

strong indications that a secret understanding had been arrived at between those countries and the United States. The coercion of Venezuela was then decided upon, but was to be delayed until the effect of the president's message to Congress had been observed. It did not take long for the allied powers to act, upon finding that no expressed opposition had developed to the "policing of the world."

In an interview, President Roosevelt is stated to have said, that those who wish to fully understand his position on this question, "must read between the lines of his first message."

Are we to understand from this that an entangling alliance has been entered into with Germany and England and perhaps other "civilized and orderly powers," to aid them in collecting their debts of the semi-civilized and disorderly countries, wherever they may be?

What if this question is considered by The Hague court, when it tries Venezuela for her shortcomings, and the arbitrators decide that the "policing" of that state is necessary and appoints Germany or England or both as high-sheriff to civilize her and collect what is due and charge a good round sum for the expense of collection?

Where will the Monroe doctrine be then? Will President Roosevelt be in a position to maintain it, with the sheriff in possession of Venezuela for an unlimited time, until the debts and expenses are paid? Venezuela cannot pay what she owes; the only settlement possible is for her to issue bonds at a large discount and a ruinous rate of interest. That would be a mortgage on her land and her people, principally to England and Germany. If she defaulted in the interest or otherwise became disorderly, which an uprising of her people against some great injustice would be construed by the powers to be, her creditors would claim the right to occupy and administer her affairs until the debt was extinguished. Like England's occupation of Egypt, this would be perpetual.

All the South American republics may be claimed to be disorderly, and all owe large sums to Europe, and there is no doubt the same coercion will be used on them and with a like result eventually—permanent occupation.

There is but one escape for all

of them and that is the refusal of the people of the United States to indorse "the policing of the world" and by the defeat of the president and party who have undertaken to carry it out.

With a Jacksonian Democrat in the White House and a declaration by him that the Monroe doctrine will be maintained at all hazards, the powers of Europe would not venture to molest or make afraid our sister republics.

We must take the bold position of the Fathers of the Republic, or in some time of stress, when political factions might be battling for supremacy, the Allied Powers of Europe might attempt the "policing" of the United States or part of them.

The Monroe doctrine must be preserved.

R. M.

DR. BASCOM ON ROCKEFELLER.

A letter from Prof. John Bascom to the Chicago Chronicle, published in the Chronicle of January 8. In this letter Prof. Bascom explains in greater fullness the statements recently made by him in two interviews already commented on in The Public. Prof. Bascom has the chair of political economy at Williams college.

In the haste of the moment one does not always select the most suitable stone to shy at a dog. I should like the use of your columns for a more explicit statement of the reasons which render unfit an acceptance by colleges of Mr. Rockefeller's gifts than was possible in a hasty interview with reporters. The question is whether colleges are at liberty to solicit donations without reference to the manner in which the money has been accumulated; or whether there should be some correspondence between the temper with which it has been made and that with which it is to be used. Some seem ready to say that money has no character and may come from all quarters and go in all uses. Our Lord did not take this view of the widow's two mites. He gave them a decided preference over the lavish sums with which they were associated, and this feeling has clung to men's minds ever since. It is the temper of instruction which makes it educational and this temper may be expressed in many ways.

The Standard Oil company has for more than a quarter of a century been the corporation most conspicuous in this country for inadmissible business methods; the faults have chiefly consisted in securing unequal rates from railroads and in direct and persevering attacks on competitors. No other cor-

poration has won so bad an eminence in these particulars. The first of these, unequal rates, has from the beginning been contrary to law. Common law does not recognize any right in public carriers to give different rates to different individuals. Much of the early success of the Standard Oil company was due to these illegal contracts, which were at times of a most flagrant character. In 1887 the interstate commerce act came in force, designed to put an end to these unequal business conditions. The Standard Oil company has done its utmost, in its entire history, to subvert the civil law in its watchfulness over the general welfare and to establish a monopoly in the teeth of all its provisions. If it secures to-day fewer discriminations in its favor than hitherto it is due in part to the fact that, its end being attained, it has less need of them and in part to the fact that the interstate commerce commission has made this method more difficult.

The Standard Oil company has attacked directly and in a great variety of ways all competitors, and has in most instances driven them from the field. The antitrust bill just introduced by Senator Hoar makes criminal, with a penalty of imprisonment, the means which have been constantly employed by this corporation. The intent and spirit of these methods have been from the beginning as criminal as the senator would now make them to be in law.

The monopoly set up by the Standard Oil company has been pushed in the most vigorous way till the wealth accumulated has become something monstrous in the world's history. Even now, while the profits are enormous, this corporation is steadily increasing the price of oil. These profits come mostly from the poorer and more dependent classes. Every workman among us in these winter days is lighted to his morning meal by a lamp and out into the darkness by a lantern on which the Standard Oil company imposes its claim. The wealth of this company is gathered chiefly from the most ragged and empty pockets among us.

The wrongful and unflinching way in which this wealth has been won, the long period over which these extortions have been extended and the surprising success which has accompanied them have made the Standard Oil company the pioneer in a policy the embodiment of methods which threatens the very existence of our institutions. Is a college at liberty to accept money gained in a manner so hostile to the

public welfare? Is it at liberty, when the government is being put to its wits' end to check this aggression, to rank itself with those who profit by it? It is not anti-trust laws that we need nearly so much as it is an anti-trust temper. If equal conditions were given to all forms of production the trust problem would shortly disappear.

The question of trusts is an economic, social and civic question, and it is the duty of every college to meet it in all these relations. A college that is thriving on the money of the Standard Oil trust is precluded by courtesy, by honor and by interest from any adequate criticism of its methods. It has foreclosed discussion on one of the most important questions which come before it for consideration. One has but to recall events which have already happened in our universities to see how this need of silence is felt. The American people have such an overwhelming admiration for the money-making process that they can hardly get on their knees quick enough in the presence of a wealthy corporation. Is this the temper most suitable to a university and a divinity school?

Mr. Rockefeller has the reputation of being a devout Baptist. One is unable to understand, therefore, how he should escape some twinge in his own consciousness when he converts the words of St. Paul: "The law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," into the words: "The commercial law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, drive your neighbor to the wall." Nor can one any better understand how a divinity school should be willing in any way to be a partaker in such a travesty of Christian faith. A portion of the ministry, as in the anti-slavery discussions, has always betrayed the people when a crisis has arisen. How does it happen?

Our Lord said: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and thou rememberest that thy brother hath sought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." If Mr. Rockefeller should obey this injunction and strive to assuage the deep and justifiable hatred he has awakened in those scattered all through the land whose business he has ruined, he would not have time enough, even if his days were prolonged like those of Methuselah, to return and complete his first gift.

What all our universities need to teach is sound citizenship. The dan-

ger which most presses on the state is unscrupulous pursuit of wealth. When our universities shall cease to send forth young men intelligently and earnestly devoted to equal rights and the public welfare their function is ended.

Williamstown, Mass., Jan. 5.

THE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY.

For The Public.

The simplest and most obvious test of truth in any proposition is self-consistency—the just and proper inherence of each part thereof in the whole. When, on the contrary, the admitted factors of a thesis are found irreconcilable, the discovery reacts upon the original postulate and proves its falsity.

It not infrequently happens that this test intelligently and courageously applied, inverts what we had thought to be an axiom, changing all the plus signs of our sufficiency to minus signs of doubt. For example, we have lately heard a vast deal about the "rights of property," the "sacred rights" and the "divine rights," and most of us doubtless rest secure in the belief that we fully comprehend what this means in theory, as well as in practice. In the matter of fuel we have learned to our sorrow and our cost that the practice part of it means extortionate prices for coal in Boston and vicinity (a person in one instance paying at the rate of \$40 the ton for range anthracite), a cornered fuel market in which dealers answer inquiries with "None at any price," while nearly 200,000 tons of coal is held idle in our harbor, until we have been moved to wonder which is the worse type of highwayman, he who holds a dagger to one's heart, with the salutation: "Give me all you have, or I'll run this knife through you," or he who places an icicle to one's breast with the grim threat: "Give me as much of your money as it pleases me to demand, or I'll stick this in your heart!"

Such conditions, it would seem, are only tolerated by the public, because of utterly erroneous ideas as to this matter of the "rights of property," which, in the average mind, is as often thought of as "the rights of wealth," in contradistinction to "the rights of labor." Along similar lines of thought we hear much of the "irrepressible conflict between labor and capital" from people who never realize that there can properly be no conflict whatever between these two economic factors, and who never have

learned that the real issue is between labor and monopoly, which amounts to an assertion on the one hand and a denial on the other, of the right of man to labor with a just return to himself.

Brushing aside all confusing minutiae and coming down to fundamentals, let us make the following postulates which, it is believed, will generally be accepted as axiomatic.

1. The chronology of primary economic factors assumes the following order: The earth; man and his labor; and the product of his labor applied to the earth.

2. Man has as natural and inalienable a right to the use of the earth as he has to that part of the earth which he breathes.

3. Wealth, then, is the product of an individual possession applied to a general possession, i. e., labor applied to land.

If these premises are true, the following conclusions would seem to be inevitable:

1. An antecedent thing (labor) cannot generate in its application to an impersonal thing (land) a subsequent factor (capital) which shall have rights oppugnant to itself. A brief consideration of what is known in mathematics as a "closed system of forces" will make this apparent.

2. If the right of the earth is a common right, occupancy or "possession" can per se by no possibility generate an individual right.

3. Since an individual right cannot inhere in or flow from a common right per se, whence comes it? If wealth be the result of the application of an individual possession to a common possession, it is clear that any individual rights inhering therein must have come from the individual possession, since *ex nihilo nihil fit* is as clearly violated by getting a single clam from an ocean where clams are not, as by conjuring ponderables from sheer vacuity.

4. If the individual right in wealth is born of the individual factor concerned in its production, then, since that factor is labor, the rights of wealth are labor rights, and any real conflict between the true rights of labor and the true rights of wealth would exhibit the astonishing paradox of a conflict of the rights of labor with the same rights of labor, or, to put it mathematically, an "irrepressible conflict" of a concrete segregated homogeneity with itself—which is to say, perpetual motion.

When a conclusion reduces a proposition to an absurdity, if correctly