

bridges, structural material, etc., they are paying from \$125,000,000 to \$150,000,000 annually as a bonus to steel manufacturers.

If it be asked why the railroads, which are not benefited by the tariff, put up with this extortion, here is the answer: Twenty-three directors of the United States Steel Corporation are in control or on the directorates of 55 per cent of the railroad mileage in the United States.

And this is only one of the smaller and more indirect tariff robberies.

E. J. BURKE.



THE COFFEE QUESTION.

We are finding out why the price of coffee has doubled within three or four years. It appears that there is a reason; it is not one of the things that just happened. Nor is it due to any phenomenal advance in wages; a remarkable fact, when we consider that such things as coal and railroad rates and many others would never go up at all if it were not for the demands of the insatiate laborer. Coffee has advanced in price, although the production has doubled, because the market supply has been artificially restricted. The Brazilian government is in the operation and participates in the profits to the extent of an export duty of three cents a pound, and American bankers are financing the scheme.

From all this a prominent New York journal of the conservative stripe draws the inference that government regulation of prices is dangerous. Now in the first place there is very little demand in this day and generation for a government control of prices that will make them higher than they are now. If a government does control prices and the people control the government, the people can control prices and there will be no danger that a consumer will have to pay fourteen cents for a commodity which costs the producers eight. But if a trust controls prices and the government can't control the trust, or if the trust controls the government and the people can't control either, then the consumer may as well be philosophical. Let him read the accounts of the Taft-Roosevelt scrap and try to forget his woes in innocent hilarity.

It may as well be understood that the export duty of three cents adds nothing to the price of coffee. If the government had kept out of the matter entirely except to the extent of seeing that the coffee planters and their American bankers were allowed a free hand in squeezing the consumer, a coffee trust could have restricted the supply; the price would be just what it is now and the planters' profit would be what it is now plus

the three cents a pound which the government collects now.

The coffee revelations throw no light whatever on the question of government regulation of prices in the direction of lowering them. They certainly afford no argument against the abolition of special privileges which foster monopoly and thus burden the consumer, nor against government ownership and operation of industries in which competition is impracticable.

WM. E. MC'KENNA.



AGAIN—THERE IS A LAW.

A pyramid standing on its apex must be maintained in position by supporting props on every side. The principle of gravitation, aided by every wind that blows and every vibrant motion in the vicinity, tends constantly and powerfully to bring it down. All additions to the structure, however in themselves adapted to improve it, but offer new points of vantage to the subversive forces which strive against such a violation of the natural law of mechanical stability.

Having conceived the idea of a pyramid painfully propped in an inverted position, we must suppose its continuance thus upside down to be considered of vital importance. On this assumption we see what toil and pains would be bestowed on the constant readjustment and renewal of the supports and the placing of additional ones as need should appear. And the principle of gravitation being obviously the cause of insecurity in the threatened structure, this principle would be loudly decried as necessitating so much arduous toil to a progressively difficult and ultimately doubtful end.

Some among the topsy-turvy mechanics would unquestionably go beyond merely bemoaning the evil tendencies of gravitation, and would seriously propose its total abolition as the only means of permanently solving their difficulties. Eloquent orators would declaim that until they had put an end once for all to the depressing and destructive action of gravitation it were vain to expect their pyramid to stand securely and hold its broad base aloft and unwavering in the face of approving heaven.

Not to pursue the simile unnecessarily, let us consider now our troublous society, which is not inaptly typified by the inverted pyramid.



Our democracy is built upside down. Its base is not established on the solid earth. Proclaiming

the eternal truth that all human land animals are created equal as to their natural rights, we have nevertheless legally and completely separated four-fifths, more or less, of the human land animals from the land.

Inevitably then the principle of competition, arising from the fundamental law which impels men everywhere and always to seek to satisfy their desires with the least exertion, unceasingly pulls and hauls at our preposterous democracy like gravitation at the inverted pyramid. Inevitably the social structure has been, is and must continue to be sustained by many artificial supports. And inevitably, as the fabric through industrial development grows more cumbrous and complex, these supports must constantly be strengthened, renewed and greatly increased in number. Beginning long ago with poor laws, organized charities and penal systems, we have now fully entered upon a thorough course of eight-hour laws, child labor laws, laws for railroad, factory and mine regulation, for pure food, workmen's compensation, minimum wages, old-age pensions, state insurance—but the reader shall be spared even an approximately complete list of positively ameliorative measures and all mention of negative acts, designed to secure publicity and discourage corrupt and oppressive practices.

All the thousand enactments bred in this saturnalia of legislative benevolence—so to speak—are to be installed and maintained in practical operation by means of commissions, bureaus, corps of inspectors, experts and detectives of high and low degree, with special benches of judicature far past enumeration—and no end in sight to even the eye of faith! The early exponents of democracy were accustomed to say, "That government is best which governs least." But many of our most trusted and worthy leaders in modern democracy seem to hold before us an ideal government which shall employ approximately half of its citizens to watch and restrain the other half from practicing or suffering injurious fraud and oppression.

And all this stupendous diversion of high-class activity away from the useful business of supplying the world with the necessities and comforts of civilized life is made necessary, we are told, by the evil work of competition, which if not vigilantly circumvented at every point will in time reduce society to a chaos of misery and inefficiency. The tendency of wages to an irreducible minimum, the menacing persistence of poverty, disease, vice, crime and corruption which baffle and appall the philanthropist, sociologist and reformer, are all charged to the workings of a natural principle of human association in industry. We are warned

that this principle must be set aside and that the wages of labor and the prices of commodities and services must be regulated by human justice and benevolence, in the interest particularly of that large and growing class of the "defective and inefficient," the "surplus population" for whose needs and welfare nature has unhappily made no provision.

The late Edmond Kelly, lecturer on government and politics in Columbia and other universities, and an able, learned and profoundly sympathetic writer on these subjects, in his exhaustive work, "Government," sets forth the implied necessity and the ambitious aim of the human agency proposed to replace the discredited regulator of industrial rewards provided by nature. "Justice," he says, "may be described as the effort to eliminate from our social conditions the effects of the inequalities of nature upon the happiness and advancement of man, and particularly to create an artificial environment which shall serve the individual as well as the race, and tend to perpetuate noble types rather than those which are base." Which is to say that justice, the price of peace, means an eternal struggle against the natural tendencies of social growth, and that the nobler qualities of men can only survive the baser as exotics in an artificial environment!



The antidote to these appalling conclusions, which may be seen coloring more and more the popular—even the progressive—thought of today, is evidently a knowledge of the fact that our social pyramid is upside down. This fact fully explains why a principle in itself adapted to secure the peace and stability of human societies should now, owing to an artificial reversal of the natural order, tend to their disintegration and destruction. Competition, like gravitation, is itself without moral quality either good or bad. It is simply a natural principle of industrial association which, according to the moral order of the conditions under which it operates, may be a saver of life unto life or of death unto death.

In the primary occupations, like hunting, fishing and primitive agriculture, competition may be seen to distribute as it were automatically and with a satisfactory measure of justice, both the rewards of labor and the benefits of mechanical invention. No employer can oppress those who are free to employ themselves, and no new contrivance can exploit the public while the old one is free to compete with it.

Even now and here there is a kind of competitive adjustments which, from their relation to in-

terests in which are involved a considerable degree of wealth, leisure and influence, are quite clearly expounded by accepted authorities. These are the adjustments of competitive trading. The textbooks declare, and most well-informed people understand, that with trade set free from artificial restrictions, legal as well as illegal, its profits would be automatically fixed by competition at a point yielding merely a fair return for the labor employed therein.

There remains to be patiently and persistently demonstrated the equally vital truth that with production set free from artificial restrictions, mainly legal, competition would with like certainty maintain wages in all classes of labor, mental, moral, manual and mixed, at a rate approximately a just return for the actual contribution, in goods or other satisfactions, which each laborer makes to the aggregate of current production.



With the social pyramid thus righted up, its broad base of human units firmly established on the earth—their nourishing mother—the eternal forces that govern the activities of men would operate but to the perpetuation of its serene and blest security.

ELIZABETH P. ROUNSEVELL.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

THE ROOSEVELT SEIZURE.

Duluth.

Rampant inconsistency is the humor of this Roosevelt seizure. Because they want tariff reduction, the multitude is clamoring for Roosevelt, who never bent a finger for tariff reduction. Because they want progressive policies, thousands are shouting for Roosevelt, who jumped to the head of the procession by stepping on the face of the man who gave form to progressive tendencies. Because they demand that the people shall rule, State after State is turning to Roosevelt the unconditioned and the absolute, who but four years ago had only a guffaw for the great Commoner's appeal, Shall the people rule?

In which rampant inconsistency, the multitude is showing itself superbly consistent. La Follette, who led the forlorn hope, does not represent the people. Roosevelt, who was dandling Aldrich and Cannon when that standard was raised, represents the multitude exactly. Taft, who blindly prosecutes the trusts to an inconsequential finish, does not represent the people. Roosevelt, who rails against bad trusts but who would not hurt business, is their proper spokesman. Bryan, a majestic voice crying in the wilderness, does not represent the populace nearly so well as Roosevelt bawling from the house-tops.

The people are disgusted with that which is rep-

resented in politics by Lorimer and Penrose and Smoot. Nobody is assailing that crew quite so vociferously as Roosevelt. Not La Follette, who advocates physical valuation of railroads and certain other measures. Not Bryan, who declared himself upon the subject of train robbers some eight years ago and has since then other matters to attend to. Both of them are able men but neither has Roosevelt's genius for seizing the mood of the moment—being seized by it. Men of their type would drive out darkness by letting in sunlight. It may be good philosophy but Roosevelt's is the more acute psychology. He contrasts black and white. Sunlight does not contrast darkness but conflicts with it. Nevertheless black contra-suggests white and not sunshine. And in certain phases of vision more is to be accomplished by pointing to black than by proposing more light. In cleaving to Roosevelt the multitude is strictly logical.

The Minnesota Republican convention is an exact illustration of the seizure and its logic. Roosevelt as usual carried the day, La Follette had a handful, Taft was nowhere. The Roosevelt platform consisted of the plank, We want Roosevelt, first, last and all the time. The La Follette minority, obtaining representation on the resolutions committee, proposed several planks, of which the majority accepted one for preferential primaries and another for a corrupt practices act, but rejected that for the referendum and recall and that other for physical valuation of railroads. Of the rejected planks one is fundamentally democratic, the other tends to constructive legislation.

That is logical and consistent. The people have not reached conclusions on fundamental democracy except where campaigns of education have been carried on for years, as in Oregon. They have not agreed upon a constructive policy except where a campaign has been carried on for years, as in Wisconsin.

The multitudes who are pressing to Roosevelt's standards are not ready to assemble about a program; they rally to an outcry.

Programs presuppose patience. The Roosevelt seizure is the incarnation of impatience.

J. S. P.



THE OLD HEBREW JUSTICE.

St. Louis.

Even with most sincere efforts to reach the high plane of true justice, and, as far as possible, to aid in applying the ideal in practice, we often find the best intentions of worthy moralists beset by errors and unconscious harmful slips.

Is it because we are too prone to feel secure as to the unassailability of our judgments on which we base our further reasoning? This may be the case, though we be aware that inaccuracies must invalidate our argument.

The rate of progress in the constant changing of social systems must needs be slow, so slow that most of the stages of the gradual evolution towards better things are unheeded and, therefore, remain unknown. It is then easily possible that much that is actually given to our view is subject to misconception and misinterpretation. It is imperatively