

into another room and entertained him there with a candid explanation while his colleague finished their joint business with Mr. Taft. Thus a "bad break" by the President was averted, while the sting of the inexcusable insult was in no wise lessened.

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Journalistic Reputation-Murder.

The center of the evil power of newspapers has hardly been better described than by Charles Edward Russell, who, in a recent issue of *La Follette's*, said of it:

Let a newspaper attack you in its editorials and you go unscathed. Nobody reads the editorials. But let its news columns give an account of something you are alleged to have said or done and your dearest friends on earth will not escape the infection. Always, thereafter, that thing will stick in their minds. They read it in the news columns, there must be something in it, they believe it in spite of themselves, in spite of loyalty, in spite of everything in the world. The news columns of a newspaper can ridicule a man out of the affections of his own family, out of the esteem of his friends, out of the support of his party and his colleagues. They can make the men fighting with him for the same cause distrust and dislike him. Even when the ridicule or the lie appears in a newspaper that they know perfectly well hates the man and wants to destroy him, they will make no allowance for that fact. They will believe what they read in the news columns and disregard everything else.

Two conspicuous victims of this abuse whom Mr. Russell names are ex-Senator Pettigrew and Francis J. Heney.

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Race Homicide.

The currency which Mr. Roosevelt gave to the term "race suicide" has needed a check, and this has been given, we venture to hope, by Dr. Charles Gilbert Davis. In responding to the courtesy of the Chicago Law School in conferring upon him on the 10th the degree of LL.D., Dr. Davis bluntly said that "instead of preaching against race suicide Colonel Roosevelt should have directed his efforts toward preventing race murder." While living children are killed by economic maladjustments, the others need not so much concern us. To deplore "race suicide" while ignoring "race murder," is to crowd pretty close up to that "sentimentality" which Mr. Roosevelt tells us is worse even than injustice. It is at any rate putting justice to the born, beneath sentimentality about the unbegotten.

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Comic Supplements.

The "comic supplements" of Sunday newspapers have come in for much well deserved criti-

cism. They have developed, however, to a point at which, though the fun be often boisterous and the influence not especially uplifting, their effect is usually harmless upon the minds they happen to entertain. This is not objectionable. There is such a thing as amusement for the sake of amusement; and so long as its influence is harmless it need not be "improving" in order to be approved. For some of the "comic supplements," however, no excuse need be made; and the dreams of little Nemo, by Winsor McCay, is one of these. From their beginning they have been imaginative, decorous, artistic insofar as their medium permits, gently satirical, stimulating, and rationally amusing. The satire in the current series is especially significant and keen. A planet where one man monopolizes air so that every one must buy breathing supplies, and even language so that no one can express his thoughts without buying words, offers an abundance of humorous opportunities to a skillful cartoonist, and Mr. McCay is making the most of it in his brilliantly fantastic Nemo dreams.

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CONSERVATION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES.

There is a story which is fairly indicative of how our government has handled the people's great heritage—the land and the riches contained therein. It runs something like this: The keeper of a fruit stand one warm day fell asleep at her place of business. A wag, noting the situation and seeing nearby a bunch of "take-one" signs on a stack of advertising matter, transferred the signs to the fruit stand and then stepped aside to watch the effect. A street arab first grasped the situation. With a whoop he descended upon the spoil. Others like him followed until by the time the fruit vender had been aroused, there was little left of her stock in trade.

What the wag did for the fruit vender the American people, with their theory of a do-nothing government and their notion that our resources were inexhaustible, have virtually done for this country. They have scattered their "take-one" signs over the public domain—the lands, forests, gold mines, silver mines, coal mines, oil and gas wells and what not; they have taught their children to sing, "Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm," and what have they found? Their great highways of commerce, the rivers, competitors of the railways, choked and unnavigable; their desirable public lands practically all appropriated, many of them by gigantic corporations; their gold and sil-

ver, iron, zinc, lead, coal, oil, gas, largely in private hands, with the result, for example, that they have found themselves in the midst of a coal famine at a time when the coal supply, actual or potential, could abundantly have met the people's needs and at a reasonable price; their Hudson Palisades turned into a stone quarry, their Niagara in process of conversion into a factory backyard, their big trees dating back to the time of Solomon or Moses being ruthlessly cut, and their forests destroyed at a rate and by methods that should make the angels weep.

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The first land act of any importance was passed in the year 1824. It provided for sales of public lands at public auction. Even then the robbery began. Land speculators would come to "an agreement among gentlemen" not to run up prices to their mutual loss. Speculators from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and points nearer the land offered for sale might be on the spot; but when it was sold and paid for, the records presented a monotonous list, page after page, of sales at \$1.25 per acre.

Right here a difficulty arose. In many instances, immigrants had already settled upon and improved some of the very tracts the speculators had bought. When they were confronted by the land owner, it was a case of pay his price or get off the land and forfeit the improvements.

The "pre-emption act," passed in 1841, partly remedied this evil. It gave to the actual holder of the land a first opportunity to come legally into possession of it.

Then there grew up the sentiment that "Uncle Sam was rich enough to give us all a farm."

So Congress, on May 20, 1862, passed the "homestead act." This entitled any person twenty-one years of age and otherwise legally qualified, to enter a quarter section of surveyed land, and after having lived thereon and cultivated it for five years to receive patent therefor.

These laws were passed for the express purpose of ensuring proper distribution of the public lands to honest settlers. But as a fact they are used by dishonest land speculators to defraud the government. The report of the Committee on Public Lands of the House of Representatives, submitted December 19, 1892, reads: "In many sections of the country the evasion of the pre-emption law has become a regularly organized business, and offices are opened for the express purpose of pre-empting and selling lands. Men are employed and paid definite amounts to make pre-emption locations, and agreements are made to transfer the

lands so acquired the moment the title vests in them. But, beyond making such agreements in defiance of law, these locations are in every respect fraudulent—the parties to them never making the required improvements, and seldom going upon the land claimed. The consequence is that this law is now made use of *almost exclusively* to accomplish results which it was enacted to prevent; to wit, the transferring of the public domain into the hands of speculators, instead of reserving it for the actual settler; and not only this, but in too many cases, passing it into the hands of dishonest speculators, who are willing to become parties to perjury and fraud.

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By means of an illustration we may see how the honest settler is forced to pay to the dishonest parasite a goodly sum.

An unscrupulous lawyer—for convenience of reference let us call him "Ketchem"—locates himself in a region where there is government land. He makes use of everybody in the village or country, or elsewhere, with a sufficiently elastic conscience. Such confederate may be less than twenty-one years of age, or a foreigner, or a resident of anywhere or nowhere; he does not have to swear to his qualifications; all he is wanted for is to sign his name perfunctorily to a pre-emption declaratory statement, which (when signed) the lawyer sends to the local office. The local office mark on their plats and record books that the tract described in the application received has been "filed upon" by the party named therein.

This is the first step in the fraud—to cover as many tracts as possible with bogus pre-emption filings. One lawyer in South Dakota filed in the local office applications in the names of his youngest son (aged four months), of his deceased father and grandfather, of his wife under her maiden name, and several of his and her down-east relatives, and of his saddle mare. The local officers had no means of knowing that "Nancy Ketchem" had four legs.

Now, Mr. Strange (let us call him) comes into that region from the East—an honest man, honestly seeking a quarter section of land upon which to make a home. He selects an apparently unoccupied tract, and forwards an application to the local office. If he should call upon Lawyer Ketchem to make out the application for him he falls into his clutches the first step; if not, he will before long. For one of Ketchem's confederates has a "filing" on that tract, and Ketchem, as his attorney, has sent to the local office a certificate of

his attorneyship, with a request that he be informed of all action taken in connection with that land. So within twenty-four hours after Strange's application is received, Ketchem is notified of it.

By due course of mail the local officers write to Strange that his pre-emption filing has been received, and is held "subject to the prior filing of Michael McGrath." Strange does not quite understand, but upon inquiry he is informed that the quoted words mean that one McGrath had filed an application for the land before he did, and, therefore, has the prior right.

Strange hauls a load of lumber to the land and is laying the foundation for a house when a wagon drives up and the driver unloads a breaking-plow with which he begins to break the sod. Strange goes to him and inquires what he is doing. The man with the plow explains that the owner of the land, McGrath—or, to be exact, his agent, Lawyer Ketchem—has sent him out there to begin making improvements. Strange hurries to McGrath's agent, Ketchem. What follows depends entirely upon how eagerly Strange wants the land, how badly he is scared and how much money he has. Without detailing the conversation between the two, the conclusion of the whole matter is that Ketchem ingeniously worms out of Strange the admission that sooner than have any trouble with McGrath over the matter he would pay a hundred dollars for a waiver of his rights.

After a lapse of sufficient time for the lawyer to correspond with McGrath, a letter is alleged to have been received from him, offering to relinquish his claim for \$125. Ketchem makes out a formal "relinquishment," signing the same as McGrath's attorney. Strange pays Ketchem the \$125 and leaves the office rejoicing that the "cloud" has been removed from his claim, and that his home is now secure, even if it has cost him \$125 more than he expected to pay.

Ketchem crosses the street to the saloon and hands \$25 to the barkeeper, Mike McGrath, an Irish lad not yet nineteen years old, not a citizen if he were of age, and, of course, incapable of legally holding the claim for an instant. Ketchem puts the even hundred dollars in his pocket and returns to his office rejoicing at the success of his little scheme for swindling another down-east "tenderfoot."

This is not an exceptional instance. Nor is it the only form of fraud practiced. But it is typical of all, although the large land syndicates would not stoop to such a little transaction. They prefer to defraud the government of large tracts of fertile lands along some river, these stretches

sometimes reaching a hundred miles in length. The fraud nevertheless is no more veiled than that indulged in by our friend Ketchem.

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We have been told that there is enough public land for all. But within the last quarter century, between vast grants to railroad companies and gigantic swindles by corporations and by individuals, our public domain has almost disappeared. Here then is a condition for enmity and ill will. Let me illustrate. If passengers upon an ocean steamer should find upon going into the dining cabin that there were seats and plates and food enough for three times as many persons as there were on board, they would be very likely to be well behaved and courteous, "in honor preferring one another." But if they knew there were only seats enough and food enough for one-third of the passengers, and that who ever failed to get a seat at the table must starve, there would inevitably be crowding and crushing and trampling under foot; the necessity of the case would compel everyone to be selfish and inconsiderate. This is just what happened at the opening to settlement of the lands of Oklahoma.

The brutal disregard for the rights and lives of others in that mad scramble has rarely been equaled outside the struggle of the British prisoners to obtain access to the single window that admitted air into the "black hole" of Calcutta. Is it entirely complimentary to American statesmanship that our lawmakers have as yet been unable to devise any method of dealing with our public lands that will not inevitably lead to such injustice and such tragedies?

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Perhaps it would be well to take an inventory. Let it be under four heads: lands, forests, minerals, and waters. In fact, we may say under one great head, land, and three sub-heads or divisions, because in the last analysis the source of them all is in the land itself.

The land area of the United States, excluding Alaska and the insular possessions, is about 3,000,000 square miles, or 1,920,000,000 acres. A little less than half of this is occupied as farm land. About five-sixths of the land area has passed into private holdings. Of the original 1,920,000,000 acres there remained July 1, 1908, 387,000,000 acres open to entry; nearly all of this is arid or otherwise unsuitable for settlement by families. Much the larger portion of our lands, therefore, have been vested in private individuals, and these are the very best tracts obtainable.

Our land policy has been a mere business proposition. No care has been exercised in the handling of the public lands, the people's heritage. The whole matter may be summed up shortly and sweetly by quoting one of our prominent and beneficent millionaires when he said: "The people be damned; we are in business to make money." Just how long the laboring man is going to accept all this buncomb as a matter of course I am not prepared to state, but it seems to me high time that he began to demand his own. "Man is a land animal."

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In our consideration of the conserving of our lands, we must not overlook the fact that that which is contained within the bowels of the earth, as well as that which has its roots planted deep in the soil, is sometimes of more value than the land itself. Therefore we must find out how our forest lands are distributed.

Originally the forest land covered not less than 850,000,000 acres, but today a conservative estimate of the area of the forest lands would be 550,000,000 acres. Four-fifths of this is in private holdings, leaving one-fifth of the total credited to the public. In connection with this fact it is significant to note that those lands which are privately owned are much more valuable than that portion which is controlled by the government.

Now it is perfectly obvious to all thinking men that in order to ensure an economical handling of these vast timber lands, we must take them out of the realm of pure business operations. To parcel them out indiscriminately to large corporations for the purpose of disposing of them at a profit, makes it absolutely impossible to exercise any degree of supervision over their handling. The government should have full control over the timber cutting industry, to the end that the watersheds be left standing, the waste by fire be minimized and the replanting of trees be systematically accomplished. All of these things are pertinent to the future welfare and efficiency of our nation.

What has been said of the forests may be equally applicable to our mineral resources which, in value, now exceed \$2,000,000,000. In dealing with the mineral resources of our country we will limit our discussion to the three great products, coal, iron ores, and petroleum.

According to the government reports as to our supplies of commercial coal, it is estimated that 1,400,000,000,000 tons will cover the available supply. They say further that "at the present increasing rate of production this will be depleted and will approach exhaustion before the middle of

the next century; and the additional 1,600,000,000,000 tons of inferior coal and lignite not now available economically will approach exhaustion before the end of the next century."

Here is an alarming condition which merits the attention of every man and woman in this great country. Already the price of anthracite and some other coals is advancing because of exhaustion of thicker beds and increased cost of working. Notwithstanding this scarcity of the product itself, we aggravate the circumstance by allowing a few wealthy individuals to control the output, which simply means that we grant to them the absolute ownership of that which God intended for humanity's comfort. They dictate the terms under which we are privileged to own a ton or two of this natural product of the land.

Passing to iron ores what do we find? The same report estimates that the supply of this ore cannot be expected to last beyond the middle of the present century. There are few men who do not recognize the fact that much the greater portion of this ore is owned by the United States Steel Corporation. And the directors of that huge combination of capital, value this natural product at its true worth. Chas. M. Schwab, president of the United States Steel Corporation, testifying before the Industrial Commission, May 11, 1901, said: "If I were valuing the raw materials in this capitalization it would not be big enough. This company has 500,000,000 tons of ore in sight in the Northwest. We own something like 60,000 acres of Connellsville coal. There is no more Connellsville coal. You could not buy it for \$60,000 an acre. This ore is the greatest asset of all. Works can be duplicated, but this ore cannot."

With reference to petroleum and natural gas, we are told that the supply cannot under any computation last through the present century. I need say nothing as to the ownership of this commodity, because the great Standard Oil Company is constantly in evidence.

Last but not least of the natural resources of this vast country are its great waterways. The acquisition by private corporations of riparian rights has resulted in so tying up these waterways as to render them unnavigable, and therefore obviating the possibility of any competition with the railways. These rights have been granted freely to the petitioners for them, without any return to the government resulting therefrom. Happily this irregularity is being discovered in a measure, and the government slowly but surely is demanding its rights in this matter. And yet there is ample room for improvement.

Having established the fact that the greater part of our land is in the hands of private owners, let us for a moment consider that evil of our system of landlordism—the alien landlord. We are reconciled, no doubt, to the practise of paying rent to a landlord for the privilege of occupying a very small plat of ground, but do we recognize the fact that a great area of these United States is owned by foreigners who get tribute from us?

The power of the purse is greater than the power of the sword. Suppose a foreign nation were to send an iron-clad to the coast of New Jersey and capture a bit of sandy beach on which to erect fortifications, and over which to float its flag. How our American blood would boil. The bit of worthless sand would be reclaimed if it cost the life of every able bodied man in America. Yet foreign landlords have sent that other war power, the purse, into the very heart of this nation, and have captured many thousands of acres of the best lands on the continent, without our American blood boiling to any alarming extent.

Why would a foreign power wish to capture this country with the sword? The answer is plain: That she might levy tribute on our people. Why do foreign landlords capture our lands with the purse? The answer is equally plain: That they may levy tribute on our people.

One William Scully, a British landlord, has sent his purse to America and captured many thousands of acres of the richest lands in the State of Illinois. And American citizens living on those acres pay hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to that British landlord for the privilege of cultivating the American soil on which they and their children were born. They pay greater tribute than King George expected to exact by the sword in the days of 1776. That same landlord, William Scully, of London, has captured several thousand acres in Marshall and Marion counties, Kansas, and other thousands of acres in other parts of that State. All this is done by the war power known as "the purse." It is done in order that Mr. Scully may levy tribute on the people of America; that his children may levy tribute on our children; that his grandchildren may levy tribute on our grandchildren—and so on down to the latest generation.

Aside from these individual holdings are large holdings by foreign land syndicates. For instance, a Dutch syndicate owns 4,500,000 acres of our land in New Mexico and adjoining territories. Another Dutch syndicate owns 3,000,000 acres in Texas. An English syndicate owns 1,800,000 acres in Mississippi. A Scotch syndicate owns 500,000 acres in Florida. In addition to this,

fifty-six foreign persons and corporations own more than 26,000,000 acres of our land—an area equal to that of Ohio, Kentucky or Virginia.

Do the people of the United States know these facts? Or are they indifferent?

I appeal to all good citizens to work earnestly for some satisfactory system of land laws that will stop the accumulation of land in the hands of the few, and guarantee homes and work to the many.

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Let us see to it, at least, that the remaining resources not privately owned, are retained by the people. The great coal fields of Alaska (p. 460) are still the heritage of the people; but under the law the government is absolutely limited to a charge of \$10 an acre, which has been officially estimated as less than one-tenth the real value of these coal lands. Shall we allow the coal barons to buy up our coal supply in Alaska, as we have those located in other parts of our country?

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One question to close with.

Would it pay anyone to own land of any kind without using it, if it were fairly taxed?

In the answer to this question is the solution of our problems. To answer No, would effectually dispose of the operations of such men as Lawyer Ketchem and Wm. Scully, and of the immense monopolists who control not only the industrial world but also the political activities of our country.

VICTOR E. FEHRNSTROM.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

PINCHOT AND GARFIELD AT ST. PAUL

St. Paul, Minn., June 13.

The banquet at the Ryan Hotel Saturday evening in honor of Pinchot and Garfield was a very notable event and one that ought to give hope to every fundamental democrat. All the speeches went to the heart of the question and were enthusiastically received by over five hundred guests at the banquet.

Mayor Keller's speech was a plain, straightforward statement of the principle that the public utilities of a city must be conserved for the benefit of all the people, not granted away to corporations.

Both Garfield and Pinchot were emphatic and uncompromising in their declarations against private monopoly of natural resources.

Justice Jaggard of the Minnesota Supreme Court, who introduced the speakers, remarked to me at the close of the banquet, "Well, Buell, the ideas that you have been preaching for twenty-five years are no longer anarchism. They are now good orthodox doctrine."

Surely the world moves, and it moves fast.

C. J. BUELL.