

of oil, iron-ore, copper, coal or borax beds, and therefore will not reduce the toll they collect, consequently the aggregate value of their privileges will not be reduced.

You can protect the public from being fleeced, not by reducing their capitalization, but by abolishing their privileges. When they sell goods abroad (including railroad and ocean freights and insurance) at two-thirds the price they charge for the same in this country, you get a glimpse of the privileges which they have capitalized, and incidentally how much the American people are being robbed. In the case of the two most gigantic corporations—the Standard Oil company and the United States Steel corporation—the privileges they possess are partly national and partly State. They are among the largest beneficiaries of the tariff system, but a large part of their capitalization is based upon the ownership of immense areas of land wherein their raw material is deposited. Because nine-tenths of these deposits are held out of use, the States in which they are located (following our own idiotic policy of permitting the fore-stallers of land to almost entirely escape taxation) do not assess them at even one per cent. of their value, the consequence being that the output is restricted and the consumers are charged all the traffic will bear. If they were assessed at their full value and taxed regardless of whether used or not, it would not pay to hold immense tracts of coal, iron, copper, oil and other lands out of use; the result would be a larger production with its consequent reduction of price. There might be less private building of libraries and endowment of universities, but there would be a more equitable distribution of wealth, prosperity and happiness would be more general, because most of the wealth would be retained by those who create it, and I have no doubt the libraries and universities would be provided—but out of the public treasury.

If any of us lived in a region where wolves abound, we should laugh to scorn the suggestion, however high the source from which it came, to appoint a commission to go out and examine the age, size and strength of the wolves' teeth. And that would be no more farcical than the assertion that "publicity" is the remedy for the trust evil. If we do not desire to kill the wolves, let us at least pull their teeth, so that they can no longer ravage our flocks. And we shall pull their teeth the moment we deprive them of

their privileges. Then they will thrive only to the extent that they perform the useful function of producing and distributing more economically than their competitors.

* * *

The Standard Oil company did not attain its position as the industrial octopus because publicity has not disclosed the number and structural value of its plants, or the prices its oil was sold for at different places. It dominates and controls the oil business, and its masters have absorbed other large industries, because of its infamous conspiracy with the Pennsylvania and other railroads under which for years its competitors were charged three times as high a freight rate, one-half of the excess being given to the Standard Oil company. History records no more scandalous transaction, no more shameful perversion of governmental powers; and no amount of publicity can prevent like results, unless we strike at the root of the evil—the use of governmental functions to favor some and oppress others.

But we are told that is ancient history, and is no longer practiced. Gentlemen, the leopard has not changed his spots. It may be that such brazen discriminations are not practiced now, if so, it is because the culprits have discovered more skillful and cunning ways of accomplishing the same ends. One of those methods is for the trust or other favored shipper to wait until his stock of goods at some important point is almost exhausted, then to secretly arrange with the railroad that on an agreed upon date the freight rate on that class of goods shall be slashed nearly to zero. In preparation therefor it accumulates its goods, and at the agreed time ships sufficient to replenish its stock. Immediately this is done, and almost before its competitors are aware of the reduced rate, the railroad announces a restoration of the old rate, offering some plausible excuse, such as an error; the practical effect being the same as if a discriminating rate had been made in the interest of the trust.

* * *

To those who assert that "publicity" is the cure of the trust evil, I ask: How will publicity lessen in the slightest degree the tariff bounties, the railroad privileges, the patent rights, or loosen the monopolization of oil, coal or iron ore deposits of the Standard Oil company and the United States Steel corporation?

Every freight discrimination is an abrogation of the right to equal service to which all are entitled, this equal-

ity being involved in the very grant of the franchise under which the railroad operates. Not even so corrupt and boss-ridden a legislature as that of Pennsylvania would have ever dared to grant a franchise for a railroad, if those applying for it had even suggested the possibility of varying freight rates to different shippers. All who have been parties to such discriminations, either as grantors or beneficiaries, should be rigorously prosecuted, no matter how rich or powerful they may have already become. The vigorous prosecution of even one of these millionaire malefactors would do much to restore a respect for law among the mass of the people, and would of course prevent any repetition of such practices.

There is scarcely a monopoly that does not get some of its power to plunder the people from these freight rate discriminations. State railroad commissions may exist. Interstate commerce commissions may have their powers broadened and extended, but these practices will not stop nor this form of robbery be thereby curtailed. Nothing short of national ownership of the railroads can secure equal service to all shippers.

Public ownership and operation of the railroads will destroy some and curb all trusts, but the final solution of the trust problem will only come when the people abolish the most fundamental of all monopoly, the monopolization of land. Then, and not till then, will free competition really exist, and men find their reward determined by the value of the service they render to their fellow men.

"LOBSTERS" I HAVE MET. MARK'S EASY MARK.

For The Public.

We had just passed the Canyon of the Royal Gorge, in Colorado, when a big, good natured looking fellow entered the smoking compartment. I was the only occupant when he came in. We talked about the scenery, and then about business; finally he handed me his card, and I gave him mine. His card read: "John C. Morrassy, Promoter," and he certainly looked the part.

"Promoter, eh?" I said, as I looked at it.

"Yes, I'm a promoter," he replied. "Know what a promoter is?"

"Why, I have a general idea," I answered, as I looked up at two other men who had just come in.

"Well, there's only one real definition of a promoter," he declared, as he sized up the newcomers critically.

"What's that?" I asked.

"A promoter," he began, with a twinkle in his eye, "is a well-dressed gentleman who is trying to sell nothing for something to another well-dressed gentleman who is trying to buy something for nothing."

"We all laughed heartily as he concluded, and the porter came running in to see what was up. I may say that, in crossing the Rockies, the porter mingles quite freely with the passengers. In fact, passengers frequently hunt him up to inquire about points of interest.

"I thought you fellows were all in the employ of the government?" one of the men—a drummer—remarked, after quiet was restored.

"How's that?" he asked.

"As a rule, when a man wants to work off a gold brick he runs for Congress, or bribes a legislature to send him to the Senate," the drummer replied, much to the amusement of the darky.

"They have to work in the name of patriotism?" queried the promoter.

"Sure thing."

"Well, that lets me out; I wouldn't sail under false colors."

"You fellows talk as if law-makers were a lot of bunco men," injected the man who had come in with the drummer.

"That's so near it that when a decent man is sent among them, they call him a crank or disturber—"

"Or an anarchist," interrupted the promoter.

"I can't see it that way," said the mark.

"Take this ship subsidy bill," observed the drummer. "The government pays the shipping trust \$250,000,000. What for? To build up our merchant marine! Sure. Our merchant marine—that's what they say. But any man that's got as much brains as a rabbit knows that's a bum steer. The merchant marine will belong to Morgan, Griscom & Hanna. The government will put up the stuff, and these guys'll get the marine." This brought out a laugh from the darky, in which the others joined.

"I don't believe a word of it," declared the mark, indignantly, as we made room for the conductor and two more passengers who had just come in. "Mark Hanna is behind that bill, and I think it's a good thing for the country."

"Of course," replied the drummer, "when Mark gets behind anything you can bet your life the country's in for a Christmas present. That's what he's in politics for. He's so full of the

milk of human kindness that when he wants an egg-nogg he only has to swallow an egg and jump up and down a few times." This afforded another opportunity for a laugh, and it looked easy for the drummer.

"Do you mean to say he's dishonest?" demanded the mark.

"That depends. He wouldn't rob a church or cheat his butcher, but apart from personal matters like that, he's the end of the extension."

"You seem to know him."

"I do. I used to live in Cleveland, and I know his history from soup to nuts. He began as a tin soldier. He helped organize the 'Perry Guards,' when the civil war broke out, and was made lieutenant. When the governor called on his company to go to Washington, the time it was threatened by the Confederate army, Mark wouldn't leave his business, and never did any rough work as lieutenant. Between getting an occasional street car franchise, through friends he helped elect alderman or mayor, and buying boats and things, he got to be a pretty hefty gazabo. In 1881 he was at the head of the Vessel Owners' Association, when the Seamen's Union struck for more pay. Now, to read one of Mark's friend-of-the-laboring-man speeches you'd think he proposed arbitration, but he didn't. Not on your tin-type. He sent to the city hall for a prize fighter, named Rumsey, who was on the police force. He told Rumsey to hire a lot more of the same brand, and made him shipping officer—"

"And he imported a lot of cheap labor to take the strikers' places," broke in one of the passengers.

"Yes, a lot of poor devils were imported to take the strikers' places," assented the drummer, "and Rumsey's bunch formed a peaceful blockade. And maybe they didn't do things to the strikers. Mister! Many a poor hod got it where the lady wore the beads. The Typographical Union got after Hanna and roasted him to a turn. The papers took it up, and Police Commissioner Bradner called on Rumsey to ask why he was acting as shipping officer for the Vessel Owners, while drawing policeman's pay from the city—"

"And Rumsey handed him a bunch of fives and threw him downstairs," prompted the other passenger again.

"Yes, and he was fined \$100, and sentenced to the workhouse for 30 days," continued the drummer. "Hanna's attorneys were defending Rumsey, and they took an appeal. At the same time they gave it out that Hanna would spend a million, if necessary, to beat

Bradner. Bradner didn't follow it any further, and Rumsey was discharged—"

"Well, I never kept close watch of Hanna," interrupted the mark. "But I know he couldn't be where he is if he wasn't all right. Most people have it in for rich men on general principles, and I suppose Hanna has to take his dose the same as anyone else."

"That may be a comfortable view to take, if you're determined to support your prejudice, but you can't defend his record," replied the drummer, as he settled back in his seat. "See what he's done lately. Tom Johnson ran for mayor of Cleveland two years ago. He promised, if elected, to give the people three-cent car fares. Hanna came out as the people's champion—that's his long suit. He said Johnson was a demagogue, that he was insincere, and couldn't give three-cent fares, anyhow. But the people knew them both, and Johnson won with his hands off the handle bars. No sooner was he elected than he proceeded to make good. He secured signatures for a car line along streets paralleling Hanna's lines, and advertised for bids. The conditions involved three-cent fares and a 25-year franchise—"

"After ten years," interrupted the other passenger, "the company was to divide all over eight per cent. net earnings with the city, but the city reserved the right to at any time buy the road, at the cost of production, plus ten per cent., without estimating the value of the franchise."

"That's right," admitted the drummer. "Well, only one bid was received, and the council voted the franchise. What did Hanna do? Did he tell the people he had become convinced Johnson was on the level? Did he? Well, I guess not. He told his lawyer to get busy. The judges didn't want to lose their meal tickets, so they helped a little. They called strikes from the start, and the franchise—"

"Tree strikes an' out," interrupted the darky, and we all laughed at the look the promoter gave him.

"Then came the State campaign," continued the drummer. "Johnson controlled the Democratic convention, and made home rule and just taxation the issue. He pointed out that the big corporations were not paying their share of taxes—"

"He quoted figures from the assessor's books," put in the other passenger, "and showed that small property owners and business men were paying on a valuation of 60 per cent., while the railroads were paying on only ten per cent."

"That's what he did," agreed the drummer. "But how about Hanna; what did he do? Did he meet the issue? No fear. He went up and down the street preaching prosperity, pro and con—principally con. He dealt the people a bob-tail flush, told them everything was all right, to let, well enough alone, and stand pat. A lot of them took his advice; when they're called—"

"They'll get aftah Hanna wit' a razah," interrupted the darky.

"Or an axe," put in some one else.

"Throughout the campaign," continued the drummer, "Hanna declared Johnson was a liar and a hypocrite, a demagogue and a fool. Do you think he believed it? If he did, wouldn't he want him to win out? Talk to me about Hanna! I tell you he ain't a right guy."

"Dat's no summah josh; he's a two-spot," put in the darky. "If he evah rides 'ith me ah'll put tacks undah the spread."

"Well, I don't take any stock in Johnson," responded the mark. "He made his money out of franchises, and now he's knocking everybody else for doing the same thing."

"That's where you're off," persisted the drummer. "I have known of Johnson for 20 years, and I never knew him to jump a man for profiting by the law. Since the day he read George's books, away back in '84, he has condemned special privilege legislation. He has taken the position that while laws granting special privileges are unjust and should be repealed, every man must be either a victim or a beneficiary. He had his choice and wasn't chump enough to choose to be a victim. I think you or I would have done the same thing."

"Give me a chance and see," interrupted another passenger.

"Well, if I did, I wouldn't squeal after I'd made my pile," cried the mark, heatedly.

"When would you squeal?" asked the other.

"Well, I wouldn't squeal after I'd made my money."

"Then you ought to squeal now," shouted the drummer. "Johnson squealed while he was yet a comparatively poor man. As soon as he found out what the people were up against, he put them next. He told them it was a raw game, that the cards were stacked, and they wasn't gettin' a square deal. I was present at a debate he had with Burton in '86, when Burton accused him of being a monopolist. Johnson acknowledged it, and said he believed the people ought

to own the car lines, but if they didn't, he'd take the job."

"An' all the tips that go with it," broke in the darky.

"Well, if he thinks he made his money in a brace game, and his conscience hurts him, why don't he give it back?" demanded the mark.

"Don't think for a minute his conscience hurts him," replied the drummer, scornfully, "make no mistake about that. He knows if he didn't take the money, some one else would, and the chances are about a million to one it would now be used in defending special privileges."

"Well, why don't he give it back to the people he's so solicitous about?"

"What good would that do? They'd get a few square meals, and be deprived of the influence large means gives to a leader. Not only that, but they'd be deprived of their leader, too. He'd have to devote his time to getting a living, instead of doing what he is. You know when Bryan ran for president the plutes said he wasn't such a much, or he'd be rich. I don't take any stock in the argument, but if they do, they'll have to invent some other objection to Johnson; that'll help some."

"Well, it's a great question. I confess I have never given much thought to it. My father was a Republican, and most of my friends are; I suppose I'm too old to be changed. It's hard for me to conclude Johnson is sincere, though."

"Well, suppose Johnson was all his most ardent champions believe him to be, how would you find it out?"

"I'd expect him to leave the Democratic party, for one thing."

"And then?"

"Then I think he ought to support the principles he made his money by."

"Suppose he knows they are vicious from stem to gudgeon?"

"Well, I don't think they are."

"What you think don't cut any ice; Johnson's acting on what he knows."

"How does he know?"

This question disgusted the drummer, and I thought he'd lose his temper, but he didn't. He hesitated a moment, then, looking his man squarely in the eye, he said: "Look here, old man; were you ever in a joint where they run a brace game? Yes? Well, do you think the guys on the inside ain't wise?" He paused for a reply. The other nodded, and the drummer continued: "Then what makes you ask how Johnson knows the people are getting the worst of it?"

"You'll have to pardon me, my friend, but really I don't see the analogy," re-

plied the mark, as innocently as a seven-year-old boy.

Everybody laughed except the drummer and the mark. The mark didn't know what it was about; the drummer was clearly out of patience. Finally he exclaimed: "You know the boys that are in on a queer game make their money out of suckers, don't you? Well, that's the way promoters of street railways make theirs. They're just the same, only one has marked cards and the other hot air."

"That's right, that's all the difference," shouted the promoter, and everybody laughed.

"Do you mean to say that Johnson took an unfair advantage of the people?" demanded the mark, ignoring the promoter.

"Not at all. He had to pay fare or collect, so he collected. Long before he came to Cleveland the people had granted a franchise to the Brooklyn Street Railway company, to run cars from the corner of Pearl and Lorain street to Brooklyn village. This company leased its privileges to the Mark Hanna railway. In 1878, when the lease had yet two years to run, Johnson bought a controlling interest in the franchise for \$1,200. In 1880, when the lease expired, he took possession. The road consisted of about two and a half miles of track, but there was no equipment or real estate of any kind. Johnson put on six bob-tailed cars and 24 mules. Hanna's company owned the right of way from Lorain street to the business part of town, so that passengers bound for the city had to pay another fare. Johnson couldn't stand for that, so he put on a line of busses, and carried passengers all the way for one fare."

"Tha'h wasn't no flies on him," laughed the darky.

"He certainly wasn't overlooking any bets," put in the conductor.

"Well, about that time," continued the drummer, "Hanna's company wanted to renew its franchise. Johnson had tried to arrange with Hanna to run over his lines to the viaduct, but it was so much like trying to get milk out of a cash register that he gave it up. He had the people with him though, and the best Hanna could do was to have his franchise renewed, on condition that Johnson get what he was after. Once over Hanna's tracks, it was easy mutton to the Public Square. This gave him a line about five miles long. When Johnson bought the Brooklyn line the fare was 16 cents for this distance; the lowest fare had been six cents; Johnson made it five cents from the start—"

"And he was there with his goods, too," said the other passenger.

"You bet he was," went on the drummer. "He had the finest cars in town. In 1888 he extended the road through Ontario, Central and Scoville, after agreeing to pave Scoville avenue with stone, from curb to curb, and carried passengers over ten miles for five cents. Hanna's crowd had been charging 25 cents for the same thing. Does that look as if Johnson took an unfair advantage of the people?"

"I should say not. And I don't see where you've improved your case, either."

"Neither did Johnson up to that time. He thought he was giving the people all the best of it. But he got hold of George's 'Progress and Poverty,' in '84, and saw a new light. He saw that the people could have done for themselves all he had done. Not only that, but they could have kept the profit he had made. He had started out with a few hundred dollars, and in about three years he became a millionaire."

"Well, he worked hard, didn't he?"

"To be sure he did, and he worked intelligently, too. But suppose that instead of having a franchise he had been working for the city, could he have gotten a salary of \$300,000, or so, a year?"

"No, I don't suppose he could."

"There ain't any supposin' about it," cried the drummer. "They're only paying him \$6,000 as mayor. Why, there'd be a holler if it was proposed to pay \$10,000 a year. But call it \$10,000. In three years they'd pay him \$30,000. The difference between \$30,000 and what he got, the people paid for bein' nutty."

"Do you think Johnson would have furnished as good service if he had been working for the city as he did working for himself?"

"Would he?" shouted the drummer. "Say, if he could have built lines where they were needed, with no Hanna injunctions to bother him, do you think it would have taken him three years to lay ten miles of track? Would it have taken him five years to introduce electricity over the right of way Hanna was compelled to lease him? Well, I guess not. He'd have had it done in six months."

"Was he the first to introduce electric cars in Cleveland?"

"I should say yes. And he had almost as hard a time doing it as Hanna'll have getting to heaven."

"He, he," chuckled the darky. "If he evah gets to heaven, he'll have to tip Petah a pow'ful lot."

"He'll never get near enough to do that," said another.

"He'll go to hell, and get a corner on brimstone," shouted some one else.

"Or form a shovel trust," put in the conductor, amid great laughter.

"Well, you fellows don't seem to think much of Hanna," interrupted the mark. "I'd like to ask my worthy friend here just one more question."

"Go on," said the drummer.

"You said a moment ago that Johnson gave a ten-mile ride for five cents. Isn't he claiming now that it could be done at a profit for three cents?"

"That's what he is, and if electricity as a motive power had reached the state of perfection and economy it has since, he'd have made it three cents then."

"Just to be a good fellow, I suppose?"

"No, not to be a good fellow," replied the drummer, impatiently; "Johnson never mixed philanthropy with business. He would have reduced the fares because there is more money in a three than a five-cent fare."

"That's all right for him to say after he's sold out," sneered the other, as he got up to go. "I take notice he didn't say it when he was in the business. That proves what I've contended all the time; he's a fakir."

"Just a minute," cried the drummer, "don't go so fast. Johnson has advocated three-cent fares on every line he has been interested in during the last five years."

"Advocated three-cent fares? Why weren't they adopted?"

"Because the directors didn't agree with him. He didn't own a controlling interest, and had to abide by the vote of his associates. The best he could do in this direction was in Detroit, where he gave eight tickets for a quarter. He still owns an interest in a Lorain line, where the fare is three cents, and about a year ago he submitted a three-cent fare proposition to the city council of Columbus, O. That was along lines similar to those now pending in Cleveland. It looks as if he was willing to back his opinion with his money."

"Oh, that's the way he made it appear; he knew he wouldn't get the franchise, so he was safe in making the offer."

"Well, say, now, what could he have done that would have convinced you he wanted the franchise?"

"Nothing. He couldn't have convinced me, no matter what he'd done," replied the mark, as he walked toward the door.

"The New York & Pennsylvania

Traction company, in which Johnson's brother's estate is interested, has begun work on a line in Trenton, N. J., where the fare is to be three cents. Tom Johnson is manager of his brother's estate. How does that strike you?"

"It, don't strike me at all; that's just another one of his schemes to make believe he's sincere."

"Well, suppose we admit he never did a thing in his life for three-cent fares, are you willing to admit he is trying to get them for Cleveland now?"

"No, I'm not," he returned, as he faced the drummer again. "I think he's just trying to be elected again on that issue. That's all."

"Why is Hanna so bitterly opposed to him, then?" laughed the drummer.

"It isn't Hanna alone," interrupted the promoter, "but every great corporation in America. They say he is the most dangerous man in the country. Why, I don't believe there are a thousand men they fear as much as they do him. Of my own personal knowledge, they are being appealed to by Hanna for money on the ground that this is their fight. They are told that Johnson is a dangerous man, and means to put an end to their graft, and if he ain't defeated, the jig's up. Why, they are going to spend millions to knock him out next spring."

But the mark only shook his head, laughed, and went out.

M. J. FOYER.

"THE SOCIABLE SNOW."

For The Public.

Oh, the beautiful snow, the beautiful snow! It hurries and scurries and how it does go. It falls on the housetop, softly and slow. It makes such good coasting, and sets us aglow,

And "turkey," and "tracking," and skating, but no!

We can't skate on this pond till it's clear of the snow.

To "Merwin's" we go on our bobs and our sleds,

And at night we come back with our poor bruised heads,

But our heads make no diff'rance, although they aren't nice,

We've had lots of fun and our heads "cut no ice."

To-day is the Sabbath and we're not on our sleds,

But we're all writing letters and using our heads.

But to-morrow is Monday, and to "Merwin's" we'll go,

To play in the beautiful, sociable snow.

H. C. (12 years old).

Things move along so rapidly nowadays that people saying: "It can't be done," are always being interrupted by somebody doing it.—Puck.