

country is hinted at by Mr. Hendrick when, in telling of the Astor fortune, he says of the original Astor:

Nor did he tempt the population to settle upon his lands. In fact, his business policy in every way discouraged it. As his plots became available for building, naturally he had many offers to sell [for building purposes]. . . . Astor turned them off scornfully. Well, then, would Mr. Astor himself erect the building and rent it on fair terms? Then again Astor withdrew into his shell. The people became urgent. There were hundreds of acres; the city was rapidly growing around them. . . . For years many of his great holdings stood vacant, oases surrounded by the buildings of more progressive men. Not all of it is built upon even now. Great blocks of land purchased by John Jacob Astor a hundred years ago, still stand in what are to-day thriving localities. Property worth millions of dollars is utilized for coal sheds, blacksmith shops and lumber yards.

Again let it be remembered that Astor is only a type of large land monopolists, and that all these together are only typical of an economic tendency which reaches down to the small speculator in landed opportunities. It is not Astor's land alone, nor that of all other large land monopolists, that has been vacant for a hundred years in spite of urgent needs for its use, or is occupied by lumber yards and blacksmith shops when needed for more profitable uses. All dealing in the land futures of New York has operated and does operate, even more rigidly, to obstruct the best uses of New York land. Neither are these vacant or inadequately used areas in New York city alone. In every city, in every town and village, the same obstruction to industry is observable. It may be found on prairie farms in the West and homestead farms in the East, whose owners are "land poor;" it may be found on water fronts, where speculative owners shut out the improver, and in the coal mining regions where great corporations shut in the valuable deposits of nature from working miners as they might shut their own cellar doors. Such obstructions to the use of land of all kinds, as the needs of the people call for it and industry respon-

sively seeks it, make in the enormous aggregate the most tremendous cause for the check upon business enterprise and brawny labor, and the most obvious and irrefutable explanation of what is vaguely called "the conflict between labor and capital."

Leslie's Weekly has struck a note on taxation that rings loud and true. It proposes to discourage the disfigurement of public streets with posters by levying a prohibitory tax. "There is no question," it says, "of the legality of such a tax. Municipalities have a right to levy it. Furthermore, the courts have repeatedly held that the taxing power can be exercised to the point of confiscation. There is no limit to it. The posters are usually an offense to the eye and sometimes to morals. Wherever they are, in the subway or on dead walls, they can be readily put out of existence by the taxing method. Tax them to death!" This would be, indeed, a perfect plan, if the outlawry of posters is desired. You can get rid of posters, dogs, cats, houses, the improvement of houses, or anything else, simply by imposing prohibitory taxes. And as a fact we do keep down the supply and quality of houses in this way. We tax them discouragingly. At the same time we are very mild in our taxation of house-sites, especially of vacant sites, thereby fostering the custom of keeping house sites vacant. Now if we really wish to have a superfluity of vacant but monopolized house sites and to have an undersupply of houses, we need only continue our present taxing methods. But if we would reverse this condition, we should take a hint from Leslie's suggestion about a prohibitory poster tax. Let us tax vacant lots at a prohibitory rate, and they will be built upon speedily; the more especially if at the same time we abolish taxes on houses and house-building materials. And, really, isn't it less important merely to abolish posters on the dead walls of vacant lots, than to abolish posters,

dead walls, vacant lots and all, and to substitute therefor better houses for business and residence purposes? Wouldn't it contribute more to the gratification of the aesthetic sense, to the comfort of those who inhabit houses, to the incomes of those who build and furnish them, and to the general good?

ROCKEFELLER'S TAINTED GIFT TO THE HEATHEN.

The Outlook, in its issue of April 1, argues that the American Board cannot consistently reject Mr. Rockefeller's proffered \$100,000. The Outlook says:

It is not the business of a church, charitable organization or missionary society to sit in judgment on the character of the contributions to its work.

That may be true, generally speaking. But it is not necessarily true in every case. The Outlook has laid down a rule; but the Standard Oil "System" is an exception to that rule.

The reason why "it is not the business of a church, charitable organization or missionary society to sit in judgment on the character of the contributions to its work" is because it would be impossible. But if it were as easy for the church to sit in judgment on the character of all the contributions to its work as it is in the case of Mr. Rockefeller, then one of the most important features of its proper business would be to reject all "tainted" money. The world will justify the church in following a manifestly necessary rule. But it expects the church to recognize obvious exceptions.

The world does not expect the church to investigate the sources of all moneys that are offered to it; but when myriad voices thunder in the church's ears: "Beware!" it expects the church to hear.

A merchant is not to blame for innocently accepting stolen money in payment for goods; but when a score of bystanders point to a would-be purchaser, and declare that the money he is proffering was stolen from them, the merchant who should accept that money would be no better than the thief.

To quote further from The Outlook:

If the church and the ministry habitually, and with courage and vigor, condemn all questionable methods of money-getting, however and by whomsoever practiced, the effect of their testimony will not be vitiated by the refusal to attempt the impossible task of determining whether and to what degree money offered for benevolent work is tainted by the method in which it is believed to have been acquired. If, on the contrary, the church and the ministry fail to bear such witness with the courage and the vigor which the conditions of the age demand, they cannot furnish a substitute for the neglected duty by the occasional refusal of money from a multi-millionaire because he has been indicted in specific terms for "methods which are morally iniquitous and socially destructive."

In this The Outlook implies that the church and the ministry do not "habitually and with courage and vigor, condemn all questionable methods of money-getting, however and by whomsoever practiced."

But as a matter of fact, on the contrary, the church and the ministry do precisely that. They do it in the only way that The Outlook will sanction. Preachers of all denominations are forever thundering anathema against all questionable methods of money-getting, not only, but against questionable conduct of any kind. The Outlook knows this to be true, and would confess as much. The Outlook does not mean to imply that the clergy do not habitually, and with courage and vigor, denounce all evil, including the evil of questionable methods of money-getting. What The Outlook evidently means is that the clergy do not name the particular cases of questionable money-getting that they condemn. It must mean that, for it cannot deny that the church attacks evil, *per se*, with persistency and vigor.

But The Outlook stultifies itself. In another portion of the article in question it says:

It is not the business of a church . . . to sit in judgment on the character of the contributions to its work.

How can the ministry condemn, more vigorously than they habitually do, all questionable methods of money-getting, except by sitting in judgment on the character of particular cases? The Outlook requires the former. It forbids the latter.

If it is, as The Outlook says, an "impossible task to determine whether and to what extent money offered for benevolent work is tainted by the method in which it is believed to have been acquired"—if The Outlook denies that the church can detect a particular source of "taint," and that, too, with the aid of hundreds of thousands of witnesses all pointing at the same spot, then what does it mean by saying that—

if the church and the ministry fail to bear such witness with the courage and the vigor which the conditions of the age demand, they cannot furnish a substitute for the neglected duty by the occasional refusal of money from a multi-millionaire because he has been indicted in specific terms for methods which are morally iniquitous and socially destructive.

The fact is that the church was about to perform its "duty," in a case where mistake was impossible, when The Outlook threw up its warning hands and cried: "Stop! The task you would undertake is impossible. You may not sit in judgment on the methods of Mr. Rockefeller's money-getting. But go first, and, with courage and vigor, condemn all questionable methods of money-getting, however and by whomsoever practiced!"

If the church is ever going to do this latter it will have to begin somewhere. Evidently The Outlook does not wish it to begin on Mr. Rockefeller. Possibly the weight of testimony against Mr. Rockefeller is not sufficient to convict him, in the estimation of The Outlook. And it must be confessed that in Mr. Rockefeller's case we have a "hung" jury. Mr. H. H. Rogers stands out for acquittal!

Possibly, if the church shall by and by succeed in spotting some commercial pirate, so luckless that not a soul in all the world will say a good word for him, The Outlook will give the word for the church to begin to bear witness, etc.

The one really "impossible" thing in this whole business promises to be the renunciation of that \$100,000!

EDWARD HOWELL PUTNAM.

If we had a popular election of Senators it would require a wrecking crew to get some of the present members out of the debris.—Chicago Examiner.

NEWS NARRATIVE

Week ending Thursday, April 6.

Result of the Chicago Election.

It is conceded on both sides that the result of the Chicago election on the 4th was a pronounced victory for Judge Dunne and the policy of "immediate municipal ownership" of traction utilities which his candidacy preeminently represented.

The municipal campaign which has culminated in that victory was described, down to the 30th of March, in the last issue of the preceding volume of The Public (vol. vii, p. 821), and we resume the narrative with the events of the 31st. The climax of the Harlan campaign was reached on the evening of that day with a mass meeting which packed the Auditorium, except the highest gallery, and at which Mr. Harlan and Col. Lowden were the principal speakers, and Congressman Boutell presided. Minor meetings were addressed by Mr. Harlan and his supporters on the 1st, 2d and 3d. The Dunne campaign reached its climax on the 1st with a mass meeting which packed the Auditorium, except the highest gallery, and furnished auditors for two large overflow meetings in the street. The inside meeting was presided over by Judge Tuley and the speakers were Judge Dunne, Joseph Medill Patterson, John Barton Payne, Samuel Alschuler, James Hamilton Lewis and Clarence S. Darrow. Judge Dunne took no part in meetings on the 2d, but on the 3d he also spoke at several minor meetings.

Predictions preceding the election were positive, and, as afterward appeared, quite unfounded. Over their signatures, on the 2d, Mr. Harlan predicted "with entire confidence a triumphant election of the entire Republican ticket"; his campaign manager, Mr. Reddick, predicted "not less than 20,000 plurality" on an "estimated total vote cast of 320,000"; the chairman of his "business men's" committee, H. G. Selfridge, predicted that "the Republican ticket will show a majority which will surprise even its most enthusiastic workers." On the other hand