

drawn, it reacts upon and disproves at least one of the premises. Such being the case, it is a fallacy to speak of a conflict between the "Rights of Labor" and the "Rights of Property," and equally erroneous to talk about "Property Rights," and "Labor Rights," since all property rights are labor rights. Giving the same thing two names does not even make two things of it, much less two antagonistic things.

The individual right to any wealth is merely, in the last analysis, labor's lien thereon. Any other "right" is not a right, and any arrogation thereof robs (whether intentionally or otherwise) labor of its due. By a parity of reasoning he who has not a labor right to "his" property, has no right to it, and if he use it he commits, before the tribunal of absolute ethics, a sin. Let the Wall street gambler and others of his fair ilk, whose "business" consists in catching midway the goods which the producer strives to toss to the consumer, ponder this and realize the microscopic ethical value of his parasitic self.

MELVIN L. SEVERY.

OUR POLITICAL METHODS NEED DEMOCRATIZING.

Written for The Public by Hon. William L. Stark, member of congress from Nebraska.

Responding to the many requests I have received I beg leave to respectfully suggest a thought relative to the function of the citizen in politics. Let us see if our departure from old-time methods has any probable connection with present conditions.

In the early days people met in town meetings and discussed matters pertaining to the common good. Political action was spontaneous, flowing from the collective citizenship, they being the prime movers thereof. In latter day politics the primary election system comes nearest to the attainment of the objects sought in the old-time town meeting; and the convention system is its antithesis. Is it not possible that we have blamed the existing parties for many things that they could not avoid under their form of organization and their method of operation? Cannot the boss-ridden conditions of politics in many States be directly traced to the convention system that organizes and operates from the center out instead of from the circumference in?

We have to face this question: Is the citizen the unit in political action, or is the convention the unit and the

citizen an infinitesimal fraction thereof? Another question that we should try to answer, is: Can we hope to succeed in the promulgation of pure political principles and practically work out the ideals of the founders of this government when we make use of the same methods and machinery by which those ideals have been well-nigh obliterated? Why is it that a party whose platform declares for reforms of various kinds, elects men who never give a serious thought to the performance of those duties to which they are pledged? Simply because the method of selecting candidates is in direct opposition to the accomplishment of the declared purposes. Results flow from actions, not from declarations. The best illustration of attempts to work out the accomplishment of our declarations under the convention method and system would be to seat a man on a horse backward and have him vociferously declare that he is traveling northward when the horse is going south. Our principles may be very good, but if our methods of operation are radically wrong our declaration of principles will avail nothing. If we believe that our government is by the people, and not an outward flow from some centralized power, then we should seek some method of political operation which will secure and retain the power to select men and declare measures in the hands of the individual elector. Especially is the selection of men all important, because the right stamp of man will do right and strive to preserve our liberties without any platform, if need be. Many men will not do these things, no matter how strongly bound by platforms. This can most effectually be done by the primary election system. As its name implies, the first or primary political action rests with the individual elector of the State, and is exercised and absolutely controlled in the meetings of these electors in their respective election precincts, instead of being authorized by some "boss" who holds the power of political action by virtue of his retainers and henchmen.

The People's Independent party has been a schoolmaster in politics to the Republican party. It taught the quantitative theory of money value, and President McKinley made use of the lesson. While his party was declaring that prices did not depend on the quantity of money in circulation, he was wise enough to avoid a monetary stringency by coining large amounts of silver although his party had made gold the standard.

The People's Independent party has a splendid platform, and the Chicago and Kansas City platforms of the Democratic party are both excellent. But in Nebraska we have the spectacle of reformers who declare in their platform for the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people, and then deny their own party the privilege of selecting any nominee by direct vote. I do not say these things by way of fault finding, but simply to point out that if we expect to accomplish reforms we declare for, we must abandon the methods and expedients by which the people's rights have been withheld from them. Our teaching has been right and has done much good, but there is no valid reason why we should not profit by our own teaching and make our example correspond to our precept.

I desire to call the attention of our people to the fact that under the primary election system in vogue in Mississippi and some other southern States, the State legislatures are mere returning boards for the primary elections, the people choosing their Senators and the legislatures ratifying their choice. In Mississippi no party candidate can be certified to and placed on the official ballot unless the nominee of his party primary. This law has been upheld by the Supreme Court of the State, and the constitution under which it was enacted has been held to be valid by the United States Supreme Court.

I submit an outline of a plan for primary elections, leaving all the details to be worked out as meets the approval of those using it. The plan is as follows: Nominees to be placed on primary ticket by petition, requiring a given number of signatures. Election can be held under the primary election law of Nebraska. Both Democratic and People's Independent petitions could be filed, thus making a fusion. There should be a committee to prepare the official primary ballot, which should be in form similar to the present official ballot, and the method of voting should be secret.

I will give three plans for computing the vote of precincts. First: The votes of the precincts are counted, returned and canvassed, the candidate having the highest number being declared the nominee. Second: Apportion to each precinct the number of primary votes that it would now be allowed delegates in county convention; the candidate receiving the greatest number of primary votes would be entitled to the vote of the precinct. To illustrate: If Oak pre-

cinct is entitled to ten votes, then the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in Oak precinct is entitled to the ten votes. Third: Apportion the whole county, but provide that candidates shall receive their fractional part of the vote of each precinct. To illustrate: Hickory precinct would be entitled to 12 votes. A, B and C are candidates for the nomination of sheriff. A receives 50 votes, B 30 and C 40. A would therefore be entitled to five votes, B to three votes and C to four votes.

The primary election system gives an opportunity for each individual of the party to make his voice heard, and enables our young men to qualify themselves for useful service. It insures satisfaction with the party nominees, and at the same time inspires loyalty to the candidate because he was selected by the direct vote of the people. How different is this from the cry we so often hear: "Stand by the leaders," "Support the administration." Instead of blindly ratifying the people should initiate the movement and select their standard bearers.

In conclusion, allow me to say that the following expression of a man high in political circles: "It is not desirable that any but men of wealth and consequence should sit in the United States Senate, and the proper way to select Senators is to filter them down through the people," should have no echo among our people. United States Senators and all other officials honored with our suffrage should come from among the people, being chosen directly by them.

I indulge in the hope that in the near future the Legislature of the State of Nebraska will enact a law as to party nominations in substance as follows: That the name of any candidate shall not be placed upon the official ballot in general or special elections, as a party nominee, who is not nominated by a primary election, and the election of any party nominee who shall be nominated otherwise shall be void. The nominations for United States Senators shall be by primary election preceding the meeting of the Legislature at which the election is to be had.

If we make our methods correspond to our principles there will be an awakening among us born of a renewed confidence that will be the herald of better days.

"I suppose he will rest on his laurels now?"

"Summers. Winters he's going to lecture on them."—Puck.

THE MAN HE KILLED.

Scene: The settle of the Fox Inn, Stag-foot Lane.

Characters: The speaker (a returned soldier), and his friends, natives of the hamlet.

Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin.

But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him, as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

I shot him dead, because—
Because he was my foe,
You see; my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; altho

He thought he'd 'st, perhaps,
Off-hand like—just as I—
Was out of work—had sold his traps—
No other reason why.

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.
—Thomas Hardy, in Harper's Weekly.

I don't understand men of the world when they tell us we must rely upon the influence of Christian principles, and boggle at every proposal to enforce them in the current proceedings of governments and societies.—Richard Cobden.

"What is a sinecure, paw?"

"A sinecure, m'son, is a job that gets money for not doing what it gets it for."—The Harlequin.

BOOKS

THE GAME OF LIFE.

Under the above title Mr. Bolton Hull has gathered his witty parables into a neat little volume of 230 pp. (A. Wessels Company, New York). They have been widely read in various periodicals as they appeared from time to time, and those who have read them, as well as those who have not, will be glad to welcome them in their new dress.

It is a book to have and not to borrow, a book to pick up at odd times and not to read through at a sitting. The parables vary in length from three lines to three pages, and two or three at a time are about enough for a day's digestion—especially if they happen to hit one's self as well as one's neighbor.

Each of them has a point, and often a sharp one. There is hardly a situation in the modern game of life which fails to get pricked more or less deeply. But while most of them are sharp and somewhat bitterish, now and then one appears which shows that the author can, when he wills to do so, deal tenderly with a subject. "Love is of God," for example, is a beautiful little piece, and "The Last Lesson" is a perfect gem of its kind.

Apart from its keen insight into modern shams and foibles, Mr. Hall's book has an interest for students of "mere literature." This is, of course, a very insignificant part of its value; but still, to find a book which professedly revives an antique form of writing cannot but attract interest to the experiment. Somehow fables and parables have not seemed to flourish in modern literature. Perhaps we are too nervous and self-conscious and strairy. Think of the ease with which Aesop winds off his inimitable yarns; we could not possibly do such things now-a-days. But it may fairly be said that, with perhaps the exception of some of Toi-stoy's, no modern parables can be found as good—even from a literary point of view—as some in this little book.

J. H. DILLARD.

THE WORSHIPPER OF THE IMAGE.

To readers slow to perceive truths in symbolism this book by Richard Le Gallienne (London and New York: John Lane, Bodley Head) may seem to be only a grotesque story. But in fact it exemplifies the spiritual demoralization that comes from devotion to the expression of a thing, with the minimization or total ignoring of the greater importance of the thing expressed.

So devoid of life is expression for its own sake alone, so suggestive of that idea of hell which has been described as "the sensuous separate," that Le Gallienne very properly represents it in this tragic fairy tale by a mask stirred now and then by appearances of life, instead of taking for his image the full rounded form. His hero becomes infatuated with the beauty of this artistic counterfeit of a lovely living face to the extent of subordinating to that infatuation all his possibilities of love for the good and truth that constitute the soul or life of the beautiful. He falls a natural victim, consequently, to love of external beauty, regardless of the evil it masks. The tints of the deadly toadstool and the shifting curves of the poisonous adder become as beautiful to him as bright flowers and graceful birds. At last the beautiful mask, symbol of "art for art's sake," steals wholly away his affection for wife and child, true types of vital love; and his child, poisoned by the miasma of the beautiful valley in which he lives passes away, while his wife, dazed and inanimate, sinks out of his life in the beautiful waters of one of its miasmatic ponds. Separated thus from all his affections save that for external beauty, he himself then enters fully upon the state of spiritual death.

This may not be a true interpretation of Le Gallienne's singu-