

**"HALF SLAVE-HALF FREE"**

Mr. Albright, in his communication this week, makes what on the surface appears to be a telling argument in favor of either socialism or ideal anarchy—one extreme or the other. He refers to Lincoln's famous saying that the United States could not exist "half slave, half free," and from this draws the conclusion that society cannot exist "half individuals, half corporations."

We might carry this further and say that society cannot exist "half males, half females"—but that might sound absurd to those who believe that society could not exist at all without both, because life itself would soon cease. Lincoln meant that the union of states could not stand if in part of them slavery existed and in part of them free labor. It must be either all slave or all free—so far as the states were concerned, but being all slave did not mean that every person must be a slave. There could be no masters in such a case.

The fallacy in Mr. Albright's position lies in the assumption that in some of the states individual ownership prevails, while in others corporation ownership prevails. The fact is that both kinds of ownership prevail in every state, and the Lincoln analogy fails.

As the Independent views it, it is not the fault of corporate ownership, of itself, that present conditions exist, but that the difficulty lies in permitting corporations or individuals to own the necessary property and perform certain services which in all ages have been regarded as the prerogative of sovereigns. Caesar's superscription was upon the coins; it was the king's highway.

Today the ownership of those steel-shod highways—the railroads—makes the owners kings, and the mere fact of corporate ownership does not matter. Individual ownership by Rockefeller would not change the fact that he would be the king as long as he retained control of the highways.

So with the issue of money. National banks have succeeded to the kingly prerogative to coin and issue money, and whether the ownership were in corporations dominated by Rockefeller, or in the oil magnate himself would make no difference.

Carrying Mr. Albright's reasoning to its logical conclusion, the outcome would be either all government and no individuals, or all individuals and no government. Neither of these extremes will ever be reached. The Independent feels assured. The two tendencies correct each other much the same as centripetal and centrifugal forces. Populism may not be "centrifugal" enough to suit the ideas of some, but it is moving along somewhere near the mean between the two extremes. The people's party may die, as Mr. Albright believes it has died, but populism—under some name—will exist as long as men strive to better their condition.—D.

Prof. Shailer Mathews of the Chicago university divinity school, at a minister's institute in Milwaukee the other day said: "Many of the people to whom you preach do not have any desire to know the fatherliness of God. When preaching to them you do not want to give them the gospel of God's love; you want to give them hell. Most people don't care a rap about righteousness. They are busy with the accumulation of property." That is a pretty good kind of preaching. It is the sort that The Independent has been doing, but every time we give the corporations, Wall street and the mullet heads "hell," Doc. Bixby or some one else puts up a protest.

**WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST**

An interview with W. R. Hearst was sent out by the Associated press last Sunday that any newspaper man, after once reading it, will declare is not only genuine, but of that kind of interviews that are carefully prepared in the quiet of some retreat and sent to the manager of the Associated press with a request that it be sent all the papers taking the Associated press dispatches. Let populists read the following sentence:

"I supported Cleveland three times and Bryan twice. I expect to support the nominee of the party at St. Louis, whoever he may be.—William Randolph Hearst.

It is very doubtful if a prominent candidate of either of the old parties ever made such a statement as that before. It proclaims the author a man without principle, a man who would support any man, or any set of principles. There are no qualifications to the statement. If Dave Hill, Parker or Cleveland is nominated, Hearst and his papers will support the candidate. What the man is, what principles he may advocate, is nothing to

Hearst. The only qualification is to be the nominee of the democratic national convention.

One of two things seems probable in connection with this interview. Hearst either got away from his guardians, Brisbane and Ihmsen, and made a fool of himself, or he has made his peace with Wall street.

In what kind of a fix will this leave General Weaver, George Fred Willits and several other men of that kind who have been for fighting Hearst delegates? Will they, too, support Parker or Cleveland if either is nominated?

**RIVETING THE CHAINS**

The supreme court step by step is riveting the chains on the wrists of labor. Last Monday that court laid down the principle that a telegraph operator for a railroad company and a fireman on a railroad engine are "fellow servants," and that the negligence of the former causing the death of the latter in the operation of trains was a risk the fireman assumed and was not ground for damages against the railroad company.

A fireman on the Northern Pacific road was killed in consequence of a telegraph operator sending a wrong order and the widow of the fireman sued the road for damages. On this new advance toward more firmly establishing that abominable ruling called the "fellow servant law," the court stood as usual, "five to four." According to all decisions heretofore rendered, the telegraph operator was the agent of the railroad and his negligence made the railroad liable, but the five members held that "the negligence of the operator was the negligence of a fellow servant of the fireman, the risk of which the latter assumed."

The result of that ruling, if followed, will be to relieve the railroads of all liability for killing and disabling any of their employees. It will always be the fault of "a fellow servant." The railroads have got this decision from the plutocrats on the supreme bench, they have raised rates in this state 17 per cent during the last three or four years by varying classifications, and now the mullet heads who vote 'em straight, will also be willing to let them avoid their just share of taxes.

During the next four years it is probable that three or four of these judges who are very old will retire or die. If Roosevelt or Parker is elected president, young men who hold the same views will be appointed to hold that court for plutocracy, imperialism and capitalism for another generation. On to Springfield.

**MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP**

The telephone rates in Glasgow, and the system runs far out into the country, with an unlimited number of calls over the entire system is \$25.50 a year. There is no installation charge, and no dues of any kind other than the annual payment of this amount. A toll service is rendered for \$17 a year, with an additional charge of a penny for each outward message, with unlimited inward calls free. On a party line with more than four subscribers the rate is \$6 per annum, with an unlimited number of calls.

In New York and Brooklyn there are different systems and it costs 40 cents to telephone to any part of the city and 50 cents to get a connection with Brooklyn. Newark, N. J., is only 25 miles away, and the rate is 75 cents for a five minutes' conversation. Citizens pay five times as much a thousand feet for gas in Hastings-on-Hudson as is charged in Glasgow, and it does not cost half as much to put it in the mains. They pay four times as much for electric light. They pay 2 cents a mile to ride on the railroad between that village and New York, which is about four times the rate charged for suburban transit in any part of Great Britain or Europe. But the people of New York are so used to being robbed that they actually enjoy it and resent the suggestion that relief should be sought either by legislation or public ownership.

There are 11,000 subscribers to the municipal telephone system of Glasgow. The private company predicted that the insanity of the management in reducing rates and giving decent service would result in financial ruin, but the investment showed a profit of \$70,000 last year, and the indications are that the present year will put the figure beyond the \$100,000 mark. In that event the management will materially reduce the rates. It has no intention of extorting a profit from those who patronize the service. Surely the Scotch are a strange people.

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Glasgow will pay not more than 30 cents for gas. Oil and coal cost much more in Scotland than in any part of the United States.

How much will New York and Chicago be paying when Glasgow furnishes gas at actual cost price? Strange as it may seem, cheap gas does not seem to destroy the independence nor deaden the ambition of the people of Glasgow. We are assured by certain interests that it will have that effect in this country.

The following statistics concerning the extent and growth of publicly owned undertakings may be of interest to students of this problem. There are in Great Britain 1,045 water plants owned by cities, boroughs or districts, as against 251 owned by private companies. Every city of consequence, with the exception of London, owns and operates its water supply plant, and London is moving for public ownership.

There are 256 public gas plants against 454 privately owned ones, but the number of the former is increasing, while that of the latter is stationary or decreasing. On capital invested the cities have made 6½ per cent, against 5-1-4 for the private companies. The cities have charged an average price of 64 cents a thousand feet, while the private companies have charged 70 cents. The total profit last year to the cities owning their plants was about \$111,500,000.

There are in Great Britain 142 municipally owned street railway systems, against 154 belonging to private companies, but the former represent an outlay of nearly \$122,000,000 compared with \$85,000,000 of private capital. The mileage is 1,067 municipal against 704 private. The percentage of profit on money invested is 73-4 for the cities and 43-4 for the private companies. This percentage is an increase over last year of 13-8 for the cities, and a decrease of 5-8 for the private companies. The net profit to the cities was \$8,000,000, and to the companies \$4,800,000. These figures are official, and do not go far to support the contention of Robert T. Porter to the effect that public ownership is a failure in Great Britain. He wrote a series of articles to that end recently and is being either denounced or laughed at all over the United Kingdom. Mr. Porter is responsible for similar statements which have

been printed widely in the United States.

Populism was not met in Great Britain with the cry of "anarchy," "socialism," "lunacy," and its advocates were not called "long-haired and wild-eyed cranks." When the propositions of populism were first presented there, the highest culture of the kingdom first investigated and then adopted them. One of the most distinguished republicans in Lincoln said the other day in The Independent office that he favored municipal ownership, but when he thought of the men who ran politics in this city, he was afraid to trust such things in their hands, which was a confession that the republican leaders here were a set of thieves and embezzlers, or only lacked the opportunity of becoming such.

The barbarities attending the eviction of people on the east side of New York who were unable to pay the exorbitant rents, has been more than equalled in Omaha where the few dishes and bed of an old couple were seized, and both of them thrown out on the street, resulting in the death of the old man and reducing to starvation the aged woman left a desolate widow. It is now said that every lease made in Omaha will hereafter contain a chattel mortgage on all the household goods down to the most cherished keepsakes and little treasures. The poor have no consideration shown them in a city run by grafters, gamblers and g. o. p. managers. It matters not whether it is in the east or in the west, the favoritism shown wealth produces the same results. On to Springfield.

The government crop report for May states that the acreage of winter wheat is 5,472,000 less than it was on the first of May last year. It says that 218,000 acres of winter wheat has been plowed up in Nebraska alone, which statement The Independent very much doubts.

In this country they talk about the "yellow peril," but over in China they are more interested in the "white peril." All of which goes to show that the way you look at a thing has a great deal to do with the conclusion you form.