

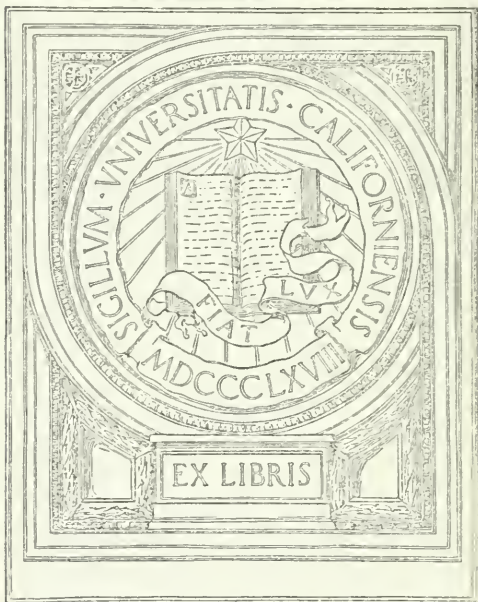
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AN EXAMINATION OF THE TENDENCIES OF
PRIVILEGE IN THE UNITED STATES

BY

HORATIO W. SEYMOUR



CHICAGO

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I.

ERRING DEMOCRACIES.

IT has been said of republics that they do not possess the power of self reformation. There is no record of a corrupted democracy reclaimed.

Monarchies have been enfeebled even to the point of dissolution, and, by a happy change of rulers or of dynasties, have rehabilitated themselves; but misguided popular governments, though their fate has been foreseen and the causes impelling it have been known, have gone irresistibly to extinction.

The explanation is obvious. Monarchies may be debauched by a weak sovereign and a corrupt court, but, if wiser and better men succeed to power, remedial measures promptly taken will correct the more glar-

ing wrongs and remove wholly the principal causes of popular decadence. The evil influence of a vicious monarch, surrounded by a profligate aristocracy, will soon communicate itself to the subjects. In like manner the wholesome example of an enlightened ruling class cannot fail to exert a powerful effect for good, even upon a populace long accustomed to the excesses of a thoroughly despicable court.

While a democratic government may at times be better or worse than the people from whom it springs, sooner or later it will reach the popular level and remain there.

The representative character of republics is the one feature of popular government that is not susceptible of change. The people are the sole source of authority; and, if government is not what it should be, it is because the people are not what they should be. If popular government descends from one lower level to another there need be no doubt that the people themselves preceded it in the decline.

Whatever tends to weaken or to corrupt individual character in a republic, there-

fore, operates unerringly upon the government of that republic, and when the moral fibre of a majority of the people has been destroyed the possibility of reform is gone.

People who cannot or will not reform themselves will not undertake to reform their government. Its very vices commend it to them. Its infamies do not displease them, because they recognize them as their own. They listen languidly to the exhortations of men who would awaken their pride and virtue. They rush eagerly to the support of leaders who excite their passions and play upon their ignorance. They glory in their delusions, and the hope of personal advantage leads them on to destruction.

A corrupted democracy never has been reformed: it is probable that a corrupted democracy never will be reformed.

II.

MONARCHIES AND DEMOCRACIES.

THE fundamental idea of a monarchy, the principle that most sharply distinguishes it from a democracy, is Privilege. The fundamental idea of a pure democracy, the principle that distinguishes it most sharply from a monarchy, is Equality.

Divested of all the eye-filling appurtenances of royalty, a constitutional monarchy does not differ much from a republic, except that it necessarily divides and separates its subjects into various orders and estates, some of them enjoying special privileges that are denied to the others. That is the essence of monarchy. The introduction and growth of privilege in a republic can not fail to be a menace to the government ; so also the introduction and growth of equality in a monarchy can not fail to be a menace to the government.

The world is familiar with the assumption on the part of citizens of republics that they

are superior to the subjects of monarchies. In the best estate of a pure republic there is reason for such a contention. The strong and resourceful man who subscribes to the doctrine of "Equal rights for all and special privileges for none," is morally the superior of the man of similar attainments who supports and takes advantage of the monarchical idea, that the classes best able to take care of themselves must have the discriminating favor of their government.

Citizens of a true republic, taken as a whole, have a right to assume a superiority to the subjects of a monarchy, for of their number are hosts of men who have voluntarily surrendered advantages which, under a less enlightened system, their natural power and opportunities might easily have secured for them.

The participation of an entire people, the rich as well as the poor, the wise as well as the ignorant, in the formation of a republic, manifests at every step of the proceeding many of the traits which in private life go to make up the most elevated character.

Greed, pride, distrust, ambition, injustice

and vainglory lie at the base of every dynasty and of every aristocracy. There can be no true democracy without self-abnegation, mutual confidence and a desire for absolute justice and equality, on the part of the very class which in a monarchy displays propensities exactly the reverse of these.

With this fact in view, the citizens of a republic may be pardoned if they sometimes extol their own institutions; for the weakest as well as the strongest among them knows that, so far as human imperfections will admit, the golden rule has been carried into the state. They have practiced collectively the virtues that everywhere are deemed admirable in the individual. Deference to the rights of others, a love of justice for the sake of justice—that is the essence of democracy.

No matter how enlightened a monarchy may be, so long as it retains the customary attachments of caste and privilege, it must perpetuate more or less of barbarism. The ostentation of royalty and aristocracy, devised to impress the humble, only accentuates the barriers raised by generations dead and gone

against those who, while the institution lasts, are to be its victims. One class may sympathize with a lower class and may seek to ameliorate its condition, but that which actuates it is condescension and not justice. The one great civilizing and humanizing idea,—that of brotherhood, is absent.

Democracy carries into the state the equality, the trust, the fair play of a family. No man who is a citizen is a stranger. There is no tinsel to dazzle his eyes; there are no awful presences, no ponderous titles, to fill him with dismay. There is no pomp to beguile him, and there are no largesses to corrupt him. More important than all else, there are no laws and no "institutions" handed down from a ravening ancestry to thwart his aspirations and to deprive him of the opportunities for advancement which capacity and industry may open to him.

To the extent that a republic fulfills the promise of its founders, it removes from one of the most important theaters of human action—that of government—the baseness, the selfishness, the wrong, against which every moralist has most strenuously contended.

To the extent that it departs from these high ideals, it relapses toward an inferior civilization, and, by retaining the forms of justice without their substance, emphasizes the mockery of all pretense and the danger of every falsehood.

III.

BARONS, NEW AND OLD.

THE first century of the American Constitution terminated in 1887. Some of the objects of that instrument, as set forth in the preamble, are to establish justice, to promote the general welfare, and to secure the blessings of liberty.

Justice was not established for a few, but for all. It was not the welfare of a class that was to be promoted; it was the general welfare. The blessings of liberty were to be made secure, not for a season or for a number, but forever and for all.

The first century of the American Constitution closed with Privilege as well rooted in the legislative practices of the country as the most consistent monarchist could have wished. If its approach had been stealthy, its growing arrogance had made it careless of disguises and reckless of danger.

Addressing itself to a government pledged on every hand to justice and equality, it de-

manded for itself, with magnificent impudence, rights and opportunities which were denied to others. Assuming feudal airs and responsibilities, it exacted from the law-making power of the republic concessions designed for its own exclusive profit and necessarily for the oppression of a more numerous class equally entitled to the protecting favor of government.

Having the opportunity and the power to control public affairs, it improved the one and exerted the other, in such a manner as to reverse the beneficent policy of the republic, and to enter upon a retrogressive movement unexampled in the history of modern nations.

When the barons of King John's time forced that representative of the absolutism of the thirteenth century to surrender to them some of the powers that he had arrogated to himself, there was a distinct gain for liberty, though the idea of equality was not recognized.

When the barons of America forced the United States government to confer upon themselves exclusively privileges sacredly

held in trust for all, there was a notable loss of liberty, for a great and noble human aspiration was perverted by the process.

Twenty-five nobles were appointed in King John's time to see that the provisions of Magna Charta were faithfully observed. The barons of our own day have been spared this exertion. The provisions of their great charters of injustice are everywhere loyally enforced by the official agents of the sovereigns whom they despoil.

The unequal laws and the dishonest policies which greed has devised bear the signatures of presidents, governors and mayors; and their proper formality is attested by the speakers and presidents of the legislative bodies, national and state, which have given them their sanction.

They meet every requirement of the constitution save one—they violate its spirit. They bear the great seals of the republic and of the commonwealth, but they are spotted all over with evidences of triumphant avarice and of trusts betrayed.

IV.

PRIVILEGE UNDER MASK.

PRIVILEGE in a monarchy is a long standing assumption. It has no apologies to offer; its candor is its chief virtue; it stands forth in its proper person, with no pretense of philanthropy and no claim to unselfishness. It is so thoroughly consistent that it adopts no disguises. It believes, and it has taught most of the people whom it oppresses to believe that, as the rich are the wise and good, it is proper that the laws should favor the rich and that the rich should exercise a controlling influence in government.

Privilege in the United States is a pretense and an intrusion. It pretends to serve the interests of all, while, as a matter of fact, it has regard only for the welfare of the few; it is rooted in falsehood. It bribes some men, it corrupts many men, and it deludes millions of men; it never is honest; it never avows its real purpose. It thrives only as it

misleads the masses of the people and perverts such as cannot be deceived.

Privilege in America comprehends every cunning subversion of law to the selfish purposes of an individual. It is so well grounded in the policies of the government and in the habits of the people, that American political contests now turn upon it almost exclusively, and it is exerting an ever-widening influence upon commercial and industrial affairs.

It is the organized greed of an era that will be forever memorable for the remorseless aggrandizement of wealth. It is the militant avarice of a class as shrewd, as unprincipled, as daring, as cruel as the world ever saw—as the imagination of man ever delineated. It is the exaltation of all that is sordid in humanity, all that is wolfish in the powerful, all that is base in the ignorant and weak.

Privilege in America stands at the doors of Congress and demands laws which place it on an equality with the government in the receipt of moneys drawn from the people. Privilege graciously permits the treasury to have one dollar if it can have two dollars.

Privilege asks in the name of labor, and receives in the name of monopoly. Privilege begs or bullies, whines or thunders, cajoles or threatens, exactly as the case seems to warrant.

Privilege disavows every responsibility. Because it can persuade the federal government to betray its citizens, it is the more vociferous in its demand that the state governments shall do the same. It avoids state and municipal taxation by the same methods that it employs to secure an unjust partnership in the imposition of federal taxation.

Privilege makes many solemn engagements which it does not observe. Privilege invents many plausible excuses for its demands. Privilege is the prolific source of most of the subtle and dangerous errors which everywhere confront the American people. Privilege has many agents—men who speak in its name, who gorge its greed, who secure its ends, and who assume to pledge it to the fulfillment of its self-imposed obligations; but, their work accomplished, they are repudiated by their principals, and nothing is left but the evidence of a colossal infamy.

V.

WHAT IT DEMANDS.

TARIFFS and other taxes levied for private rather than for public ends, bounties of every style and description, subsidies bestowed in many different ways for the purpose of bolstering selfish interests, exclusive grants of franchises by which opportunities are monopolized, pensions to the extent that they may have become mere largesses, unwise and unnecessary legislative interference with the natural rights of men, by means of which some wicked advantage is conferred upon a few for a time, and nearly all gifts of public lands or moneys to corporations, are the basis of Privilege as it exists in America to-day.

The recipients of all these favors stand together. Singly they can accomplish little, but united in a compact and resourceful organization, representing what a president of the United States has aptly termed the "communism of pelf," they are all powerful in shaping the destiny of the nation.

This element lives and thrives on the industry of the people. We greet its representatives with smiles when they come begging or bullying for more. We dignify the class into a national issue. We maintain a great political party whose main object is to sustain its impudence and to lend respectability to its greed. We make its covetousness a matter of daily thought and of most solicitous care.

We read its newspapers with patience and we listen respectfully, sometimes enthusiastically, to its orators, although from neither of them comes an idea but plunder, or an inspiration but selfishness. We submit humbly to its reproaches and its impudence. At its command we abdicate our reason and our intelligence as well as our liberties. We wink at its faintly disguised greed. We accept its foolish assurance that it sustains the people, and that the people do not sustain it. We maintain a pretense of belief in its patriotism. We march in its processions, and we rend the air with our shouts as its advocates, most of them ignorant and all of them conscienceless, approach. We permit

its agents and representatives to usurp the places which statesmen should occupy, to masquerade before the world as types of American leadership, and to spread upon our statute books in our name laws that some day will bring down upon us the reproach of mankind as surely as the earth shall endure.

Appealing to the ignorance as well as to the immorality of a nation, this class has acquired its present prestige, and it looks forward to a future of increased security, by the ease with which a people with somewhat too keen an eye upon the main chance may be deluded. The chief pity of it all, the darkest side of it all, is that the American republic, with ample opportunity to inform itself as to the nature of this controversy, is not even now discussing the right and wrong of the matter. It is content, apparently, to consider the question on the low plane which Privilege itself has selected. It is satisfied to let the argument rest on the purely commercial lines of profit and loss.

The issue that confronts us is not: "Is this policy right, or is it wrong?" It is the

shameful truth that all contention, all investigation, all prospect or possibility of what we call a solution of the problem, is embodied in the question: "Does it pay?"

VI.

THE ABERRATION OF A PEOPLE.

ACTUATING the great pecuniary interests which have intrenched themselves in the laws and policies of government in this country, is a spirit of gain so eager and reckless that, even in its effects upon men as individuals, it long ago excited the condemnation of the world. It is a spirit which fills our mad houses and other retreats with wrecks and castaways; which costs thousands of lives annually; which has tenanted many a suicide's grave, and which has broken down a host of men old before their time.

It is a spirit which hesitates at no sacrifice that promises gain. It is a spirit which absorbs the energies, the soul, the heart of men; which makes them reckless of every moral obligation, reckless of ease, reckless of health and life, reckless even of the hereafter.

It is this feverish passion, this delirious craze for wealth, which has laid hold of gov-

ernment in this republic and has made Privilege institutional. It is the aberration of a people given up as no other people ever was to the frenzy of acquisition, which has blinded the eyes of millions to the wrong and the danger of existing policies.

The spirit of trade, the spirit that is quick to take advantage of the weak or the careless, the spirit that is ever on the alert for profit, the spirit that scruples at no trickery or deception promising an immediate return in money, is the spirit that is lodged in our laws to-day.

It is to this spirit that we owe the prevalent idea, that the government supports the people and that the people do not support the government. This spirit has brought into life innumerable political industries, which, in turn, have invited to this country some millions of working people who would not and could not have come here unassisted, and whose wretchedness has become a national scandal.

This spirit has taxed all the people for the benefit of a few of the people. This spirit is accountable for the error so indus-

triously propagated, that it is the duty of government to provide work and wages for all. To this spirit is due the fact that the political business man enters upon no new venture until he has made sure of a favoring law at Washington or at some state capital.

This spirit has developed our manufacturing industries at the expense of all other industries, to an extent that enables them to supply any and all markets now open to them by working half time, their "protected" labor starving or tramping the other half of the time.

This spirit has made it feasible for one class to pay some wages by taking from another class the ability to pay any wages. This spirit has forced capital and labor out of naturally productive industries into naturally unproductive industries.

This spirit has made every legislative and every executive officer of the government a huckster, every foreign treaty a trade with some domineering private interest, and many a judgment of the departments or the courts a mere registration of the will of some commercial or industrial potentate who chances

to be in a position to compel action advantageous to himself.

This is the spirit of aggression, individual as against individual, to curb which governments, particularly republican governments, are instituted among men. When such governments abdicate their true functions and enlist on the side of the avaricious and powerful to oppress the people who owe them allegiance and who have a right to look to them for protection from this very evil, the rule of force and fraud is substituted for that of justice and honesty.

Privilege thus gives a flavor of merchandising to our politics, and carries all of the petty and detestable methods of the money grubber into the highest places of government. Privilege in Europe sometimes concerns itself with other things, but Privilege in America never has a thought except as to gain. Its party platforms, its political speeches, its executive papers, its laws and its maxims, support and lend color of truth to the assertion of the distinguished railroad president who declared recently in an interview, that the dollar is the one thing

sacred to Americans. Privilege pitches all of our political contests and discussions in this low key, from which there is rarely a variation.

VII.

ON A LOW PLANE.

THE fathers of the republic unhappily sought to compromise the question of human bondage; but, with that pitiful exception, they formed a government of justice, equality and mutual confidence, which was to stand forever above the strife and turmoil of the people's lives, holding the scales with an even hand, protecting and encouraging every lawful enterprise and offering no advantage to the great and the powerful that was not open also to the humblest citizen in the land.

Privilege has changed all this. It establishes a system which meddles with and oppresses industry, holds out false hopes of gain to the many, and makes certain only the profits of the few. By unexampled abuses of the taxing power, by promises never intended to be observed, by sophistries and falsehoods so obvious that even their repetition is a reflection on the intelligence of the people, Privilege has convinced

many of the American people that laws designed to oppress most men for the benefit of a few men are of greater value to a republic than the old principles of justice and equality. By these means also Privilege has convinced many of the American people that a system which taxes one man for the benefit of another man is to be credited with the wealth of a bountiful nature, with the blessings of providence and with the fruits of all industry, in a nation more ambitious and laborious than any other on earth.

Not every American who has subscribed to this evil doctrine has been deluded ; many are not deceived. The mass of its supporters may be honest, but many—some millions of them—are arrayed under the banner of Privilege, not because they have been misled, not because they are ignorant of the injustice of the proposition, but because they think that in one way or another they are benefited by it, and because they do not care whom or how many it may oppress, so long as they can figure out a little gain for themselves.

This is an unpalatable truth, but it is

truth. Our political contests show it; the utterances of our party leaders show it; the actions of vast numbers of our voters show it. Political battles in recent years have been won and lost by the shifting of this element from one side to the other. It is ready to vote for Privilege if it can be convinced that Privilege is able and willing to do all that it promises. It has no higher motive than this. It has no other conception, even of its own welfare.

Promises of dividends and fortunes to one class are no more alluring, if they can be fulfilled, than are promises of wages to another class, if they can be fulfilled. There are several millions of Americans, the descendants and successors of the men who established the doctrine of equal rights, who, on more than one occasion, have demonstrated their willingness to accept the bribe of Privilege if, by any ingenuity of its own or by any fortunate circumstance, Privilege can make it appear that it has kept its part of the bargain.

The party of Privilege bases its claim to popular favor on such evidence as it can

bring to the support of its contention that it divides the spoils fairly. The party nominally opposed to Privilege is content in most places with the production of such proof as it can find that the division is unfair.

On this low plane the discussion proceeds, while Privilege as such, making new conquests of important outposts, menaces the very citadel of liberty itself.

VIII.

A QUESTION OF MORALS.

HERE is a question of morals that demands the attention of every honest man—a question that must be settled, and settled right, at no distant day, if this country is to remain a republic in anything but name. With all men equal before the law we are already divided into two classes, one that oppresses and one that is oppressed. Because this infamy has been successfully practiced for a generation, is there an American infatuated enough to suppose that it can last forever? Do the intelligent and patriotic citizens of the republic, who, for one reason or another, have winked at this atrocity, imagine that it can end in anything but disaster?

With such an example as Privilege thus sets before the young, no one need be surprised if the coming generation of Americans shall develop the most colossal scoundrelism that the world ever has known. All the landmarks are down; all the guide posts

removed. We now are teaching inequality and not equality; we are showing how much better it is to be unjust and rich than it is to be just and poor; we are holding up the government as a victim to be robbed or a robber to be enlisted on our side when we set out on our forays against our fellow men.

We no longer draw inspiration from the heroes who taught equal and exact justice and who bequeathed to us a republic that was to be always the best hope of mankind. The constitution we have flouted, the golden rule we have forgotten, the decalogue we have relegated to the garret, as we have turned lightly in pursuit of the golden bait offered by men who have made Privilege and plunder their watchwords.

What do we say to the youth about to enter upon the serious business of life? Do we assure him that success is to be reached only by industry, frugality and honesty? Not at all. We point to a shorter cut. By our example we tell him to go to Congress and beg or buy a law that will enable him to tax his neighbor. Do we say to the aspir-

ing boy that to succeed he must deserve success? We do not. We point to the men whom Privilege has made powerful, and we say to him, Get a bounty, or a subsidy or an appropriation.

Do we hold up scrupulous honesty and undeviating justice as the things most to be desired and most likely to lead to fortune? Never. We say to the lads of our day, Seek out some unfair advantage by means of a wicked law and then get rich quickly. No matter if you do have to bribe and bully your way to success. Who cares? You will have plenty of company, and if you are a smart rogue you will find numerous dull but influential rogues who will assist you.

Do we refer the young man who aspires to political honors to the lives and precepts of the stalwart heroes who made the republic known and honored around the world? No. Our present system says to him as plainly as words can frame a thought: Never mind the old men; they were antiquated and slow. Take off your hat to some selfish interest; prove your capacity to serve King Iron, King Coal, King Silver,

King Copper, King Glass, King Sugar, King Tin, King Salt, King Wool and King Lumber; and then, with their money in your pocket and a lie upon your lips, go before the people whom you are to delude and betray!

That is the lesson that America is teaching to-day while our politicians are discussing the profit and loss of crime; while our newspapers are marshaling statistical tables on either side of immorality; while good men are footing up columns and making laborious comparisons between the varying results of dishonesty; while learned economists are toiling through dismal pages and chapters of useless books, called forth by the pros and cons of oppression; and while even the most courageous reformers are adjusting their scales with the nicety of an apothecary, to measure the possible difference between policies that they know to be wrong and policies that they know to be far enough from right.

That is the lesson that Americans are teaching while the dreary contest, in many respects a sham battle, goes stupidly on,

with no prospect in sight but disaster, and no certainty that complications here or there may not arise any day and compel for another generation an abandonment of the entire discussion.

IX.

PARTIES OF MORAL IDEAS.

WE have a great political party nominally arrayed against Privilege, which does not fully represent the real sentiment of those people who are uncompromisingly hostile to the idea. It has enjoyed the support of this element in the past, for the hope has prevailed that eventually it would rise to the emergency and constitute itself the champion of popular rights.

It will not be denied that it has done much, but it has not done enough ; it has yet to prove its capacity to adopt a moral idea and carry it to a triumphant issue. Its counsels are divided ; it speaks in equivocal tones. It has stood resolutely for a curtailment of the pretensions of Privilege, and, at no little cost to itself, it has fought a good fight for popular rights on grounds of expediency. It has yet to demonstrate its ability to take higher ground and to pursue the contest on the broader plane of good morals.

It has carried the contest to a point where its own dishonest and self-seeking members have been forced to reveal their treachery and take sides openly with the enemy. It remains to be seen whether it has the virtue and the courage to cast out these false friends, and by the pursuit of justice for the sake of justice, keep in its ranks the great hosts of honest men already there, and win from the thoughtless or the doubting recruits enough to make certain the ultimate triumph of the right.

It was the boast of the political organization which brought about the destruction of slavery, that it was a party of great moral ideas. A remnant of another and an earlier political organization styled itself the conscience Whigs. There was a good deal of cant and humbug about both of these claims, but for each there was a certain basis in fact. One of them, at least, had this foundation, that the party making it took for its chief object the destruction of an immoral idea.

When a true party of anti-Privilege takes the field in this country it will have a better claim to the title of a party of great moral

ideas than any other that ever existed. The anti-slavery party was a sectional organization, made up of men who had no possible pecuniary, social, personal or even sentimental interest in the institution whose destruction it sought. It did not prescribe morals for itself; it prescribed them for other people. In all this land there were not a dozen abolitionists who were to lose a farthing by abolition, while there were thousands of abolitionists who hoped to profit by it in one way or another.

The abolitionists called themselves a party of moral ideas, but they lacked a great deal of that morality which first conquers self and which subdues the profitable vices which we ourselves practice. They may be likened to persons zealous in the prosecution of foreign missions, except that they proselyted by force and not by persuasion, and that they hated the people whom they were to reform. They were separated from them by almost impassable barriers; they had no possible sympathy with them; they were not similarly situated. By accident slavery was a southern and not a northern

institution. The anti-slavery party of the north was accidentally right, as the pro-slavery party of the south was accidentally wrong.

It is vastly different with the party that is opposed to Privilege. This organization is not sectional; it is national. It embraces within its membership thousands of men who at one time or another have believed, or who may now believe, that they are in a position to profit by the unjust system whose overthrow they seek. Its members inhabit every county and township in America. They have supporters of Privilege for neighbors and associates; they meet them everywhere, and, in the main, they respect them.

It was practically impossible for a northern man to become a slave owner; he could have moved to the south, as a few did, but the cost of the change was too great for many to meet. There is nothing to prevent the average member of the party of anti-Privilege from availing himself of the unjust privileges enjoyed by his opponents, if he be so disposed. If he is a capitalist and the present tariff laws do not suit his purpose,

the way to Congress is open to him. If he is a working man, he may easily enlist in the ranks of protected labor and delude himself with the idea that he is receiving, or may sometime receive, some of the plunder.

Because one-half of the American people have resolutely put behind them all the bribes which Privilege offers, it may be said with truth that their party, deficient as it is in many respects, is the moral party of the day, for it has staked its existence upon the one question here involved. It lives or dies by that issue.

The party of anti-Privilege is arrayed against selfishness and injustice which have become national, if not dynastic. To achieve success it must resist all the allurements of wealth and power; it must maintain its strength through good report and through ill report; it must inspire its members not only with the zeal of converts, but with the certain knowledge of right which belongs usually only to the tried soldiers of faith. It must not be dismayed by defeat, or by the treachery of pretended friends, or by the desertion of troops of supporters who have

not the character to endure privation for the rewards which conscience alone can bestow. In a word, it must carry through every level of politics, from the lowest to the highest, the doctrine that, no matter who may profit by it, the practice of taxing one man for the benefit of another man is wrong—wrong in morals, wrong in politics, wrong in business, wrong in government.

This wrong, which makes evil its good and which proclaims iniquity as its highest and noblest aspiration, has invited destruction. It will not fall if it be attacked merely on grounds of expediency, or of policy, or of convenience. It must go down, like any other immorality, in shame and disgrace, vanquished by the righteous, and detested in its ruin even by its own authors and dupes.

It cannot be overthrown by counter appeals to the selfishness of men. Its foes must recognize it as it is—the most formidable enemy that the republic has yet encountered, an enemy stronger and more to be dreaded than any of the invading hosts of Britain or of the Confederacy. Its attractiveness must not be underestimated or

denied. Its ability and its willingness to improve the worldly condition of some men must not be belittled.

Repulsive morally, its blandishments are too numerous, and its capacity to reward good service and to punish opposition is too easily demonstrated, to make it worth while for any antagonist to misrepresent its power or to minimize its fascination. It must be assailed on higher ground and with higher motives. The moral sense of the nation alone will prevail against it.

X.

OPPRESSOR AND OPPRESSED.

ONCE enlisted in the struggle against slavery, the moral forces of the republic demonstrated the inherent weakness of all error and the invincible power of the right. There are many reasons to suppose that, if summoned now to another contest possessing many characteristics in common with the one that led to the extinction of human bondage on this continent, they would respond with equal spirit and energy.

Appeals to the American conscience that proceed from the timorous or the doubtful will fall upon dull ears; there have been too many such already. The call must come with emphasis from men who neither know nor care what effect the utter destruction of a great wrong will have upon individuals, interests, or localities, but who will be filled with a splendid confidence that right-doing will bring its sure reward. Even-handed justice can inflict no injury upon honest men;

and if hardship result to those who have profited by injustice, it will be insignificant in comparison with that which they have visited upon the people at large.

It took time and suffering to convince the American people that slavery had to go. They had juggled with the question and compromised with wrong for so long a period that millions of them, although entirely conscious of the error, were nevertheless incapable of supporting a policy that looked to its complete extermination. A hundred considerations were urged against precipitate action. But there came a time when it was apparent to all that a long step forward must be taken, and when that hour struck a man was found who had the wisdom correctly to interpret the popular will, and the firmness properly to execute it.

There were no more refinements of villainy after that. From that moment on until the last shackle was broken, no man weighed words in characterizing slavery, nor with nicely selected phrases attempted to bewilder the people as to the fate that was reserved for it; plain speech was all suffi-

cient then. The doom of slavery was written on every starry banner and was echoed around the earth from the smoking muzzles of a thousand guns.

When Mr. Lincoln came to deal with slavery as slavery, there were men who had followed him as far as that, who then turned back. They were willing to check slavery; they were willing to cripple it; they were willing to strip it of some of its power; but they were not willing to have it destroyed.

So now the earnest men who come to deal with the kindred crime of Privilege may expect that, when their serious purpose to tear down and to exterminate is made plain, many people who have followed them to that point will turn back in affright. They will be ready to compromise; they will agree to cripple or to check Privilege; they will propose lower percentages of theft; but they will not consent to the destruction of the principle itself.

The error of Privilege in America is inherent and fundamental, as the error of slavery was. It cannot be tolerated even in a small way, A small robbery is as obnox-

ious in principle as a large robbery. If one man may be taxed a small amount for the benefit of another man, the motive and the excuse will be always at hand to increase the imposition. If slavery had been left untouched in some districts, or if the blacks had been retained in bondage a part of the time and left free a part of the time, the latent spirit of injustice would have asserted itself in a demand for more territory and for longer periods of serfdom.

As these states could not remain half free and half slave, so now the people, all equal before the law, cannot much longer maintain toward each other the relationship of oppressors and oppressed. Privilege must go. It is not enough that some of it shall go; it must go to the remotest fibre; and the principle itself must be made hateful to the people whom it has deceived and plundered.

XI.

THE PRICE OF LIBERTY.

THAT the prodigious material development of the American people has been attended by some loss of character, will hardly be denied by any one familiar with public affairs.

It is not surprising that the reclamation of wildernesses, the conquest of savage aborigines, the prosecution of wars at home and abroad, the upbuilding of states, and the countless activities and aspirations of a people of unparalleled energy and ambition, absorbed public attention for many years, almost to the exclusion of everything else.

The American of fifty years ago might doubt many things which were self-evident, but his faith in his government amounted to a passion. He had been well taught, probably over-taught, on that point in an era when patriotism and egotism were in some respects interchangeable terms, and when no fact and no argument could convince him that

the sum of all the wisdom of the ages was not comprised in the institutions which he revered. All else might change or vanish, but of his liberty, of the beneficence of his government and of the equality of the laws he was sure.

The difference between this too confiding man and the American of to-day, who generally is distrustful and dissatisfied, is too remarkable to escape notice. The change was not wrought in a day or in a year; it came gradually and almost imperceptibly. In fancied security as to the undeviating justice of his government, the American's intense party spirit, his natural buoyancy, and his disposition to regard favorably and not to scrutinize too closely new projects for achieving wealth easily and speedily, made him a particularly gullible victim of the self-seeker and wonder-worker when they appeared on the scene. He had learned the story of liberty, and his all-pervading faith was well grounded, but he had forgotten—what the fathers had not failed to teach—that eternal vigilance is the price of it all.

Thus preoccupied, thus torn by rancorous

partisanship, thus lulled into fancied security by the sonorous oratory of the period, which he accepted without qualification, he did not heed, and he certainly did not fear, the stealthy approach of Privilege. It came to him under high-sounding phrases and with a patriotic garniture; it came craftily and persuasively. It did not avow its real purpose; it flattered and cajoled its intended victim; it asked little and it promised much. It did not awaken the spirit of greed with a rude shock or a loud cry; it touched the pocket nerve of the alert and crafty American with a deft hand, reserving for the enthusiastic and unthinking disciple of equality and fraternity the noisier manifestations with which the new departure was attended.

Privilege gained a foothold in America by false pretenses of patriotism for the edification of the masses and by cunningly devised suggestions of opportunity to individuals of nimbler wit. It was not until another generation appeared upon the stage, a generation that was confronted by the momentous consequences of the errors of

the fathers, and by which their mistakes were atoned for in blood and agony, that Privilege ventured to assert itself. The savage greed of a class long tolerated and pampered through a misapprehension of its real purpose, was shamelessly avowed at a time when all that was heroic and unselfish in the American character was arrayed in defense of the republic. Under the stress of war the government delivered into the hands of Privilege the people to whom it had appealed in the first alarm of avowed treason and rebellion.

It was then that fifty years of guarded instruction in the art of perverting public laws to private ends brought forth a swarming host, every member of which had some project for his own enrichment that depended upon the oppression of his fellow men.

Privilege's first sweeping triumph in America was the passage of the protective tariff bill of 1862. That was the summer of Fair Oaks, Mechanicsville, the Chickahominy Marshes, Chantilly, Malvern Hill, and the second Manassas; the summer also of Lexington, Donelson, Henry and Shiloh.

A million of men were in arms contending against the idea, then struggling for recognition, that it was right for one man to deprive many men of the fruits of their toil.

A hundred thousand new-made graves, stretching in yellow lines from the Lower Mississippi to the Potomac, attested the devotion of a great people. The sword ruled the land. Every hamlet was a camp, and the drum beat became a monotony as the tramping hundreds and thousands hurried away. Surely, if the mighty spirit thus enlisted on the side of right could be caught and tamed to the will of a master in chicane, it were well worth while !

The protective tariff bill of 1864 was passed without debate in either house of congress, and almost without amendment. It embodied every selfish device that the human mind could suggest. It was the most stupendous measure of taxation ever known on this planet. Justified at the time only by the existence of war, it nevertheless made public revenue a secondary object and, in some notorious respects, was wholly for plunder.

It had been concocted in committee exactly as the bill of 1862 had been concocted. The people were not heard; no man appeared in their interest. The man who wanted to tax his fellow citizens had but to signify the desire. No avarice was too great to meet instant indorsement; whatever tax this man or that man had the hardihood to demand, that tax was laid by a body that was quick to do the bidding of Privilege.

Thus constructed, the bill was presented to Congress by a man who, ashamed of his own work, apologized for it, pronouncing it the most cruel burden ever inflicted upon a nation, and pledged his own and his party's faith that the increased taxes, public and private, should be remitted as soon as the war should cease.

That was a generation ago, and substantially this same tariff was in force in 1890, when another congress given over wholly to the service of Privilege, added 5, 10, 20 and 50 per cent to schedules that had been considered crushing in time of war.

XII.

TWO AMERICAN OLIGARCHIES.

WHEN the question of human slavery had been discussed in every conceivable phase for more than a generation, as the question of Privilege now has been discussed, it was found that the monstrous error was incurable. It could not be reformed; it could not be circumscribed; it could not be rendered harmless; it could not be modified; it could not be concealed. Convicted in the high court of reason, it sought refuge in one falsehood after another until at last, with desperate obstinacy, it threw off all disguises, and, appealing to the sword, perished by the sword.

Slavery was a hereditary wrong; so is protection. The generation that now is oppressing the American people under cover of the tariff and kindred abuses was reared to injustice. The right to rob has been handed down from fathers who had shame-faced excuses for their system, to sons who

never knew anything else and who believe that it is right for one man to tax other men.

It is idle to suppose that these hereditary beneficiaries of wrong-doing can be won over by argument, or by appeals to reason and conscience. Their point of view is not that of their victims. They cannot be made to yield by persuasion or by threats. They will argue the matter gladly at any length; and, if they weary of the iteration of falsehood and folly, they have money wrung from the people with which to hire attorneys and newspapers to take up the strain where they leave off. While argument is prolonged the oppression continues. They do not fear abstractions; they do fear action. They will remit no tax; they will relinquish no plunder; they will abolish no abuse. There can be no relief from their exactions that is not extorted from them by their victims.

Things came to such a pass in the days of slavery that no legislation on any subject could be entered upon unless the slave oligarchy were taken into account. It had established a power that was co-equal in

some respects with that of the government itself. So now the tariff oligarchy rules, and Americans who go to Washington and with uplifted hand swear solemnly to support the republic and its laws, hasten to make their peace with this despotic power and straight-way enter into its service and forget their oaths.

The tariff oligarchy rules this land. At its order taxes, prices, industries, wages, politicians, rise or fall. At its command public expenditures increase or decrease; it fills the treasury or it empties it; it employs labor or it starves it, as political exigencies demand. Its interests determine every policy that is adopted. Few bills of any importance ever reach the president for signature that have not at some stage received the approval of this odious power. Pensions, public improvements, silver and other financial legislation, bounties, subsidies, treaties, appropriations of every description—all the things with which Congress concerns itself—represent no longer the ascertained will or the undoubted interests of the people; they indicate and measure the bar-

gains and bribes that Tariff has been able to effectuate.

The tariff oligarchy, like the slave oligarchy, is a compact power that is formidable because of the numbers that it deludes, the numbers that it silences and the numbers that it involves with itself in crime. Men having wicked schemes to promote reckon no more with the people, but with Tariff. If Tariff finds in it an opportunity to attach a congressional district or a state to its following, Tariff assents and the bill becomes a law. If there is no advantage for Tariff in a measure it dies, no matter how meritorious it may be, because Tariff rules this land. Its voice is the voice of authority to-day.

Tariff stands, as slavery stood, ever with a bribe in one hand to entice weak and corrupt men to its side. Tariff stands, as slavery stood, ever with a bludgeon in the other hand to intimidate cowardly men into its service. It is not a thing that the masses of the people are attached to. A few hundred lawless men are the chief beneficiaries of the system, exactly as a few hundred desperate men were the chief beneficiaries of the

slavery system. The one coterie holds the honor and safety of the republic as lightly as did the other. When slavery could not rule it sought to destroy. Tariff has manifested the same malignant spirit, and only awaits a better opportunity to outdo slavery itself in the most tragic of its rôles.

XIII.

SLOTH AND WASTE.

THE enormous waste of the protective tariff is not the least of the objections that may be urged against it. It took four years of war and a political and social revolution to convince the slave owners of the wastefulness of the system to which they clung with so much tenacity. The two wrongs bear as striking a resemblance to each other in this respect as they do in many others.

Slavery was wasteful because it established a patriarchal society not in keeping with modern ideas; because it necessitated large expenditures of time and money for political purposes; because its effect upon free labor was injurious; because it deprived many people of an incentive to thrift; because it was less productive than the expense of maintaining it demanded, and because it retarded the general development of the country in which it prevailed.

Protection is wasteful for nearly the same

reasons. It teaches labor of the most degraded type to look for its reward to legislation rather than to industry and frugality. It causes thousands of manufacturers to devote to political manipulation time and money which might much more profitably be devoted to business. It leads to the establishment of unproductive industries in places where the conditions are unfavorable to their success. It is a prodigious burden on the consumer; and, as it is more and more in need of defense, it calls for constantly increasing contributions from its dupes as well as from its beneficiaries, to be used in controlling elections and in bribing congresses.

The few great slave owners who managed to control the business, politics, society and religion of the south, were loyally assisted by a great host of smaller slave owners who were almost as much afflicted by the system as the slaves themselves. They thought they were benefitted, but, as a matter of fact, they were injured, as they now see plainly enough. The great mass of small manufacturers in America, many of them the most

intolerant supporters of protectionism, are victimized by the institution which they defend with so much vehemence. The planter who boasted the possession of two, three or five slaves, was likely to be most bitter in persecution of his opponents, just as to-day we find that the small manufacturer in many places exercises the most exasperating terrorism over the few poorly paid men that he employs, and is most intolerant of any interference with the privilege which he enjoys. As the chief profits of slavery lay in the social and political power that it gave to a few men, so the greatest advantage that protection confers upon its supporters is monopolized by the comparatively few who are thus enabled not only to control many lines of business but to dominate the government of a great nation.

The effect of protection is to discourage enterprise of every legitimate sort; the effect of slavery was the same. Protectionism puts a premium upon sloth and ignorance; so did slavery. Protectionism says to the manufacturer: "Here is a cornered market, whose victims must buy of you.

Your customers and your profits are assured; you have no occasion to try new processes, to invest in new machines or to pay attention to the progress of the age. If foreigners take advantage of important discoveries in science and mechanics, and at length are able to compete with you in spite of the tariff, we will add twenty per cent or forty per cent to your protection."

Slavery said the same thing to the planter, in a different way. It told him to raise but one crop, to resist to the utmost the mighty pressure of civilization and humanity, and to give no heed to men who suggested new ideas in production or in mechanics. But, as improvements come in spite of protection, improvements came in spite of slavery. The cotton gin, invented by a New Englander, quadrupled the wealth of the south in a year. Slavery could not have produced it; yet slavery stole it, and, besides refusing to pay its inventor for his discovery, it used the wonderful instrument to fortify with wealth and respectability its own thieving institution.

Slavery could have exchanged every

negro in the south for Whitney's machine and made money by the operation. There have been inventions since that day that would have justified protected manufacturers in remitting every cent of their wicked impositions upon the people, but they have coolly appropriated the discoveries, employing women and children, as the labor of men has been displaced by machinery, and have eagerly sought new fields for plunder.

Protection invents nothing, as slavery invented nothing. The minds of many sagacious men are continually employed devising ways and means of overcoming the unjust advantages which protection confers upon its beneficiaries; and when success crowns their efforts and by new methods production is cheapened, protectionism seizes upon the invention and claims that the cheapness thus obtained was what it was striving for all the time.

Slavery was wasteful also because it was carried as a political issue at great expense into regions where it could not possibly exist as an industrial system. Protection is similarly wasteful, because, by appealing to the

cupidity and prejudice of men, it leads to the establishment of hot house industries in sections where they cannot naturally be conducted at a profit, and then points to their languishing condition as a sufficient reason why the people should be taxed at an increased rate for their maintenance.

It is a fact that must be apparent to any reflective mind that, if the manufacturers of this country had expended in efforts to improve their processes and widen their markets the time and money that they have devoted to the beguilement and corruption of the people, they would have been more self-reliant, their prosperity would have been more substantial, and a false system, ever in danger of tottering to destruction, would not have been brought into existence.

So long as the south leaned upon slavery the comparatively few great beneficiaries of that institution persuaded all the people, whether slave owners or not, that without slavery they could not exist. Slavery was the tyrant of politics, the patron of industry, the ruler of society, the arbiter of commerce, and the supreme authority in the church.

To-day it is a memory only, and there are in the southern states more enlightened politics, more productive industry, a more wholesome society, a wider commerce and a more perfect religion.

XIV.

EASY INFAMY OF PRIVILEGE.

THERE was a time when, if the slave owners of the south had been willing to admit that their system was wrong and that it was an affront to nineteenth century civilization, they might have procured a hundred years' lease of life for it by keeping its infamies within bounds and sparing mankind the infliction of its intolerable encroachments. But such a thing came at last to be impossible. Led on by audacious men filled with the lust of power, hosts of the smaller slave owners and multitudes who owned no slaves at all, were hurried into a position from which nothing but a successful war could rescue them and their cause. Their war did not succeed, and their cause perished.

Time was when the protected interests in this country, with a few reasonable concessions to public opinion, might have ordered matters so that they could have retained

their peculiar abuse for a generation longer. But the spirit of concession was not in them. The same consuming greed, the same burning desire for political and commercial power, that lured the slave owners to ruin, beckons them also to destruction. The time came when the assumptions of the slave owners were not compatible with American freedom and self-respect — when they became a menace to society at large—and from that day compromises with slavery were impossible. The institution was doomed. The time is at hand when the claims of the beneficiaries of Privilege are not to be entertained by Americans who value the title of freemen, for they are at war with the fundamentals of liberty, and their further extension can be accomplished only by the sacrifice of principles dear to every loyal heart. That institution likewise is doomed.

In the original scheme of protectionism, as in that of slavery, no account was taken of its victims. As slavery ignored the human chattel, so protectionism ignored the consumer. The slavery question was dis-

cussed for many years without taking the slave into consideration at all. What he thought about it was not to the point. When, finally, as a last resort of desperate men, it was maintained by the slave owner that slavery was best for the victim, the proposition was not made to the slave himself but to free men hundreds of miles away whose votes were sought.

No one presumed to ask the slave's opinion of that idea. He was unheard; it was a crime to teach him to read; his word was not good in a court of law; he was not a party to the contest, although, in one view of the case, it concerned him alone. In like manner Privilege has ignored its victims for many years.

In such miserable tracts, pamphlets or apologies as have been published in the interest of protectionism the consumer never is mentioned, and the aim of the proposed beneficiaries is to convince the world that there is no such person. Of late the consumer has come into court, where it has been found that he reads and writes, that he is a competent witness, and that he also votes.

In his indignant presence Privilege has awakened to the fact that its victims must be taken into account, and, with unparalleled impudence, it has done a thing that slavery never did—it has gone before the men whom it has oppressed and, with the older slavery's wicked lie on its lips, it has told these plundered millions that the system is really maintained for their benefit; that, instead of being for a few, it is for all!

Privilege is at the bar of public opinion on trial for its life; it is to be judged and punished for what it tried to do, as well as for what it has done. It started out defiantly to subject the great mass of the people to the oppression of a few. When first challenged it admitted its purpose and justified it. It now crawls and cringes before the men whom it sought to enslave and asks them in God's name to sustain it, for it was designed for their benefit.

Slavery had many sins to answer for, but it spared the world an exhibition of such scoundrelism as this. Slavery did not go down on its knees and, with tears in its eyes, entreat the victims of the lash and the blood-

hounds to join its legions and fight for another cycle of servitude. The point at which slavery stopped without resource has been clearly overreached by the easy infamy of Privilege.

XV.

PROTECTIONISM'S BRIBES.

PROTECTIONISM proceeds on the theory that every man has his price. It buys industries; it buys individuals; it buys states; it buys congresses. Vote-buying is the natural and necessary result of a policy that begins with bribery, is sustained by bribery, and reaches its most notable triumphs through bribery.

Protection itself is but a monstrous bribe. It was demanded by and paid to certain interests in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania in 1860 as the price of their support of a new and at that time a virtuous party. Perceiving the necessity of having reinforcements, Privilege thus intrenched, bribed lumber and salt, copper and glass, crockery and cutlery, wool and sugar. Recognizing also the importance of fortifying its injustice still further, it offered a colossal bribe to labor and another to agriculture, well knowing that it could not pay, but hoping to secure by de-

ception what it could not otherwise obtain at all.

Protectionism said to labor: "Vote my ticket and I will raise your wages out of the plunder which unjust laws enable me to take from agriculture." For a time agriculture was appeased by railroad building at the expense of public funds and public lands; and when it became restive, protectionism said to the farmer: "I perceive that all this time you have been overlooked. Singularly enough, nobody has thought of applying our admirable system to you. Manufacturers and their employes are protected and prosperous. You are poor. If you will vote my ticket I will lay a tariff on wheat, and corn, and rye, and barley, and eggs. The tariff has made us rich, we admit. It will do the same by you."

Wherever an industry or an individual is found clinging to protectionism for profit, that industry or that individual has been bribed. Wherever an industry or an individual is found clinging to protectionism for imaginary profit, that industry or that individual has been duped.

Protectionism buys the great and the small. It scorns nothing but justice and honesty. The giants of iron and steel, lumber and copper, coal and glass, make common cause with the midgets of pearl buttons and tin cups. Nothing that will steal and will help it to steal, be its power ever so puny, is too insignificant to be bargained with.

Every selfish interest, every corrupt scheme, every cozening industry, every aggregation of capital, that can carry into politics any contribution of votes or money in return for an unjust law, allies itself with protectionism naturally and easily.

When a hostile interest, such as silver mining, becomes troublesome, it is bribed by a special law regardless of its effect upon the country, and in return for the favor thus extended, its representatives are expected to indorse with their votes the whole fabric of Privilege.

As it is becoming more and more difficult to hold the silver producing states of the far west in line in support of a system that bears upon them with particular hardship, we may

look for a more than ordinarily desperate bargain soon, for the silver party is not be trifled with, and if Privilege gains its support it will be at the sacrifice on its part of every principle of sound finance that it ever has entertained.

There is a prospect also that other western interests naturally oppressed by the policy of Privilege will soon be afforded an opportunity to consider a bribe in the form of a great national irrigation scheme, by means of which it is expected that both their morality and their self-interest will be appeased.

From the bribery and attempted bribery of whole industries, trades and occupations, of districts, states and sections, to the purchase of the votes of needy or depraved Americans, is a step that offers no obstacle to the promoters of Privilege. The bait that this system holds out to capital is unfair laws. The bait that it offers its deluded victim is a bank note. At one end of the scale of bribery is the man of means considering the question, "Will this wrong-doing pay?" At the other end is the wretch in whose mind may linger some

memory of a better citizenship, considering the question as he fingers the miserable bribe offered for his vote, "Does it pay?"

We need not wonder at the great corruption funds employed by protectionism in the so-called doubtful states, for an institution born in the greed of a class and nurtured in bribery must at the last, where universal suffrage prevails, depend for its life upon its ability to purchase the support of the individual.

XVI.

AMERICAN PAUPER LABOR.

THE relation that Privilege bears to labor has been greatly obscured by the palpable dishonesty and timidity with which the politicians of the country have treated the question.

According to the defenders of the protective tariff system, Privilege bestows every blessing that American labor enjoys. Without Privilege for others, labor starves: with Privilege for others, labor is employed and contented. On the other hand, too many of the opponents of the protective system deny that Privilege exercises any influence whatever upon labor. They hold that Privilege is a burden resting upon all the people and that its benefits are enjoyed only by the few employers of labor who are able to take advantage of it—which is true as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. The deeper and more far-reaching effects of the system usually are lost sight of.

It may as well be admitted that Privilege exerts a very powerful influence upon labor. It would be amazing, indeed, if a system costing the American people so much in money and self respect operated only to the advantage of the capitalist and had no effect upon the lives of the masses. Whether the fruits of the system so far as labor is concerned are worth what they cost, and whether they are such as the republic can afford to encourage much longer, are another matter.

When the powerful assistance of the United States government is extended to a private enterprise, we may be sure that a partnership so radically at variance with our earlier conceptions of the republic will affect nearly or remotely the lives of a great many men. With this assistance Privilege has established here a government by manufacturers and, at the expense of the whole people, has stimulated manufacturing enterprises vastly beyond the needs of the country. It has drawn hundreds of millions of dollars from other and naturally more profitable uses, and concentrated them in industries, many of which are unneeded and most of which

are at times feverishly stimulated to activity that has no health, and therefore no permanency. In like manner it has attracted toward the manufacturing centers hundreds of thousands of working men, who have been eager to secure their share of the plunder which they have not failed to perceive is conferred by unjust laws and often secured in their name. Not a few of these men have been drawn from other American industries, but by far the greater number of them have come from abroad.

Immigration to the United States during the last twenty years has amounted to more than ten millions. While many of the new arrivals have been desirable, most of them of late have been of a type which cannot be regarded with much favor. Demanding special advantages for itself in the name of labor, Privilege has crowded the steerages of steamships with the cheapest labor of Europe and placed it in direct competition with the very American labor which it has professed to befriend.

It is not possible to ascertain the proportion of immigrants to the United States in

the last twenty years that came here on the invitation of Privilege ; but, judging from the character of the new arrivals, it is evident that several millions would not have reached these shores without some special inducements, such as prepaid passage, free lands or assurances of employment on their arrival.

Privilege has glutted the labor market of America with the dregs of European labor, as all our protected labor camps to-day attest. Privilege has seen to it that there is protection for its products. It has taken care also that there should be absolute free trade in labor. With every levy that Privilege has made on European brawn, hosts of true Americans, despairing of the ever-increasing hardship of competition with labor of lower and lower types, have been driven from the protected industries into other pursuits.

True American labor is the cheapest labor on earth to-day. It is the most intelligent, the most industrious, the most aspiring. American labor is high priced because it is productive. It has been sadly debauched by wretched importations in the interest of

the protected employers, but, all things considered, it is still the best and the cheapest labor in the world. In the days of African slavery it was supposed that the southern states had cheap labor, but the survivors of the war do not need to be told that this was a mistake. Slave labor was expensive. Free labor is cheaper, though nominally dearer, because it is more productive.

American working men have been intimidated for many years by dismal warnings against the pauper labor of Europe. It is not the pauper labor of Europe, but the pauper labor drawn from Europe and now in America that American working men have to fear. In times of depression and idleness, when mills and factories are closing and the masters of industry in all lines are reducing their working forces, the American out of employment does not come into competition with the pauper labor of Europe. That labor is far away.

It is the pauper labor of America, the labor that reaches out with bony fingers for any pittance, that can live and does live as no born American can live, which confronts

him in the labor market. He must meet it on equal terms or starve. It is here to stay. It was brought here unnaturally by Privilege, which recognizes no obligation to keep it employed, and which, when its regular periods of starvation ensue, does not hesitate to make heavy drafts upon the charity of a people whom, in good times, it plunders.

Besides stimulating this inferior immigration and drawing many Americans away from legitimate pursuits by delusive promises of gain. Privilege exercises a further injurious influence upon labor. As a result of the unjust partiality of government, manufacturing enterprises have been over-stimulated, and, in some cases, have been established where they cannot be conducted profitably even with an ever-increasing subsidy. The promise of large returns on capital thus invested has led to many unwise enterprises and to many industrial failures. In every case of this description labor is the chief sufferer.

The excessive development of manufacturing has compelled also, even in the most prosperous times, a system of agreements as

to the limitation of production, which has operated to the injury of labor. The protected industry that is in progress continuously is almost unknown. So far as any possible market is concerned, American manufacturers can supply it by working half time. These long periods of idleness follow seasons of the wildest activity, often seasons when the largest available number of hands is employed over-hours or in double shifts. There is economy in the operation of a great plant to its full capacity. From the standpoint of capital there is economy in absolutely closing a great plant as soon as the product has accumulated beyond the ability of the market to absorb it.

In these protracted seasons of non production, often extending over months of time, the labor unnaturally drawn together must and does separate, and, appearing in other places in search of employment, easily accounts for our armies of tramps and our pitiful assemblages of the unemployed.

Such are some of the more important effects of Privilege upon labor. So far as concerns the preposterous delusion that

labor as a whole is benefitted by the system, the men who are employed in the protected industries as well as those who are engaged in the victimized industries, have only to consider the fact that one section of the people cannot be taxed to enable another section to pay high wages or any wages at all,—even if the wages really are paid—without to that extent impairing the ability of the oppressed section to pay high wages.

These unjust laws create no wealth. Government creates no wealth. It has no money of its own; it can give nothing to one man except as it takes from another man. The protected classes can have no more wages than the ruling rate except as they deprive other men of the ability to pay even that rate.

In spite of the promises made in its behalf, there can be no profit for labor as a whole in such a system. If some labor is benefitted by it occasionally in localities, its advantages are gained at the expense of other labor, and at a sacrifice of self respect of which no man worthy of American citizenship would be guilty.

XVII.

PRIVILEGE'S BROKEN PROMISES.

UNDER the protective tariff certain industries have been made the recipients of governmental bounty. They have been selected through no virtue of their own; their proprietors are no better than other men; their products are no more necessary to the welfare of Americans than are the products of other industries. They and their employés do not constitute one tenth of the people of the United States who are engaged in gainful occupations.

It is imperatively necessary to the success of such a system of rapine that the beneficiaries shall be less numerous than the victims. One in ten is a liberal estimate of the proportion of possible tariff protégés to undoubted tariff victims.

If the utter destruction of Privilege were to bring instantly to an end all these pampered industries, and if no new enterprises were to take their places,—which will hardly

be claimed by anybody—the worst that could befall the people would be the competition to which this unemployed element would immediately subject other labor. If these industries cannot exist without the tariff, the labor displaced by the abolition of the tariff would have to find occupation in other pursuits.

But is it conceivable that the removal of monopoly taxes would end every American industry which has profited by them? We know better. There would be some losses: there would be many and mighty gains.

Industries unfavorably situated with reference to raw materials, fuel and markets would die out, as they always have done, and be succeeded in more favorable localities by more deserving enterprises. The premiums so long put upon sloth, ignorance and extravagance would be withdrawn; and with a free field and a fair chance, human sagacity and energy would be compelled no longer to stand abashed in the presence of greed and power. Industry would be natural; not forced and unnatural. It would leave some of the haunts made odious by the

predominating influence of monopoly, but it would reappear in greater vigor, in fresher and fairer scenes that were prepared for it from the beginning.

For every weak, unhealthy or dishonest industry that passed away, because it had depended like a mendicant on politics for sustenance, a dozen honest and vigorous industries would spring into existence.

Admitting all that can be claimed for protectionism, it is of value only to a small minority of the people. How far short it falls of what is claimed for it, how unmindful it is of its promises to labor, is shown by an examination and a comparison of the condition of working men in what are called hard times in protected and in unprotected industries. Suspend work in one of these protected labor camps to-day, and starvation begins to-morrow. Nowhere else in America is the margin so narrow.

Protectionism demands much from the American people and gives little or nothing in return, exactly as it pleases. It demands as a right the privilege of taxing all for the benefit of a few. It makes certain promises

of generosity toward labor, but they are forgotten as soon as its own point is gained. Putting the best possible face upon its position, it has been seen that protectionism, in spite of the advantages conferred upon it, is at liberty to ignore every engagement and that there is no way by which it can be compelled to live up to its part of the contract.

XVIII.

LIKE THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT.

PROTECTIONISM is the only American employer having a legal and public as well as a moral and private obligation to deal generously with labor. It asks and receives public assistance on that very ground; it agrees to share its plunder with labor; it proclaims its disinterestedness and its philanthropy. Yet the publicly expressed "regret" of a recent president of the United States committed to this detestable policy, is a notice to every American that, in spite of the millions contributed to monopoly under protection laws, the payment of living wages depends wholly upon the will of the employer. Like the slave owner, he is master. He recognizes no contract, written or implied; he begs or bullies legislative favors for himself; his employés receive from him in wages what they can extort by strikes and riots, and no more.

The employer, whether protected or not,

pays such wages as he pleases or as he must. If he can find men who will work cheaper than those in his service at the time, he may and usually he will dismiss the old and employ the new; and the law will sustain him in his purpose and in the execution of it, no matter to what extremity he may go. That is law which is necessary to the preservation of society; it is law which nobody except the beneficiaries of Privilege attempts to deny or to set aside; it is the law to which protectionists themselves appeal when—all their falsehoods exposed and all their promises broken—they run to cover to escape the fury of their unhappy dupes.

The bad faith with which Privilege treats labor is shown in many other ways. It is the protected employer and not the unprotected employer against whom run all the modern factory laws for the enforcement of decency and humanity. It is only in the protected industries that the state must appear with a strong arm to prevent shocking outrages upon womanhood and childhood. It is in the protected industries that the

“truck store” flourishes. Industries which, if let alone, would brutalize women and drag little children into early graves, are the ones, almost without exception, which pose before the American people as humane and disinterested supporters of the protective tariff.

We may judge from these evidences of the heartlessness of protected capital, how insincere and how dangerous is the claim that Privilege looks first to the welfare of labor. Nothing but state laws, passed by men whose hearts and consciences have been touched by the misery resulting from the avarice of protected manufacturers and producers, prevents these pharisees and hypocrites to-day from sending women underground in their protected mines, from huddling girls and men indiscriminately in small rooms in their protected factories, and from confining little children for long hours amid the thundering machinery of their protected mills.

With evidences of such greed written all over the land, how is it that men can be persuaded that a system so shrewdly designed

in the interest of a few can be made of service to all?

This vein of dissimulation runs through every protectionist argument or assertion. In the beginning no man denied that tariffs increased the price, not only of the imported goods on which they were laid, but of domestic products that came into competition with them. Now it is held that they cheapen all prices. When complaint was made that prices had not been lowered, it was said that prices were high because wages were high. When it was shown that wages in protected industries were no higher and in many of them were lower than in unprotected industries, it was denied that the tariff was a tax at all. When the farmer complained that the manufacturer was taking advantage of him, a pretense of putting a protective tariff on farm products was made, and the doctrine was then daringly proclaimed that tariffs cheapen the prices of manufactured goods, but increase the prices of everything that the agriculturists have to sell.

These are not clever falsehoods; they

are outrageously clumsy. They are first uttered with a suspicion that they will be drowned in a chorus of jeers, and are repeated only when it becomes evident that the capacity of men to accept them has been underestimated. The hopes of their authors hang all the time on the success of this or that desperate expedient. Like the cheaper offenders known to the police magistrates of our cities, they always are on the defensive, and base their hopes of escape on the inspiration that the hour or the occasion may give to nimble wits.

No beneficiary of Privilege expects that his system will live. It has lasted much longer than he ever imagined it could last; but, like the thief in the night, he takes his life in his hand and goes forth, expecting and prepared for the worst, and yet hoping by wit or by trick to gain one more day, or month, or year of plunder.

XIX.

BY ITS FRUITS.

PRIVILEGE is destroying the self-reliance of the American people as surely as it is corrupting our youth, exasperating our labor, and polluting our politics. We not only receive hundreds of thousands of immigrants each year, but we maintain an institution which teaches these newcomers immediately on their arrival, that they are to receive work and wages because the government taxes other workingmen, most of them born here, for their support. The helpless children of oppression at home, they gladly accept this condition of pauperism here; and if the man who stands between them and the government fulfilled his part of the agreement, there would be no complaint from the people thus pauperized. It is not until they discover that he does not bestow upon them in alms the plunder that he takes from American citizens that they revolt.

In the self-respecting days of American

labor, how many workingmen could have been obtained for service in a shop or mill whose owner announced his incapacity to pay the ruling rate of wages unless he were given the privilege of taxing the people at large for the purpose? What proud-spirited American mechanic would have taken the money that any mendicant of this description might have offered him?

Let the answer be read in the protected labor camps of this country to-day, where "American workingmen" are known, not by name, but by number, and where a man with a pronounceable name or an English tongue is so rare an object as to occasion remark.

In the offscourings of the old world the lords of Privilege in America found exactly the material that they wanted, out of which to constitute a pauper labor class, and which they could fashion into voters who would assist them in fastening their detestable system upon better men. Accustomed to caste and Privilege and snobbery and injustice at home, and unacquainted with the independence that once characterized American workingmen, these wretches fell easily into the

trap that was set for them, and voting protection ballots that they could not read, they became instruments in the hands of their employers to extend the accursed oppression of mediæval Europe over a people who had once been virtuous enough to throw it off.

American labor has been driven in despair from the shops and mines to the farms and to other unprotected industries; there it is defiantly taxed ostensibly to enable Privilege to pay high wages, but really to aggrandize its wealth and enable it to astonish both hemispheres with the prodigality of its expenditure. That is where true American labor is, and that is what it is doing.

The more highly protected an industry may be, the fewer Americans will be found in it. The employer who professes the most unselfish interest in the welfare of American labor will be found to have the closest relations with the swarming thousands at quarantine. The interest that pretends to entertain the gravest fears of a "flood of pauper-made goods" is most likely to preside over a starvation camp, where no English is

spoken, where human beings live like savages, and where no American idea save that of taxing one man for the benefit of another man ever takes root.

This redundant "protected" labor, which is taught to depend upon government for its support, is the true pauper labor of the world, and it is positively the only pauper labor to be found anywhere on earth outside of the almshouse.

Privilege rarely concerns itself with the hardships of the people whom it has assembled in the neighborhoods of its mills and factories. The long periods of idleness, caused by overproduction and the glutting of insufficient markets, are seasons of destitution to the labor thus abandoned and of holidays and foreign travel to the beneficiaries of the system.

Labor has starved in this country every winter for a generation, under laws ostensibly enacted in its behalf; but it was not until these measures were assailed by a congress elected to repeal them that Privilege discovered that want and famine existed. In the face of a possible loss of its advantages,

Privilege made the most of the distress occasioned by its own excesses; and by enlisting the support of society, it brought forth a charitable movement so broad and so generous that men and women long accustomed to work in that field were amazed at what appeared to be the spontaneous liberality of the people.

Politics had accomplished in a month what years of exhortation in behalf of religion and humanity had failed to bring about. The hungry were fed, the naked were clothed, the sick were visited; not because the hungry and naked and sick had not been with us always, but because Privilege, dominating society, had decided that the "object lesson" of the disaster surely to be experienced if its system were attacked, must be made as impressive as possible.

Embittering every morsel of food received by the really necessitous at that time was the not always spoken but the well-understood threat of the ruling class: "You shall have bread now, but the next time you vote against us you shall starve!"

Privilege teaches the most ignorant, the

most immoral and the most completely foreignized section of the American people—the ones most sorely in need of instruction in the fundamentals of our civilization—that industry and thrift are not of prime importance, but that government assistance is absolutely necessary to their welfare. Having unsettled labor with these shameful precepts and delusive promises, Privilege withholds the expected plunder and shows in its own ostentation what unjust laws do for man. Goaded to exasperation, the workingman sometimes strikes and riots, and perhaps in defeat he is starved and driven from home a vagabond; but he goes forth—a dupe no more—sullenly to join the great army which, officered by exiles from despotic Europe, nurses here the hatred of wealth and authority that was engendered there.

This is a matter which Americans will have to consider some time. Why not now? It is a question which may yet be settled, and settled right. Delay is dangerous. A republic in which all men are supposed to be equal cannot with safety to itself habituate millions in this way to semi-dependance. A republic

cannot afford to accustom a great class to the idea that it is right to prey upon another class. A republic cannot with impunity permit one class of men to delude and exasperate another class of men. A republic is for all, or it is a mockery.

A republic which develops in the minds of a considerable number of its citizens the idea that government is a thing to be plundered, or a plunderer itself ever ready to bestow upon them money or property taken unjustly from other men, is producing at both extremities of the social scale the very elements which have destroyed more than one civilization, and which on several occasions have menaced our own.

A GIANT IN CHAINS.

THIRTY years of protective tariff taxation have reduced American agriculture to a position so ignoble that in some places it does not even retain its self-respect. A generation ago the American farmer was the proudest and most independent workingman on earth. To-day he cannot persuade his own son to remain on the farm. Thirty years of unjust laws have made the farmer the sport of the cities, the butt of all the cheap wits and the hoped-for victim of every swindler in the land.

In the thirty years of protectionism, the typical American farmer with whom we have been and are familiar has been changed from a well-dressed, well-read, independent and spirited man to a scare-crow, with vacant eyes and gaping mouth, with the inevitable confidence man near at hand. We do not deceive and oppress a man and retain our respect for him. The contempt with which

the privileged classes in America regard the farmer whom they plunder has been communicated to the whole body of the people.

It was the prosperity and independence of the American farmer that first excited the cupidity of the protectionists. They coveted his possessions, and they proposed class legislation as a subterfuge, under cover of which they were to plunder him. They told him that he needed a home market and that they would give it to him in return for the privilege of taxing him.

When the home market swindle was exposed they beguiled him with the idea that they could and would share their protective tariff with him; and, while going through the mockery of putting a tax on foreign agricultural products, they took occasion to increase their own share of the spoils.

The protective tariff rests upon nearly everything that the farmer uses or wears. It enhances the price of nearly everything that he buys. It does not add a farthing to the value of anything that he has to sell. On the other hand, its burdens fall so heavily

upon almost all other Americans that their capacity to buy of his product is diminished, and on frequent occasions is entirely destroyed.

The hope held out to him that the mock tariff on agricultural products which we do not import can in any manner benefit him, is shown by steadily declining prices to be delusive. It was a bribe which could not be paid. If it could have been paid it would have bankrupted and impoverished the remainder of the people.

Everybody cannot be the gainer by class taxation; somebody must suffer. Speaking in general terms, the farmer is more particularly the victim than any other man in the United States; on his bent back the great monopoly burden rests. American agriculture comes into competition with the cheapest peasant labor on earth; yet but for the inflictions put upon it by the craft of a class, it would be amply able to take care of itself. Its splendid surpluses are disposed of in the remotest lands, and the returns serve to quicken every pulsation of trade and commerce throughout the country.

American agriculture is a giant in chains. It is capable of showering blessings upon the people with such lavish prodigality, that every other interest and industry must rejoice in its strength and share in its abundance. Exposed as it is to the shackles of a mercenary class at home; hedged about as it is by laws designed to cripple and oppress it abroad; and humiliated as it is by systems and policies cunningly devised to bring reproach and ridicule upon it everywhere, it nevertheless sustains by its toil and privation the great weight of injustice that rests upon the country.

It shares none of the luxury of a land which it has enriched. It is poorly clothed, poorly housed, and poorly fed. The small economies which it submissively practices will not in a year compensate for the wicked impositions which it suffers in a month at the hands of Privilege. Embraced within its ranks are a majority of the people. Its patience under injustice, its hopefulness under adversity, its courage in the presence of disaster, its meekness under tyranny, and its humility under the scorn of a class whom it

has made powerful, and whom it can, if it will, sweep away with a breath, are among the most amazing exhibitions that the world ever has seen.

XXI.

AMERICANS WITH A GRIEVANCE.

PRIVILEGE appears to cherish many illusions, but it may be assured of one momentous fact—a majority of the American people are fully awake to the enormity of the injustice that lurks in the laws of this country. They do not as yet agree as to the remedy to be applied, but they are agreed as to the evil complained of.

The feverish unrest of the masses, the angry outbreaks of turbulent and desperate men, the sullen mutterings of discontent, all indicate a keen popular appreciation of the situation, if they do not presage violence and revolution.

Sweeping and even cyclonic victories for one political party or another at short intervals, signify not so much the fickleness of public opinion, as the lack of popular confidence in the leadership of all parties. These whirlwind votes, first in one direction and soon with even greater fury in another direc-

tion, do not measure the calm and settled judgment of the people, nor do they hold out a promise of a speedy improvement in existing conditions. They are indicative, rather, of popular demoralization, if not of desperation and despair.

The importance of awakening patriotic Americans to a serious realization of the fact that destructive forces are at work among them, ought not to be underestimated. The plundered farmer of the western plains, the misguided workingman of the cities, the duped immigrant languishing in the protected camps, the battalions of tramps on our highways, the homeless and destitute of every kindred and clime, to whom false hopes have been held out and whose conceptions of the duty of government have been perverted, must be saved from themselves.

They have been taught and are now taught falsely; and in their efforts to escape from the misfortunes that overwhelm them, it is not surprising that they have become the victims of the most visionary fanatics of the day,—rushing madly one year to the support of the wildest dreamers, and the next

year, in sheer abandonment precipitating themselves under the wheels of the monopolistic Juggernaut.

The violence of far western legislation on the subjects of finance, capital and taxation, is the expression in one locality of the utter despair of the agricultural population,—as the equally menacing growth of violence in strikes, in speech, and in the socialistic propaganda in the cities, is the manifestation of the hopelessness of large masses of the working population in other localities.

In the face of such indubitable proofs of popular discontent as these, it is idle and worse, for the agents of Privilege to recite their well-learned harangues about universal prosperity. The prosperity of which they boast has been confined to a class. The victims of that prosperity, the men whose toil has set forth the feast, deny before heaven that they have shared in it, and their word is entitled to consideration.

These farmers, miners and workingmen are not inexcusably vicious. They are not anarchists. In the main they are native Americans. They have been ridiculed and

misrepresented until it is the fashion to dismiss them with a smile or a sneer ; but no man,—certainly no beneficiary of Privilege,—who can read, should forget that they come of a race that pulls down tyrants and destroys tyranny. They are of the blood that has been tested in the battles of liberty in the Old World as well as in the New. They are not aliens ; they are not cranks ; they are Americans with a grievance, and they will be heard.

These elements have been irritated by distress, by deception and by false doctrine. They have been misled by Privilege and they may be misled again ; they have fallen into social, financial and economic errors, partly of their own contrivance, and they may be beguiled in the same way for another season ; but the time is approaching when the promises of Privilege will not avail.

They know that somebody profits by the system which they have supported and, in a fashion, attempted to imitate. They will not much longer be deceived by assurances that they are to share in the proceeds. When that time comes,—when neither the

voice of reason and justice nor the honeyed words of the discredited agent of Privilege shall be heard above the tumult of angry cries for vengeance and reprisal,—the true American may well tremble for his country.

Whether they appreciate it or not, the men who profit financially and politically by this detestable system are playing with fire. They are goading to fury a people whom they have instructed in the methods of injustice. They have prepared a powder magazine, at the doors of which faggots are already in full glow. If they cannot or will not of their own volition abandon their perilous adventures, the honest men of the country, regardless of past party affiliations, must speak and act in behalf of their menaced institutions. Present social conditions cannot last; they must be made better or they will become worse.

The unwisdom of temporizing with such an evil as this may be seen in every chapter of the history of progress and freedom. Nearly all the great battles for liberty have been fought on questions of taxation. The English revolution grew out of a ques-

tion of taxation involving an important principle but a small amount of money. The American revolution was precipitated by a question of taxation. The French revolution grew out of long continued abuse of the taxing power by kings and nobles.

In all lands and in all times, wherever and whenever a substantial gain has been made on the side of human rights and constitutional liberty, it has been, as a rule, the direct result of popular uprisings against unjust taxation.

The fiery spirit that sustained Simon de Montfort's first house of burgesses in England; that inspired the followers of John Hampden in their rebellion against the ship tax; that actuated the Continental Congress in America and the States General in France, was awakened by the oppression of class by class under the forms of taxation.

That is the spirit with which Privilege is trifling in the United States to-day. It is true that it maintains, with diminishing evidences of sincerity, that it seeks the good of all; but it will not be possible much longer to deceive many people on that point.

Did Dubarry and Pompadour take into account the starving peasants of the Rhone, the Loire or the Garonne? Does the tariff-enriched lumber baron give a thought to the pinched farmers on the treeless plains of Nebraska, Kansas or Dakota? Did Louis's brilliant court know of the wretches who haunted the garrets of Paris and Lyons? How many dividends have the protected industries of America paid out of the "cut wages" of their working men?

Successful tyranny in France bred a generation of voluptuaries and aristocrats who forgot, if they ever knew, that it was necessary to apologize for oppression. The United States have not quite reached that level as yet, but they are approaching it. A few more triumphs, and Privilege will become an institution whose supporters will accept their "hereditary rights" as a matter of course, and, instead of wasting time in an effort to convince the people that the system is of value to them, will set about the pleasant task of hanging men who dare assail such "vested rights." That is the solemn prospect ahead of us.

XXII.

OUR DEPENDENT CLASSES.

THE dependent classes in this country are becoming too numerous and too clamorous. They not only crowd each other, but they press too closely upon people who are struggling to maintain their own independence. They take up too much room; they fill too large a space in the public eye; their intolerable quarrels over the division of their plunder demand too much attention. They cost too much. It is becoming more and more difficult to support the burden. It cannot be borne much longer.

Too many people in the United States demand a livelihood from the proceeds of inflated stocks and bonds, from vast or petty impositions on the masses, from conspiracies in production or in distribution, or from the tribute that unjust laws enable them to wring from industry.

Too many people in the United States

live by their wits; too many people in the United States are seeking to live by their wits; too many people in the United States with a capital of a few thousand dollars, or with no capital at all, are attempting to live without work.

This unworthy ambition affects all sorts and conditions of men; it blunts their sensibilities; it leads them into shameful complications and not infrequently into crime. It causes men holding high public stations to pass upon matters involving their own financial interests. It taints many acts of legislation and some of the judgments of our courts. It enables United States senators to vote tariffs and subsidies into their own pockets, and to face with calm indifference such angry popular protests as may reach their ears. It has degraded our state and municipal legislatures, until men of first class character and ability are, as a rule, no longer to be found in them. It has made the management of many of our corporations the subject of world-wide scandals. It has encouraged pauperism among the poor and stimulated sharp practice among the vicious.

As the well dressed rogues and dependants have multiplied, there has been naturally and unavoidably a corresponding increase in the ranks of the ragged rogues and dependants. The example of the rich has not been lost upon the poor.

For every great scheme of Privilege on the part of the well-to-do, there have been scores of small projects in mendicancy on the part of the less favored. A society which applauds undeserved subsidies and bounties will not severely judge the recipients of dishonest pensions or the holders of cheap political sinecures.

Where so many are looking to government for assistance or advantage, we need not be surprised to find a marked increase in common pauperism. The idea is contagious. Workingmen who are taught that in times of prosperity their wages are conferred by a system which taxes other men for their benefit, do not hesitate when the inevitable day of adversity arrives to demand and accept alms of the people. Their condition is one of perpetual dependence. When the processes of Privilege fail them, they are

conscious of no humiliation by discarding the agency of the protected wage payer, and accepting directly from the community in personal contributions the bounty which even a false system cannot always provide.

The self-reliance of our people was once the boast of the republic. They would endure privation and hunger, but they would not beg. Among the poor there was a sense of equality with the richest, a true pride which ill fortune and hardship could not subdue, and a hope for better things to be honorably won, that was unconquerable. Among the rich there was a consciousness of responsibility, a pride in the security of our institutions and in the justice of our laws, that helped many a struggling wayfarer over the thorny paths leading to fame and fortune.

It was a helpful and generous society such as this that made real pauperism terrible ; for it was held that a man who had to beg had no friends, and to have no friends was to be an outcast for cause. We have retained the ethics of that day as to the genuine pauper, the man who has gone down under accumulated misfortune ; but we have

brought forth a troop of beggars on horseback, who are riding rough-shod over whatever there is of patience, and decency, and industry in the land.

XXIII.

ON TO WASHINGTON.

RECENTLY great bodies of men have moved on Washington with the avowed purpose of demanding legislation in the interest of the poor. Participated in chiefly by native born Americans, these demonstrations deserve attention, not so much because they are a new manifestation of the growing idea that government is to support the people, as because they prove that conditions of pauperism are no longer hateful to all Americans. These vagabonds lived on the country like a raiding army. Partly through terrorism, partly through sympathy, and largely through policy, they were fed and clothed by the communities through which they passed; and not one of these recipients of alms has yet been able to perceive that he lost anything in character or self-respect by the experience.

But if millions of dollars can go to Washington and demand legislation, why shall not

millions of men do the same? Is there really greater danger to the republic in the presence at the capital of a mob a million strong than there is in the presence there of the agents and attorneys of selfish interests, who do not hesitate to bribe those whom they cannot intimidate or deceive? Capital has cried "On to Washington!" for thirty years, and no serious alarm has been felt anywhere. If labor now takes up the refrain, it is following a distinguished precedent. The republic still lives, and what is lawful for one class cannot be unlawful for another.

The seat of government was located on the banks of the Potomac far away from the great cities, for the reason that it was feared that Congress and the executive departments, if nearer the populous towns, might be subjected to intimidation by the people. Old world experiences show the wisdom of this policy so far as monarchies are concerned, but it is doubtful if a republic of the magnitude and intelligence of the United States can hope to profit much by it. Destroy the confidence of the American people in their

representatives, and if they conclude to march on the capital, its distance from the centers of population will not appall them.

Great pecuniary interests have intrenched themselves at Washington in such a manner as to defy any ordinary expression of displeasure on the part of the people. They have complete possession of one political party, and they have had sufficient influence with the other to cloud its utterances and to paralyze its arm. Their agents come and go noiselessly, attracting no attention and exciting no sense of danger.

If the victims of these laws—who are many—were to follow the example thus set for them, the capital of the United States would be speedily transformed from a peerless winter resort, a favorite place of residence for persons of wealth and fashion, into a teeming camp of forlorn and desperate men.

If the American workingman ever be moved to assert himself at the capital; if after a generation of false teaching he shall appear there to demand for himself the relief which others have not failed to secure,

he will not be bound by the rules that obtain in polite society, nor will he follow the precedents, established by the lobby. The workman who, through delusion or otherwise, concludes to visit the seat of government to demand what he conceives to be his rights, is sure to be an object of much concern, not only to the people of Washington, but to the whole body of thoughtful Americans.

Probably it is not unreasonable to assume that the danger signal has sounded. We have seen two movements on Washington representing the extremes of American society. One was of wealth, the other was of poverty; both were wholly selfish, both were predatory. One had as much right and justice on its side as the other, which was none at all. Both mistook the nature of the government. Both assumed that its province was to take care of the people like a wise father—to regulate their business for them, to direct them where and when and with whom to trade, to coddle this industry and to destroy that, and to provide work and wages for everybody.

It will not be possible much longer to

confine these forays to a single class. The degradation of the wealthy has found its counterpart in the degradation of the impoverished. Lazarus will stoop as low as Dives; the tramp will jostle the millionaire on Pennsylvania avenue and in the corridors of the capitol. Hereafter, if the ways and means committee is to hold inquiries on the lines with which it has familiarized the people, the poor and wretched will crowd the witness stand along with the rich and proud. If congress may legislate money into the rich man's pocket it may do the same for the poor man. We need not marvel if labor shall repudiate all intermediaries and demand hereafter that every largess intended for itself shall be paid directly into hand. In a land nine-tenths of whose voters may be arrayed on the side of toil, it will not long be possible to persuade a majority of the people that millionaires and corporations are the only proper almoners of the government's bounty.

XXIV.

A FIERY PATH.

THE dangerous propensities of Privilege should receive the most solemn consideration at the hands of that large and influential element which has achieved fortune through its own industry and sagacity, and without the assistance of unjust laws.

It is possible that the natural tendency of men enjoying the same conditions of wealth and power to come together in a common interest, has made the honest riches of this country too careless of the methods by which dishonest riches have been amassed. If so, the possessors of great fortunes honorably won cannot be warned with too much emphasis, that the security which they enjoy and the conditions which make the prizes they have gained worth having, rest alone upon the public sense of the wisdom and justice of our laws. The honest wealth of the country, in a word, cannot afford to make common cause with the wealth that has been

accumulated by the deception and oppression of labor, and by the operation of laws so shamefully unjust that a self-respecting American cannot witness their effects without feeling the spirit of rebellion rising within him.

In its best possible phase protectionism is the most pronounced form of socialism that America ever has known. When the hollow-eyed inhabitants of our garrets and cellars meet to demand that the rich shall share their luxury with them, we do not hesitate to denominate that manifestation of socialism "anarchy." When a few men who live by their wits assemble to demand that everybody, rich and poor, shall contribute to them, we are in the habit of calling that manifestation of socialism "protection."

Protection has brazenly seized upon every business interest and endeavored by threats and falsehoods to persuade honest men to make common cause with it against its protesting victims. It has arrayed labor against capital in countless places and with increasing vehemence, because it has flagrantly broken its promises and boldly engaged in

oppressions unknown in America before its day.

It is based on a grotesque disregard of human nature, and is the discredited exponent of a theory exploded in history and against which popular government is a standing protest—that the rich should and will take care of the poor. It has deceived, robbed and exasperated labor, until it has embittered the needy and spread desperation among the wretched. It has emphasized the class idea in a republic where all are equal, and on more than one occasion it has precipitated strife that has amounted to civil war. It is as much the foe of honest wealth as it is the foe of honest toil and the worst enemy of honest government.

No privileged class ever yet mounted to luxury and ease without carrying with it more or less of the respect which success, even of the dubious sort, usually commands. The tariff lords of America are no exception to the rule. The ties of society, of good fellowship, and of party are strong, and political action that is calculated to disturb them is likely to be condemned by men who

may have nothing to fear from it. In every society also, there is an element that stands in dread of change; that is timid almost to the point of cowardice; and that is forever expostulating with the sincere, restraining the courageous, rebuking the bold, and entreating the determined to be cautious.

Every moral revolution of which we have any record has had first to deal with this repressive influence on the part of good men, to say nothing of the more brutal manifestations of dislike on the part of the ignorant and the vicious.

“Business interests,” many of them having no affiliation whatever with slavery, were intolerant of all agitation of that question, and they spoke practically with one voice in favor of peace on any terms until the flag fell at Sumter. Compromises are satisfactory to business interests; every surrender of a principle is applauded in business circles; every standard that comes down, every flag that is struck for the sake only of peace, brings security and confidence to business interests. Consult business interests, and there is no wrong too offensive to be borne

in behalf of peace. Left to the sagacious men who speak for business interests, every great evil would be permitted to cover the land with infamy and to involve a nation in ruin, before they would risk a dollar of trade in an attack upon it. Business interests have been known to commit suicide, but they never yet have turned their backs upon an interest, good or bad, that had money to spend.

Business interests to-day are opposed to further agitation of the tariff question. The right and wrong of it—even the possibilities of infinite mischief that lie in the contention, do not concern them. They will cheerfully submit to any injustice, any abuse, any wrong, any danger, if by that means apparent stability can be gained and buying and selling promoted. Business interests do not give expression to the conscience or to the nobler aspirations of a nation; they voice the timidity of capital and the concentrated selfishness of men. American business interests opposed and repressed the patriots of '76; they resisted the men who fought the war of 1812; they held the anti-

slavery leaders at bay for a generation, and they now almost solidly confront the men who refuse to accept a partial victory over Privilege as a final settlement of the contest.

“What man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshiper of the great goddess Diana and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?” The temple of Diana was one of the wonders of the ancient world. The worship there carried on and the lucrative manufacture and sale of shrines for the great goddess were not to be lightly assailed, even by the apostle to the gentiles. These things “could not be spoken against.” Yet Diana is in the dust, her shrines have vanished, the artificers who thrived on the delusion of the people have left no trace, and even the place where the hopes and interests of the pious and the selfish centered is known no more of men.

We have in the United States to-day a legislative fetich which a privileged class, assisted by business interests, has sought to guard as sacredly from the inquiring eyes of

unbelievers as the Ephesians protected the image that fell down from Jupiter. This class teaches that the American idolatry cannot be discussed with safety; that any modification of it must be attended by the gravest danger; and that, in spite of known imperfections, it must be applauded at all times, and particularly so when an uproar takes place as a result of the preaching of truth and liberty, which always have been at war with false gods and false doctrines.

No doubt business interests have suffered and are to suffer still more as a result of tariff agitation and uncertainty. Men can no more escape the penalty of collective wrong-doing than they can escape the penalty of individual wrong-doing. We sought in many ways to avoid the consequences of the slavery sin, but the expiation came at last. We shall not escape the penalty of the great transgression which now confronts us. The civil war continued "until all the wealth piled up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil was sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash was paid by another drawn

with the sword." "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." Business interests can hope for no real stability so long as this great wrong, behind which many of them are intrenched, shall endure.

If it be urged that this is a fiery path, it may be said that the feet of millions, for whom business interests do not speak, have pressed it uncomplainingly for years. It is a fiery path, indeed, but it leads to justice; and without justice there can be no peace.

XXV.

IS IT WELL ENOUGH?

DREAD of change is the sentiment which the disreputable rich employ to intimidate the reputable riches of the land. When all other "arguments" fail, the man of plunder and privilege asks the man whose fortune comprehends no stolen dollars, if it is not wise to let well enough alone?

Honest wealth should weigh this impertinent question well. Is it well enough, that the government of the United States is in the hands of a rapacious combination which is at war with every legitimate business interest?

Is it well enough, that a great political party has become the creature of these self-seekers, using its power to further their greed?

Is it well enough, that through the terrorism of Privilege no man in that party dare raise his voice in protest against the degrading doctrines which it upholds?

Is it well enough, that the ignorant and thoughtless have been educated to the belief that an intolerable system of economy cannot be discussed, criticized or qualified, without disaster to business and industry?

Is it well enough, that organized labor is already on a war footing in many places, and that strikes are developing as much savagery in our cities as was once witnessed on the frontier?

Is it well enough, that employers enjoying public bounty have engaged in conspiracies to intensify periods of depression, by closing their works and leaving labor in distress—the better to enforce the idea that interference with Privilege is dangerous?

Is it well enough, that all over the country there are political mills, the owners of which can be persuaded by their confederates in the management of the party that bestows legislative favors upon them, to operate or to close their establishments accordingly as the necessities of that party may dictate?

Is it well enough, that every consideration of civilization and humanity, of progress and

justice, so far as this great American party is concerned, should be made to depend upon the lust of this one swollen and conscienceless class?

Is it well enough, that in a republic where equality used to be taught, every member of this party, from highest to lowest,—the wisest as well as the dullest,—now insists that it is the legitimate province of political organizations and governments to increase wages and to provide work for everybody?

Is it well enough, that the men who profit by this system are relentlessly impoverishing American labor by importations of inferior races, and filling the breasts of hundreds of thousands of workingmen with the conviction that they are suffering from injustice, with which it is not in their power lawfully to contend?

Is it well enough, that there is growing up all over the country a belief that plunder and not justice is the controlling spirit of government?

Is it well enough, finally, that these miscreants should couple themselves with all other men of wealth, and with matchless inso-

lence proclaim the falsehood that attacks upon their laws and their riches are a menace to all laws and all riches?

There need be no dread of any change that promises to strip these men of their power and pretensions. Properly enough, there may be the gravest reasons for dreading the final consequences of apparently invincible injustice and oppression.

There is security in impartial government; there is danger in every departure from it. We have had sufficient notice of the progress and the motive of this agitation for the restoration of the constitution and the laws to their original purpose. The movement proceeds on lines of peace, justice and truth. No man can foretell the hour when, bursting the restraints that now govern it, it may leap in maddened fury beyond the control of reason or of right.

This is not a despotism, with a great standing army ready to do the bidding of a king whose will is law. It is a republic, the government of which derives all its powers from the governed. The men of wealth are comparatively few; the men who have

no wealth are numerous. If the few rich may now oppress the many poor, what guaranty have we that presently the tables may not be turned?

This is a government of law. The dishonest rich have made these unequal laws. If in some dark and desperate hour the dishonest poor shall band together to glut their money hunger on the wealth of the land, as the dishonest wealth has been banded together for years to devour the fruits of a nation's industry, we may be sure that they will not lack the power to crystallize their ideas into law and that they will not discriminate as between individuals.

If the motive to despoil the many is strong in the breasts of the few, what will it be in the bosoms of the many when they come to apply the same savage doctrine to the few? The men who have accumulated fortunes honestly, and the men who hope to accumulate anything honestly, may be assured that the pendulum of injustice is likely to go as far in one direction as it has gone in another. That is a change which they well may dread.

XXVI.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR THE REMEDY.

THE way out of this labyrinth of error and mischief is straight out. Devious courses have been attempted in vain; modifications of injustice will bring no permanent relief. While the principle remains; while wicked laws and practices prevail; while it is possible for one interest to prey upon another interest; while the forms of justice are invoked to promote injustice, class must be pitted against class, misunderstandings must increase, violent measures must be resorted to on occasion by both sides, and the turmoil must continue. Privilege of every description—Privilege in the nation, Privilege in the states, Privilege in municipalities, cannot be tolerated in any degree. Privilege in a republic is everywhere and forever wrong.

The great middle class of the country, which unfortunately has allied itself thus far with the supporters of these abuses, must be looked to for the remedy. The rich who

bribe and the poor who are bribed may as well be eliminated from the discussion. Natural distrust of the party which has timorously assailed one, and perhaps the greatest, of the strongholds of Privilege, has deterred many members of the middle class from joining in the reform movement; but social allurements, a growing subserviency to wealth, an increasing aversion on the part of many well-dressed people to association with the working classes, and an almost invincible determination on the part of thousands of people who work for salaries, to misunderstand and view with suspicion the millions who work for wages, are chiefly responsible for the fact that the gulf between our "upper" and "middle" and "lower" classes has become well nigh impassable.

The middle class of to-day is as profoundly interested in the abolition of Privilege as, in the days of slavery, the middle class of that period was interested in the abolition of that institution. While it maintains *quasi* social and political relations with the great freebooters of the period, it is being ground to powder between the millstones of insa-

tiable avarice on one side and of hopeless and desperate poverty on the other.

No doubt the large and ignorant labor element which is under the influence of Privilege, a part of the time quieted by promises of booty and a part of the time inflamed to madness by disappointment and thirst for revenge, will concern itself for some years to come with the wages dispute; but the great mass of the American people—the men and women who live in well-ordered houses, who aim to keep up appearances, who go to church and whose children go to school, cannot intelligently consider this question without perceiving that they have a prodigious interest in a change.

The protected labor camps have introduced to the people of this country a scale of living so low, so wretched, so abhorrent, that the problem as to how few household articles, how scant a wardrobe, and how lean a diet can be made to suffice for human beings, may be said to have been solved; but the great element between the extreme of poverty and the extreme of wealth, which does not yet despair, but which finds it

harder every year to provide the necessaries, nearly all of them taxed in the interest of Privilege, must eventually bury partisanship and examine into the causes of their hardships with the gravity that they deserve.

The average members of the middle class who do not and cannot receive any benefits from the protective tariff pay as roundly under the system of taxation on consumption as the richest men in the country. They and their wives and families may wear and use as many things as millionaires and their wives and families. Their houses must be furnished; they must be decently clothed; they must have wholesome food in variety. Except for certain luxuries, which are not so heavily taxed as the necessaries, the family of the preacher, lawyer, architect, doctor, railroad employé, merchant, or farmer, who earns one thousand or two thousand dollars a year, may consume as much and pay as much in federal taxes as the family of the capitalist whose income is a hundred thousand or a million dollars. Can we wonder that the hard conditions of American life

have excited the amazement and the commiseration of all our foreign visitors?

It is folly to delude one's self with the idea that this system of taxation is the result of accident or of unintentional error. It is the deliberate, well-calculated, and coolly predetermined method by which wealth gains unfair advantages for itself and shirks public burdens. It is a part of the great edifice of fraud that has been built up around the central idea of Privilege. It is one phase of the great public wrong that has produced the American millionaire and the American tramp in such numbers that they occupy separate divisions in our censuses, and that has all but exhausted the wealth-producing people who may be found between the two.

Multitudes of business men and workingmen who have no direct interest in the protective tariff are nevertheless made to suffer by the periods of contraction and inflation which inevitably follow the buffeting of this question in politics. The daring gamblers of the protected class can take their chances. They win or lose heavily. It is their trade.

They are prepared for the casualties of the war in which they are engaged.

It is not so with the legitimate commerce and industry of the land. They find themselves disorganized by circumstances over which they have no control. They are subjected to all manner of alarms and conjectures, to every variety of doubt and panic. They seek no favors; they will quietly submit to no imposition; they merely ask to be let alone and to know that the future has no surprises in store for them in the way of dishonest and meddling legislation. But they can be sure of nothing so long as this question remains the football of parties.

While men are free, and speech is free, and presses are free, the supporters of Privilege must be on the defensive. There will be no peace while this error lasts. So long as one true American voice or pen endures, there will be no ground for hope that the taxation of all men for the benefit of a few men will become the settled and accepted policy of the nation.

Privilege may continue in one form or another for years; it may even extend its

lines and gain strength at times. It may blacken the reputations of its foes, and with the assistance of a corrupt society, it may fortify with seeming respectability its own detestable leaders; but its victories will be unsatisfying and temporary, bringing no settlement and justifying no reduction in the numbers necessary for the defense of an institution which, in the nature of things, cannot be at peace with its victims. In the hour of its mightiest triumphs it will be in the gravest danger, for in the presence of glorified wrong new moral forces in opposition will spring into being on every hand.

This is the prospect that confronts the honest wealth and the legitimate business and industry of the country. They can make the struggle short or long, as they please. They can do away with Privilege in a single campaign, if they will. Their power is not in question; their virtue is in question.

XXVII.

DESPERATE RICH AND DESPERATE POOR.

WITH both protected capital and protected labor becoming more arrogant every day, and with every new dispute developing novel elements of ferocity and recklessness, he need not be looked upon as an alarmist who invites the attention of the plain people of America to these unhappy conditions.

The desperate rich and the desperate poor may be content to pursue their quarrel as to work and wages and plunder, to the end; but the millions who have no selfish interest in the dispute, who have wearied of the tiresome contentions and the audacious assumptions of both extremes, and who now and then experience a sensation of alarm in the presence of some new expression of violence, cannot much longer escape the conclusion that they have a duty in the premises.

Already we have seen virtually the entire army of the United States engaged for

the maintenance of peace as between these two factions. Already we are familiarizing ourselves with the strike leader's flippant use of the word "revolution." Already we have seen our transcontinental railways picketed by troops as are the thoroughfares in Russia when the czar rides forth. Already portions of the militia of more than one American state have mutinied against the authority to which it has sworn obedience. Already there have come threatenings of rebellion from states that had not yet been carved out of the wilderness when the scene at Appomattox was enacted. Already the rich man is revolving in his mind the problem and the possibility of "strong government." Already multitudes of Americans are demonstrating their lack of faith in their own institutions, by the eagerness with which they seize upon and indorse the dreams of state socialists and the visions of the poorly disciplined intellects of the wretched.

There is nothing in the situation or in the half-hearted and tentative measures of relief that have been proposed, to reassure the man who is in earnest in his belief that

Privilege is morally wrong, and that the security of free government demands its utter and immediate extirpation.

Many of the ideas on which the republic was based have become inoperative. Through the aggressions of a class we have been led away from the safe and simple rule bequeathed to us by immortal patriots, and have taken on ourselves the injustices and discriminations which scandalize the worn-out despotisms of Europe. The only practicable and prudent course open to the people is to return to first principles, and with uncompromising firmness cut away every new growth that does not harmonize with their everlasting truths.

The way out is straight out to the higher ground of honesty and to the purer air of truth. The men who linger hesitatingly over the well-worn columns of figures and the fumbled tables of statistics, from which they have been accustomed to elucidate the economic value of robbery, may as well be left to the congenial society of the great plunderers and the degraded paupers which the system has produced. To no member of

this objectionable trinity will a moral question appeal. Faith must be had in the great body of the people, for in spite of many prejudices and great preoccupation, they may yet be depended upon when properly approached, to dispose of this question correctly and for all time.

With the issue once presented as it should be, and as it will be before much progress can be hoped for, there will be for a season but two political parties in this country—one of honesty and the other of dishonesty; one of morality and the other of immorality.

Those American people who ask as a right for themselves more than they are willing to accord to others do not constitute the majority; they are an insignificant minority; their plague spots of avarice, disorder and woe do not characterize the republic. If they did, the case would be desperate indeed. The profounder currents of national life, often vexed and impeded by the follies and vices of these interests, are not seriously contaminated as yet by the excesses which they have encouraged. The recuperative and reformatory power of the masses living far

from the scenes of these injustices has not been impaired. It may need direction, it may need education, it may require discipline; but it does not lack virtue or energy.

To that uncorrupted democracy which has viewed with patience, if not with indifference, the vicious systems and policies designed for its own spoliation, which asks no injustice, and which, at no distant day, will demand and accept nothing but justice, the appeal in behalf of good morals and good government must be made. It has not failed the republic in the past; it will not fail it now.

Thoughtful men do not need to be told that the next great struggle of civilization is to turn upon the relations between capital and labor. They know that portents of this momentous conflict are visible even now in every enlightened nation. Whether it is to be a battle of ideas alone, or one in which rivers of blood shall flow, they cannot tell, but of one thing they may be certain: The rage of that conflict will beat fiercest upon the nation that has most to answer for in the way of injustice and oppression.

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