

The Angle of Repose

How to make America better? There are many ways of rendering assistance in this line. Each individual can contribute a part by increasing his own value to his country, because all, taken together, constitute the nation. In proportion as each one can be strong in body he raises the average of physical strength; in proportion as he can be strong in mind, he raises the intellectual standard of the nation; in proportion as he can be useful socially and has high moral standards, he helps to raise the social and moral standards of the nation. But, as the people are especially interested in giving a nation-wide impulse toward needed changes and a more perfect brotherhood, I beg to submit the following:

When I visited the Panama Canal a few years ago, I went through the Culebra Cut with one of the government engineers, and, noticing a recent slide, asked when the slides would cease. He answered, "When the sides of the cut reach their angle of repose". It was a new phrase, but seemed both euphonious and descriptive; the beauty and force of the phrase have grown upon me as the words have again and again been recalled.

The Angle of Repose is the thing that we are all seeking. The individual labors and saves, not so much from anxiety to be rich, as from a desire to provide comfort for himself and loved ones when his power to earn has ceased; he is seeking the Angle of Repose. And, so, in public life we are trying to put the problems of government and society in a position where they will no longer disturb the public. We are trying to settle them, and they will be settled only when they reach their Angle of Repose.

Just now we are interested in the establishment of the "League of Nations" in order to end war. Heretofore there has been no sufficient machinery for peace. The League of Nations provides such machinery, and the supporters of the League of Nations believe that the machinery which it provides will be sufficient to settle any international disputes that may hereafter arise, and, thus, make the war out of which we have come the last war to redden this old earth with blood. If by any possibility the proposed League of Nations should not be established, or, if established, should fail to fulfill the hopes which it has excited, the agitation will continue until some other plan is found to prevent war—and then the war question will reach its Angle of Repose.

But we have many domestic problems. The profiteer is abroad in the land, and his presence will be an irritating factor until he is driven out of the country and the door closed against him. This can be done only by providing machinery in nation, state and local community, sufficient to deal with every attempted wrong. The government, having taken from each individual his club, is in duty bound to protect the disarmed citizen from every arm uplifted for his injury.

The labor question has not yet reached its Angle of Repose. Much progress has been made during the last twenty years—government by injunction has been abolished; the eight-hour day has been secured, and labor has been distinguished from things inanimate, but much remains to be done. Wages are generally considered in connection with the cost of living, at least minimum wages are. There ought to be some means of ascertaining the weekly or, at least, the monthly fluctuation in the price level of the necessities of life, so that wages can be adjusted to increased cost of living without delay, and without arousing antagonism between capital and labor.

But, no purely mechanical method of dealing with the labor question can ever be entirely satisfactory; nothing but the spirit of brotherhood can bring employer and employee into the harmonious relationship that should exist, and that must exist, if we are to have the co-operation necessary for steady and continuous progress. The employer must recognize the laborer's interest in home and family, and the laborer should have a chance to learn something of the anxieties of the employer, and the burdens he bears. There should be a more intimate acquaintance and a better understanding between them. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," explains many misunderstandings in every walk of life.

The church is sometimes accused of having too little sympathy for those who toil, and the

attitude of the church has been explained by the influence exerted upon the church by large employers and heads of corporations. The church now has an opportunity to cast its influence on the side of labor by supporting the demand for a half holiday on Saturday, as the declaration in favor of a forty-four hour week contemplates.

If laboring men are able to use Saturday afternoon for amusements, it will be easier to devote Sunday to spiritual development. The church should aid in securing for the wage earners this extra time, in order that the claims of the church may be the stronger on Sunday. Prohibition, too, will aid the church in its appeal to the masses, for the absence of the saloon not only eliminates a counter influence, but leaves those who were formerly inclined to drink more susceptible by religious influences.

I have left for the last, the issue between private monopoly and government ownership, an issue which relates directly to the telegraph question, the telephone question and the railway question. These three problems will require time for their solution, or rather for the spread of information necessary to solution. A private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable. Wherever competition is impossible and a monopoly, therefore, necessary, it must be a government monopoly, administered for the benefit of all the people, and not a private monopoly, administered for the benefit of a few. A private monopoly is economically wrong, because it destroys all incentives to improvement. It is politically dangerous, because it builds up a vast financial interest hostile to popular government. The monopolist is not willing to trust the people with the making of laws because he knows they would protect themselves from the greed of monopolists. It also creates a class, discouraged, if not made desperate, by the injustice done by private monopoly. Victor Hugo says that "the mob is the human race in misery". We cannot afford to allow people to be made miserable by being made the victims of injustice. As the mosquito carries the germ of yellow fever in its bite, so the plutocrat carries the germ of revolution in his bite. It is as necessary to destroy the breeding place of private monopoly—the breeding place of plutocracy, as it is to destroy the breeding place of the mosquito.

If the federal government can efficiently manage the Postoffice system, it ought to be able to add a few telegraph lines and run them in connection with the Postoffice department.

If a city can conduct a water system and an electric light system successfully, it ought to be able to conduct a telephone exchange, and connect with the outside world through long distance telephone lines owned and operated by the federal government.

And so with the railroad system, which partakes so much of the nature of a monopoly that it cannot much longer remain in private hands. If the federal government will acquire and operate a system of trunk lines reaching into each state, and making each state independent by giving it an outlet for its products and an inlet for its purchases, the state governments can acquire and operate the other railroads within their borders, thus giving to the public the advantage of government ownership, without the dangers of centralization. I believe these questions will never reach their Angle of Repose until the principle of private monopoly is eliminated and government ownership substituted. We should all try to make America better, but our desire for the triumph of the truth should be greater than our desire for the triumph of that which we think to be the truth, if we are, in fact, mistaken. If every person will study public questions, and then give to his country the benefit of his judgment and conscience, discussion will enable us to compare ideas and select that which is best. The virtue and intelligence of the American people can be trusted to decide every question right when the question is understood.

W. J. BRYAN.

The man who worried a great deal because he was afraid his soldier son might marry some French or German girl is now communing in the shade with the one who was fearful that the boys might learn to love Europe so well that they would not want to come back. The Foolish Fears club has the largest membership in the world.

The man who is giving the most realistic performance of going away back and sitting down is the one who loudly proclaimed that the ending of the war would bring lower prices.

Franco-American Treaty

In his message transmitting the proposed treaty with France to the senate, July 29, President Wilson said:

"Gentlemen of the Senate: I take pleasure in laying before you a treaty with the Republic of France, the object of which is to secure that republic the immediate aid of the United States of America in case of any unprovoked movement of aggression against her on the part of Germany. I earnestly hope that the treaty will meet with your cordial approval and will receive an early ratification at your hands, along with the treaty of peace with Germany. Now that you have had an opportunity to examine the great document I presented to you two weeks ago, it seems opportune to lay before you this treaty, which is meant to be in effect a part of it.

"It was signed on the same day with the treaty of peace and is intended as a temporary supplement to it. It is believed that the treaty of peace with Germany itself provides adequate protection to France against aggression from her recent enemy on the east; but the years immediately ahead of us contain many incalculable possibilities. The covenant of the League of Nations provides for military action for the protection of its members only upon advice of the council of the league—advice given, it is presumed, only upon deliberation and acted upon by each of the governments of the member states only if its own judgment justifies such action.

"The object of the special treaty with France which I now submit to you is to provide for immediate military assistance to France by the United States in case of any unprovoked movement of aggression against her by Germany without waiting for the advice of the council of the League of Nations that such action will be taken. It is to be an arrangement, not independent of the League of Nations, but under it.

"It is therefore expressly provided that this treaty shall be made the subject of consideration at the same time with the treaty of peace with Germany, that this special arrangement shall receive the approval of the council of the league, and that this special provision for the safety of France shall remain in force only until, upon the application of one of the parties to it, the council of the league, acting, if necessary, by a majority vote, shall agree that the provisions of the covenant of the league afford to her sufficient protection.

"I was moved to sign this treaty by considerations which will, I hope, seem as persuasive and as irresistible to you as they seemed to me. We are bound to France by ties of friendship which we have always regarded, and shall always regard, as peculiarly sacred. She assisted us to win our freedom as a nation. It is seriously to be doubted whether we could have won it without her gallant and timely aid.

"We have recently had the privilege of assisting in driving enemies, who were also enemies of the world, from her soil; but that does not pay our debt to her. Nothing can pay such a debt. She now desires that we should promise to lend our great force to keep her safe against the power she has had most reason to fear. Another great nation volunteers the same promise.

"It is one of the fine reversals of history that that other nation should be the very power from whom France fought to set us free. A new day has dawned. Old antagonisms are forgotten. The common cause of freedom and enlightenment has created new comradeships and a new perception of what it is wise and necessary for great nations to do to free the world of intolerable fear. Two governments who wish to be members of the League of Nations ask leave of the council of the league to be permitted to go to the assistance of a friend whose situation has been found to be one of peculiar peril, without awaiting the advice of the league to act.

"It is by taking such pledges as this that we prove ourselves faithful to the utmost to the high obligations of gratitude and tested friendship. Such an act as this seems to me one of the proofs that we are a people that sees the true heart of duty and prefers honor to its own separate course of peace.

"WOODROW WILSON."