

been punished. We assert that they also say privately that such crimes are "ancient history;" in some cases they even assert it publicly. That shows that they do not want to bring such crimes to justice, but to protect themselves from doing what they promise to do by conjuring up a statute of limitations for themselves. The question, then, American man and woman—citizen of the United States and happy child of the empire—is just this: What are you going to do about it? Are you going to let it become a part of history—"ancient history" in time—that you had the fact morally proved to you that a horrible murder was committed under your flag by one of your officers, in collusion with others, who helped him kidnap his victim, and that you, responsible, intelligent, influential, let that iniquitous thing be done—in a word, that you condoned the crime of shielding the confessed murderer and his associates and accomplices? Or will you demand justice as though the dead victim were your relative, brother or son? That is exactly, O child of the empire, what you face to-day, stated in bold, hard, unmistakable terms! You must make your choice in the sight of God and a very large company, speaking out now distinctly, or else forever after hold your peace. If you speak out, justice will be done. If you remain silent, saying you are sick of the whole stupid business and of the cranks who keep it stirred up, you may be sure justice will not be done. You are quite free to remain silent, but you cannot escape the verdict of history. So take your choice.

#### ASSESSMENTS IN THE MINE REGION: AN OVERLOOKED POINT.

Mr. Bolton Hall, a lawyer in New York and an incisive writer on economic questions, took pains to investigate the subject of assessments in the mining districts of Pennsylvania, and published the result of his investigations in a recent issue of the New York Journal. Salient points of Mr. Hall's article were quoted in the Philadelphia North American, but in no other paper, so far as I have seen.

And yet, of all that has been said and written on the subject of the coal strike, from the beginning of this memorable conflict down to the present moment, nothing has appeared of such real interest and importance.

What Mr. Hall found was this: That there are acres and acres of coal lands

in Pennsylvania worth from \$25,000 to \$30,000 per acre—actually claimed by officials to be worth, this—and assessed at the rate of from \$30 to \$3 per acre. These lands—or rather coal-beds—are held out of use; and the state of Pennsylvania assists Mr. Baer and his associates to hold them out of use by assessing them at these absurdly low rates.

How is this low assessment to be accounted for? There is no need to imply bribery or false dealing of any kind to account for it, though there may perhaps have been undue influences. But we see the same kind of discrepancy everywhere—in city lots and plantations as well as in coal lands.

The basic trouble is the mistaken notion, not of assessors alone but of the public as a whole, that natural values should be assessed according to what they yield. This is a false idea. Natural values should be assessed not according to what they actually yield, but according to what they may yield, if properly used.

Let me illustrate: Here, just off Canal street, is an old tumbling-down, two-storied building that may be yielding small rent because of its condition. The land on which it stands is of great value because of its location. The value of the land calls for a much fuller use. Now, the mistake of the assessors is to let the conditions of the "improvement" affect the assessment of the land-value. That land-value is there—it has really been created by the community—and there is no reason why it should not be assessed. It might, and ought to, be better used; and it would be, if it were properly assessed.

If a man is holding valuable land out of its full use, that is his fault, and he should not be rewarded for it. This is what we do: We reward such a man, and fine the man who adds improvements.

It is the same way in the country. The man who has 50 acres which he actually uses is taxed relatively much higher than a man who holds hundreds of acres, naturally just as valuable, out of use.

But to return to the coal fields, let me ask two important questions:

Is it just that the holders of the coal fields should be favored by an assessment at so much lower rate than their lands are worth, simply because they do not choose to use these lands?

And secondly, what would be the result if these coal lands were assessed at even 60 per cent. of their acknowledged value, say at \$15,000 per acre?

In other words, how long would they be held out of use, if assessed at this fair valuation?—J. H. Dillard, in the New Orleans Harlequin.

#### BURDEN BEARING.

For The Public.

The Rev. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis instructs us from St. Paul to bear each our own burden; but how does he escape the charge that precedes this: "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ?"

The two texts, seemingly contradictory, are perfectly reconcilable. That each shall bear his own burden is certainly the principle of individual development; but no less may the highest nobility and strength of human character be unfolded by a magnanimous sharing of the burdens of others. When a man's heredity, training and environment are all against him—when he is bound and cast to the ground with the foot of his superior upon his neck, he is in no condition to bear any burden, but that of his superior's selfishness and oppressive sin of greed. If he is assisted to rise and to throw off the load of another's guilt he is put in a position to bear his own burden. It is this in a degree that the labor union is seeking to do for each of its members, and it is no more a leveling process, as Dr. Hillis puts it, than the enrollment of church members pledged to stand together against the encroachments of evil. The great leader cannot be leveled to "the worst laborer" through any organization that attempts like the free school and the press and the church to "level men up." In spite of the denunciations hurled by the reverend doctor at the industrial unions they are working for the uplifting of the individual through conditions that may give greater opportunity for the self-development which he demands as the first virtue of the faithful citizen. There is not a single argument brought to bear against the union of labor that does not apply with even greater force to the combination of capital. The inconsistency of exalting organization upon one side and denouncing it passionately upon the other is strikingly evident in this eloquent discourse which is a powerful plea for the strong man arraigned before God for injustice toward the weaker brother. The reasoning of the learned doctor is brilliant but specious, abounding in false