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Wild cat banking and rag money!
Where, oh, where is the gold standard?

And yet, you old sinner, there is no information at hand to show that there is a coal famine in hades. Be good!

Gosper county will be "shy" about \$446.15 in this school apportionment. It is that much less than the smallest ever made by fusion state officers.

With Madden for third assistant and Loud for fourth assistant in the postmaster general's office, then editors of reform papers would have a time of it sure enough, and they say that that is what is going to be done.

According to the dispatches from Washington the Fowler bill has been changed into a bill authorizing the issue of an almost unlimited amount of "rag money" by the banks. What has become of the "gold standard?"

The British and German governments are giving some new theories to the world in relation to the collection of debts. The way they do it is to destroy the debtor's property, then he will be sure to pay.

A proposition is being discussed in Hartford, Conn., to close the churches and give the coal which is in their bins to the freezing poor who have no coal at all. In the old days the authorities in that religion forbade any artificial heat at all in the churches.

The State Journal says that the enormous decrease in the apportionment for common schools under a republican rule is because "the holders have paid all back interest and principal on the school lands." The mullet head in the state answers back: "Yep, That's so. The more money a republican treasurer has, the less he can pay out."

Rockefeller raised the price of oil 1 cent a gallon. Then he made a Christmas gift to the Chicago university of \$1,000,000. The raise of 1 cent a gallon on oil will net him during the next year about \$30,000,000. But the Standard Oil trust must be a good trust because out of \$30,000,000 of stealings, \$1,000,000 is given to a university.

For the delectation of the millionaires, a Boston publisher is to issue an edition of the works of Paul de Kock, the nastiest writer who ever got into print. It is to appear in 50 volumes issued in various styles, the most sumptuous of which, to consist of a single set, is to cost \$150,000. There are ten sets at \$50,000. The sensuality of the Roman emperors can no more be compared with that of the American millionaires than their fortunes to the vast accumulations of the present day.

PARKER'S ADDRESS

Perhaps it is not strange that so many men have been thinking along similar lines since the last election. The letter of Mr. Houston, published last week, had been read and placed on the hook for the linotyper when the very next letter contained an advance proof of Chairman Parker's "Plan To Unite Reformers." Inspection will show that these two have very similar ideas as to what ought to be done. Taking The Independent's editorial, "Marion Butler, Listen," in issue of November 27, Dr. Reemelin's suggestion, Mr. Houston's letter, and Chairman Parker's address as a basis, the Independent would suggest this:

A joint call by Chairman Butler and Chairman Parker.

State conferences on February 22, 1903.

Selection of three or five delegates from each state to meet in national conference with the various national committees of the present factions.

National conference at St. Louis, February 22, 1904.

Declaration of principles, selection of a committee and committee officers, together with adoption of a name and call for a national convention.

Non-interference in state politics during the year 1903. If southern populists desire to "fuse" with the republicans—let them do it. If Nebraska populists desire to "use" with the democrats—let them do it. The election of a democratic supreme judge in Nebraska—a man of the character and legal attainments of Chief Justice Sullivan—by the united effort of populists and democrats, need not retard the movement toward united effort to secure government money and government railroads.

THE COAL FAMINE PUZZLE

The shortage of coal all over this continent, in Canada as well as in the United States, is a puzzle still unsolved. Montreal is suffering just as Boston and Washington are. A disposition is developing to lay the trouble at the doors of the railroads. A prominent citizen of Montreal remarked the other day that "the coal in unlimited quantities is at our very door; let cars be begged, borrowed or stolen as you will, let the government commandeer the mines if necessary, but let Montreal have coal, and plenty of it, at a reasonable cost."

There are some facts known to all men and among them is that there is coal all over the United States in unlimited quantities, there are trained miners, many of whom cannot get work, there has been no greater consumption of coal this winter than usual, the railroads have greatly increased their equipment in the last two or three years, and yet there is a scarcity of coal everywhere. Even in the little towns of Nebraska, one has to go to the dealers, beg for coal and then pay an exorbitant price to get it in very small quantities. Some days it cannot be got at all.

So far, no one has attempted to give any reason why coal should all at once become so scarce. If we had a congress that was worth the powder and lead to blow it up, it would create a commission to investigate the subject and give the people the facts so that they could protect themselves in the future. It is the opinion of The Independent that this famine in coal has been brought about by the preconcerted efforts of the same men who have been forming trusts and that the directors of many of the railroads have had an active hand in it, for most of them have been in the trust promotion business up to their eyes.

One thing is certain. There is no necessity for a shortage in the coal supply of the United States. If private parties have schemed to fleece the people in this way and cause the great suffering and loss that has ensued, the public should know it so

that means can be taken for their punishment. If the coal operators have not genius enough to supply the people with coal, then the time has arrived for the government to take possession of the mines and prevent future extortion and suffering.

WHO ARE HIRELINGS?

Some time ago The Independent remarked to the labor unions, business men and other parties who were hurling anathemas at Mr. Burt because of his action in bringing on the strike on the Union Pacific, that they were after the wrong man, that Mr. Burt was as much of a hireling as any man who worked in the shops and had to be more careful to obey orders than any blacksmith or boiler maker. The truth of that statement was made evident last week when Mr. Burt had a private conference with the labor leaders and asked them to delay further aggressive movements against the road until he could go to New York, confer with Mr. Harriman and see if something could not be done to bring the strike to an end. People ought to begin to see by this time that what The Independent has been telling them was simply "God's truth." Through the private ownership of railroads, every business interest of the state of Nebraska is at the mercy of a few Wall street sharps. Harriman can give an order that would bring everything to a standstill in this state. It used to be Jay Gould who held that power, now it is Harriman. When Harriman dies, some other plutocrat will take his place and exercise the same unlimited power—a power far greater than that held by any monarch of all Europe. Under such circumstances as these, some wise men of Nebraska have come to the conclusion that "there is nothing to vote for." So they brag of the fact that they are "cornfield canaries" and stay at home on election day.

The power of Wall street grows year by year. Harriman's orders are more far-reaching than those of Jay Gould ever were. His extortions upon the producers are far greater than those inflicted by Gould. Slowly the lines are closing in around us all. But then there is nothing to vote for and we will content ourselves by husking corn on election day.

A PANIC STOPPER

It seems that the Rockefeller, Vanderbilts and Goulds have become very tired of stopping panics, by putting up some millions every week or two as was told in The Independent last week, so they have organized a "panic stopper" with \$50,000,000 capital. The papers say that "the pool is not designed to revive a wild-cat speculation for the rise or to preserve solvency where there is hopeless entanglement in insolvency; its aim is to see that no solvent interest is thrown down because of a temporary pinch in money."

That fifty-million pool may serve for a while as a panic stopper, but something on a different line from that will have to be invented. An inflation of all reason of bank credits cannot be remedied by providing more inflation furnished by a pool organized for that very purpose. That sort of a panic stopper may work for a while, but a few raids on it by the bears will wreck it.

The organization of the "panic stopper" with fifty millions of capital is looked upon in Europe "as a public acknowledgement that the financial position is really strained," as one correspondent located in London expresses it. The National City bank has been making a desperate effort to import a little gold and got a very small amount from France. For years, the gold standard countries of Europe, when er they got in a tight place, have fled to silver-using France for aid and now Wall street is reduced to the same expedient.

THE PLUTOCRATS' CREED

The creed of the plutocrats has at last been formulated and officially promulgated. It is as follows:

"It is better for society on the whole that its surplus wealth fall into the hands of the few to be by them disposed of as they see fit. Given, then, a strong sense of trusteeship for the public on the part of the wealthy few—we have a better disposition of surplus riches in the present order of things than would be the case were surplus wealth more evenly distributed."

Under this creed it is better for the public, that aldermen should be bribed, legislators bought at so much a head, thousands of men ruined by favoritism on the railroads, that the people should be forced to pay extortionate prices for the necessities of life and hundreds of millions accumulated in the hands of three or four men to be given away, than it would be to have honest city councilmen, upright legislators, all treated alike in the way of rates on the roads and men prevented from forcing the people to pay extortionate prices for the actual necessities of life. It is by those means that these enormous accumulations of wealth have been made. It is better for mankind that a few men should steal millions and then give away part of their stealings than that wealth should stay in the ownership of those who created it. That is the doctrine.

This astonishing creed is attracting the attention of economists everywhere. John A. Hobson, the distinguished English economist, attacks it at various points. He says:

"It is not always easy to trace the origins of great wealth. It is sometimes accomplished by the increment of land values, by combinations to secure control of the market—limit the output; by rebates and discriminations, tariff manipulations, lobbying to that end; by speculative coups, etc.

"Those engaged in private charities know the dangers of promiscuous giving. What about the public? Has it no character to lose? Does not charity buy off justice? . . . Is there no loss of independence in this? I challenge any one to deny that these methods of getting money for public purposes do not awake in the receiver at any rate that sentiment of patronage which is the mortal enemy of independence in an individual or in a city."

We have a Carnegie-millionaire-gift library here in Lincoln. We do not know what the records show, but from occasional visits there it appears that it is not doing half the good to the public that the old library did. The common people look upon it as a place for the rich and they are not at home there as they were in the one that they themselves created and supported. Millionaire charities are alike a curse to the giver and receiver.

IS IT A GOOD TRUST?

And now comes the Springfield (Mass.) Republican, following the example of The Independent, and wants Teddy to tell us whether the Standard Oil trust is a "good trust" or a "bad trust." It says that Rockefeller has raised the price of oil 3½ cents a gallon since the beginning of the hard coal strike and that he made 45 per cent on his investment last year, while capital generally did not make over 5 or 6 per cent. It don't think that "publicity" will mend matters. After giving the above facts in the case it remarks:

"Is the Standard Oil company, then, a good trust or a bad one? What says the president and all the rest who are talking about trusts as being good or bad? Here also is publicity. How effective is it in preventing extortion? Does the fact that Mr. Rockefeller gives a small part of his oil monopoly gains to education make the trust a good one, when otherwise it would be bad? Or if it is a good trust anyway, where can be found an example of a bad trust?"

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