defiance of law; for the money embezzled from the policyholders in insurance companies; for the bribes given by trust magnates for the corruption of public officials; for the corners obtained by greedy men upon the fuel and food of the land in the presence of shivering children and starving women; for the crime that since the "national honor" was redeemed in 1896 has stalked rampant in the circles where these so-called captains of industry most do congregate there is not one rich criminal in convict stripes as a living testimony to the vindication of the law's majesty.

If we would search for an object lesson showing strikingly the difference between crime and crime, take the case of former Senator Burton and the case of the late Senator Mitchell and make comparison with other cases available in the vicinity of the senate chamber. Burton, luckless and poor, accepted fees amounting to, perhaps, several thousand dollars for appearing as an attorney before one of the departments of government. Mitchell, poor and luckless equal with Burton, shared with his law partner fees paid to that partner for services rendered certain clients before a department of government. Comparatively speaking these were cheap

offenses. Both these senators were indicted; one died and the other retired in disgrace. But what about Chauncey M. Depew? It has been shown that from various sources he drew, while serving as senator, money to which he was in nowise entitled; and where Burton or Mitchell drew one dollar Depew drew, perhaps, fifty. Depew's offenses were bad enough to force him from his office in Yale college and to drive him from the directorates of many commercial concerns; but he yet holds his place as United States senator, and no serious demand has been made to the effect that he relinquish his high commission in that body. Even the newspapers that fought Burton to his retirement and Mitchell to his death have not seemed so serious, and by no means so persistent, in their criticisms of the New York senator. But even Depew's offenses pale into insignificance compared with those of other men, who, while serving in the United States senate and being presumed to have a watchful care for the public interests, are, in fact, nothing more than the representatives of powerful corporations. Perhaps these men are not paid exactly as Depew was paid or as Burton and Mitchell were paid, but it is a matter of public knowledge that since entering the senate they have grown richer and richer, and a matter of public knowledge, also, that the great concerns which habitually prey upon the American people depend upon these same United States senators to protect their interests and to make possible a continuance of their immoral practices—practices which are sometimes carried on within the law and sometimes without the law, but practices which, within the law or without the law, may be properly classified as theft.

"Robbery of the Many, for the Benefit of the Few"

In one of his speeches Secretary Shaw complained that the democratic convention of 1892 "declared that the republican tariff law was robbery of the many for the enrichment of the few." That referred to the McKinley bill. Since then a republican congress enacted the Dingley law, whose schedules Nelson Dingley himself said had purposely been placed high in order that they might be used as a basis for obtaining reciprocity treaties. Yet, while failing to strive for reciprocity treaties, the republican party maintains the high schedules at the expense of the people of our own land. It is true the republican tariff law, as represented by the McKinley bill, was "robbery of the many for the enrichment of the few;" but the Dingley bill, the present tariff law, is so much more oppressive than the tariff law of 1892, that republicans in all portions of the country are crying out against it.

The republicans in Iowa on two different occasions protested in their state platform against the shelter which the trusts find in the tariff, and only a few days ago Governor Cummins, now the republican nominee for governor, declared that he had nothing to retract with respect to any of the statements he had made on the tariff question. So Governor Cummins is a "standpat" witness as to the truth of the proposition that the republican tariff law of 1906 is "robbery of the many for the enrichment of the few."

Then there is Curtis Guild, Jr., governor of Massachusetts. It will be remembered that during the last campaign the Massachusetts repub-

licans had a great scare caused largely by the tariff question. Soon after the election Governor Guild wrote a letter to Mr. Roosevelt in which he stated that in his judgment the republican ticket in Massachusetts would have been overwhelmingly defeated if the republican platform had not contained the plank favoring immediate tariff revision. The governor said that he deemed it his duty to inform Mr. Roosevelt of the real condition of public feeling in Massachusetts, and he urged the president to incorporate in his message a suggestion favorable to tariff revision.

During the year 1905 Secretary of War Taft publicly declared that American manufacturers were trying to hold up the government in the prices charged for canal supplies. Mr. Taft said that if necessary supplies for the canal would be purchased abroad. This conclusion was given to the public in an Associated Press dispatch printed last May. That dispatch said that the executive committee of the Isthmian canal commission had decided to purchase in the markets of the world the material necessary for the building of the canal, and added:

"This important decision was reached with some reluctance because it was appreciated by Secretary Taft and the executive committee that there would surely be a great outcry from two great interests in this country, the producers of material and the ship owners, if the purchases were not limited to the American products. But it was decided

that the money consideration was so great that it could not be ignored, for it was held that in many cases fully fifty per cent more would be charged for the material needed in the canal construction than the same goods could be procured for in Europe."

The Washington correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald likened Mr. Taft's order to "a Chimose bomb shell."

The Taft order was widely discussed and very generally approved at the time, but recently we have heard but very little concerning it. Since that order was made public the administration purchased for the canal service two American ships of 5,700 tons each for \$1,300,000, when it was offered two foreign ships of 6,000 tons each for \$750,000. Since then the administration has awarded to the Maryland Steel company a contract for two dredges at \$362,000 each when a foreign concern had offered to build these two dredges for \$70,000 less. Since then Mr. Roosevelt wrote to Representative Watson his famous "stand pat" letter. But it will be observed that while the administration has forgotten the Taft order and has failed to purchase supplies abroad in order to avoid the impositions of the trusts, it has not hesitated to go abroad for its labor, and now makes no effort to conceal the fact that it is preparing to build the Panama canal with coolie labor. Perhaps the administration expects the people to overlook the failure to carry out the Taft order, and remember only the great benefits to be derived by carrying on American enterprises with yellow labor.

It is Not "An Ugly Question"—--And It Must be Met

The Wall Street News in its issue of September 17, complains because in his St. Louis speech, Mr. Bryan made, what the News calls "the amazing query, 'What trust magnates are in jail?'"

The News says: "That is an ugly question. Furthermore it is an absolutely useless one, calculated merely to play upon the feelings and not the reason of excitable, unthinking people."

That is "an ugly question" from the standpoint of the man who violates the law; but to the American people in whose interests anti-trust laws were enacted, it is not "an ugly question."

It is, indeed, a very pertinent question; and questions similar to this must be pressed upon

the attention of men in authority, until no officer, whose duty it is to enforce the law, will dare to permit a trust magnate to escape, any more than he would give immunity to the rogue in rags.

This question was not made "to play upon the feelings of excitable, unthinking people." The editor of the News, if he be sincere in these criticisms, is the thoughtless one. Does he not know that we have upon our statute books laws forbidding the organization of trusts—laws intended for the punishment of the very men referred to by the designation "trust magnate?" Does he imagine these laws were made to be violated? The truth is that the best thought of this country is now aroused to the importance of putting a check upon the greed and lawless-

ness of the men who are commonly known as "trust magnates." These men have shown no mercy for the consumers, and no respect for the law. They are not to be restrained by feather duster blows; they are not to be held in check by solemn resolutions, or even by fines; they are to be proceeded against exactly as the commonest violator of the law is proceeded against. And it is to be written in the code of American ethics, even as it is written upon American statute books, that in the eyes of society, as well as in the eyes of the law, the man who would conspire in restraint of trade, and seek to obtain monopolies upon the necessities of life, is no whit better than the thief who robs on the highway; no better than any other human being who, for the sake of profit, defies the law of the land.