

benefits. The American does not expect to go to the Philippine islands to live. If all of the Filipinos were killed off, the country would not be colonized by Americans as North America was colonized by Europe. Ahab had a far better excuse for wanting the land of Naboth than we have for wanting the Philippine islands. Naboth's land joined the land of Ahab and the taking of it enlarged the land that he cultivated, and yet the Bible tells us that Naboth's right to hold the land was vindicated. Who will vindicate our right to conquer the Filipinos in order to hold land that must be worked through overseers and protected by an alien government and an army? The right of the Filipino to hold his property rests upon the same basis that our right to hold property does, and we can not ignore his property rights without endangering our own.

Every attempt to legislate in the interests of the laboring men is met with the declaration that it is an interference with the rights of property. How would property be created but for labor? And who will say that the man who furnishes the capital should be permitted to decide without appeal the conditions upon which property shall be created by those who labor for him? We often hear it asked by the manufacturer: "Have I not the right to manage my own business?" That is not the question. If the manufacturer will set himself to work to produce something with his own hands, nobody will question his right to control his own business. But something more is implied by his question. If he would put the question fairly he would ask, not "Have I not the right to manage my own business?" but rather "Have I not the right, in managing my business, to regulate the lives, the liberty, the hopes, the happiness of those whom I employ?" But to ask the question in this form would be to suggest a negative answer, while he demands an affirmative answer.

Those who claim the right to arbitrarily determine the hours, the wages and the conditions of labor demand the right to arbitrarily determine the status of the laboring man and to fix the conditions that are to surround him and his posterity. Is it an interference with property rights to demand that the laboring man shall have a fair share of the proceeds of his own toil—a fair share of the property which he creates? His right to accumulate property should not be ignored. Not only should he be allowed to accumulate property, but he should have leisure to enable him to enjoy communion with his own family and to fit himself for intelligent participation in the affairs of his government. By what authority will the capitalist put his claim to larger dividends above the rights of the wage earners, and the welfare of the wage earner's children?

Just now the trust magnates are hurling epithets at those who seek to destroy the trusts. They assume to be the special custodians of property rights, and charge anti-monopolists with communistic, socialistic and anarchistic designs upon "the thrifty and the successful." As a matter of fact the reformer has never been more grossly misrepresented than he is now by the monopolists. It is the trust magnate, not the opponents of the trust, who is striking at property rights. He trespasses upon the property rights of the small manufacturer and the retailer, and heartlessly drives him into bankruptcy. He trespasses upon the property rights of the consumers, who have a right to purchase what they need in a free market at a reasonable price. The monopolist simply appropriates the property of others. The trust magnate often trespasses the property rights of the employe, whose skill and muscle he utilizes. He encourages the employe to invest in a home and then he sacrifices that home if he engages in a war with his laborers or finds it profitable to dismantle his plant. Even the property interests of the stockholders are not safe in the hands of the trust magnate, for he has been known to depress the market for the purpose of freezing out his associates or in order to buy more stock at a low price. Those who, believing that "a private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable," are laboring to restore competition and to protect the small producer, the consumer, the merchant, and the skilled laborer—these, not the trust magnates, are the real defenders of property rights.

The railroad presidents are also very much concerned now lest their particular form of property will be injured by legislation, and they are quick to describe as demagogic all arguments that are intended to inform the public intelligence and to arouse the public conscience on the railroad question. What is the position taken by the railroad presidents? They deny the right of the public, acting through government officials, to fix rates, or they deny that these officials are

competent to fix rates. As to the right there can be no question. The rates charged by a railroad to a large extent determine the value of the land contiguous to the railroad. When a railroad manager materially increases the rate on an important article of commerce he increases the revenues of the road, and in increased revenue increases the price of the stock. He therefore has it in his power to increase the value of the railroad property, but when he increases the railroad property by increasing the transportation rate, he lessens the returns of the farmer and, in so doing, lessens the value of the farm, which necessarily depends upon the value of the product.

Can any one seriously question the right of the patrons of the railroads to protect their own property? Or is railroad property the only property to be considered? Because comparatively few persons enjoy the benefits of an increase in the value of railroad stock while the evil effect of exorbitant rates is distributed over a large territory, many seem to think only of the beneficiaries. But in the discussion of property rights we are not at liberty to ignore a small loss brought to each of a large number of people and think only of the considerable gain secured by a few.

Neither do the railroad presidents take a tenable position when they insist that only railroad officials are competent to fix rates. If they would but apply to this question the rule which they apply to other questions, they would know that the railroad managers, instead of being especially fitted to arbitrarily fix rates, are in reality specially unfitted for the work. The bias caused by pecuniary interest is everywhere recognized. A judge is not permitted to sit in his own case, and a juror is excused if he has the slightest pecuniary interest in the result of the trial. And yet railroad managers impudently assert that those who have the largest pecuniary interest in the fixing of the rates are just the ones to be trusted with this important task.

If competition was free to work in the fixing of railroad rates, the patrons of the road could protect themselves, but there is no competition at all between intermediate points, and the rates are often fixed by agreement at competing points. It is as absurd to say that the patrons should depend upon the railroad managers for justice in rates, as it would be to say that a plaintiff should submit his case to a jury made up of defendants in the case.

And so, no matter what question is under consideration, the reformer is always misrepresented by those who find a profit in the existing conditions.

Not only is the reformer the real defender of property rights, but he is the best friend of the very persons who abuse him. Just as that physician is the best one who points out to his patient the dangers of the disease from which he suffers and proposes the best remedy, no matter how severe, so those are the best friends of the rich who attempt to restrain excesses and to correct abuses.

Jefferson in his first inaugural address describes the right of election by the people as "a mild and safe corrective of abuses which are lopped off by the sword of revolution where peaceful remedies are unprovided." The reformer seeks by peaceful means to correct abuses which, if not reformed by legislation, are sure sooner or later to lead, first, to bitterness between the classes and finally to violence. Dickens in his "Tale of Two Cities" gives his readers a picture of the French revolution and points out that the horrors of the revolution were but the natural result of the cruelties which the masses previously suffered at the hands of the aristocracy. This in his language:

"Along the Paris streets, the death carts rumble, hollow and harsh. Six tumbrils carry the day's wine to La Guillotine. All the devouring and insatiate monsters imagined since imagination could record itself, are fused in the one realization, Guillotine. And yet there is not in France, with its rich variety of soil and climate, a blade, a leaf, a root, a sprig, a peppercorn, which will grow to maturity under conditions more certain than those that have produced this horror. Crush humanity out of shape once more, under similar hammers, and it will twist itself into the same tortured forms. Sow the same seed of rapacious license and oppression ever again, and it will surely yield the same fruit according to its kind.

"Six tumbrils roll along the streets. Change these back again to what they were, thou powerful enchanter, Time, and they shall

be seen to be the carriages of absolute monarchs, the equipages of feudal nobles, the toilettes of flaring Jezebels, the churches that are not my father's house but dens of thieves, the huts of millions of starving peasants."

The French aristocrats who showed their contempt for human rights were very solicitous about property rights, and yet they were in fact the deadliest enemies of property and property rights, because their wantonness provoked the attacks which followed.

The situation in this country today is not what it was in France prior to the revolution. The extremes of society are not so far apart nor have the evils now complained of been carried so far. And yet no one who has studied the situation can be blind to the fact that the arrogance of our financiers, and greed of our railroad magnates and the avarice of our monopolists are creating a gulf between productive wealth and predatory wealth—between the very poor and the very rich. The longer remedial legislation is delayed the wider the gulf grows, and the wider the gulf, the greater the danger. The longer a needed reform is delayed the more radical the remedy is likely to be and the more danger that the spirit of retaliation will make itself manifest.

It is time to call a halt. It is time to displace the corporate influences that now have such a powerful hold upon politics, and to return to a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," in which the property of the poor as well as the property of the rich, the life of the obscure as well as the life of the conspicuous, and the liberty of all shall be protected by law. They are the best friends of both human and property rights who labor most earnestly and most intelligently to correct injustice in government wherever found; they are the most dangerous enemies of property rights as well as of human rights who either turn the instrumentalities of government to private gain or who, for pecuniary advantage, resist needed remedial legislation.

POSTMASTERS AND POLITICS

The Nebraska Postmasters association met at Lincoln, June 14 and 15. Although that meeting was presumed to be "for the good of the service" and had been given official recognition, there were several interesting and significant political events.

Mr. Pollard, who is the republican candidate for congress before a special election to take place in July in the First Nebraska district, was invited to address the convention. Mr. Pollard is not a postmaster. The Lincoln, (Nebr.) Journal, a republican paper, referring to Mr. Pollard's address, said: "After thanking the convention for inviting him to speak, he began a discussion of the principles laid down in the Falls City platform."

The "Falls City Platform" is the platform upon which Mr. Pollard is running for congress. Just what that has to do with "the good of the service" is not entirely clear. But Mr. Pollard delivered to these postmasters a political speech and we are told that "his position was approved with applause."

Congressman Hinshaw addressed the association on the subject, "Politics in the Postoffice." He declared that there should be no politics in the postoffices and advised postmasters to be "diplomatic in their political actions." While saying this Mr. Hinshaw also said that he did not believe in placing the postoffices under the civil service. He thought this would be for the betterment of the service.

When Senator Burkett came to address the association, he made it plain that he did not agree with Congressman Hinshaw. According to the Lincoln Journal, "Senator Burkett said he would not give a cent for the postmasters who were not good political workers and that while Congressman Hinshaw told them to be diplomatic and not to pay too much attention to politics, he really meant 'get in, boys, get in.'"

In this statement Senator Burkett was not very complimentary to Mr. Hinshaw; yet he doubtless reflected the sentiments of that class of politicians whose representatives have been in the habit of "holding the word of promise to the ear to break it to the hope, and who have been trained to believe that "one great use of words is to hide our thoughts."

The United States has contracted for 11,000 pounds of ice per senator for the ensuing fiscal year. The senators should quit traveling such a hot pace and settle down to doing something for the people.