

of vacant land. *Answer: How much would vacant land be worth in the real estate market of any community where titles to land were not protected? Little or nothing. Civil government increases the market value, not of building but of land. It must therefore be for the benefit, not of buildings but of land, including vacant land. Does any one honestly and seriously deny it?*

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

REFLECTIONS FROM THE "EASTERN SHORE."

Westover Farm, Md.

Between Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic lies the Eastern Shore, originally explored from Virginia by people who crossed the bay to "make" salt, by evaporating bay water in "pans" fashioned on the flat, clean, sandy beaches of the Peninsula. While the well-filled "pans" were drying down, excursions were taken into the heavily wooded interior, by way of tide water streams that wound by "many a curve" deep inland from the bay. Settlements were made along the streams, for generations the natural and only highways, which accounts for the late development of country roads. These settlements by individual families were on lands granted by patents from the Crown. Some of the old grants are still held in the families of the original grantees, and the houses first built, of brick imported in ballast, are still in use.

At the head of navigation on the longer streams, clustered settlements became villages and towns. Ships from England engaged in traffic with the factors, merchants, planters of these towns; and many plantations had wharves and docks to receive and ship without aid from middlemen.

Large estates, great areas of land, are of no value to any proprietor unless he can find labor to operate his land; so the lace bedecked cavalier had to have his servants. Therefore English magistrates, from Cromwell down, transported to the Colonies vagabonds produced by industrial conditions, and the captives of pillaged cities, in vast numbers as bondsmen. This form of slavery continued until the importation of Negroes took its place. The labor of those bondsmen and of Negro slaves gave the landowner that life of luxurious ease which sustained the distinction between "landowner" and all others. The "poor white" became a distinct complementary class at the same time.

While landowners as a rule were kind to their slaves, the "poor white," unenfranchised, had no one to pity him or his family. His condition was one of hopeless, helpless poverty and ignorance. At times, invited to the tables of men who despised while they used them, "poor whites" were also complimented by invitations to become "patrollers." Bands of them, led by one "respectable" landowner,

mounted on landowners' horses, armed with raw-hide whips, roamed the highways—"patrolled" the roads at night, lashing till all hands were tired out, every Negro, slave or free, they chanced to find. The landowner spent half his time visiting, and the other half entertaining. Tables groaned with an abundance and quality that gave name and style to a famous cuisine; while a continuous merry-go-round of feasting, hunting, racing, dancing and sport, filled up the year.

Up to 1850 and later, horse-carts, wheelbarrows, even ax helves, were brought from north of Mason and Dixon's line. Store bills were settled once a year, about Christmas time; but there was nothing to exchange but the produce of agriculture. And there was no profit, as it usually took everything produced to meet the year's obligations.

Nature takes care of her own, even as to the fertility of land. A system of agriculture so managed produced its natural results. The land just "quit working," precisely as a starved mule would do. And those who could not find profitable employment on land farms took to the water farms.

These water farms of Maryland were (and might now be) more productive than all her grain fields and orchards. They have stood between labor and its subjugation, by offering a living to everyone who could rent a boat or handle an oyster dredge; proving again, if need were, that no man will accept less for toil for others than he can secure by toil for himself, the one vital factor being freedom of opportunity to toil for himself. Efforts have not been lacking to twist the grapple hooks of monopoly into this form of opportunity.

The partial independence of a labor class is grievous to every type of monopoly; therefore, to "keep the nigger working," as well as every other man not of the elect, various and manifold devices and experiments have been employed. They run from a Prohibition that does not prohibit, to a ballot and a ballot law that has disfranchised at least thirty per cent of the voting population of portions of the State.*

In Maryland, as elsewhere, there have been observed indications of a working understanding between ostensible leaders of presumably hostile party organizations. It is surmised that the proprietors of the minority (Republican) party organization, some of whom hold Federal offices, are not at all anxious to see their party too successful at election times. A chance for a change in party proprietorship might imperil positions now filled to the entire satisfaction of the incumbents. It results that men of all parties who are genuinely democratic feel compelled to oppose the professedly Democratic agents of those very monopolies that Progressives oppose everywhere. They debate the need for a new association of progressives.

The stages of civic development are easily traced.

*Since December, 1911, a new law is to be tried, a law that is ostensibly as fair to one as to any other.—W. G.

Beginning with the land-owning few on the one side of every question, and on the other slaves and helots, the many denied education, denied a voice in public affairs, denied their suffrage, held in ignorance and poverty by the laws and institutions of the land, the catastrophe of war changed the actual into a metaphoric lash. The ballot, when it came, broke to the hope of usefulness the promise given to credulity. When, finally, the sleight was acquired to fold the ballot (the first test of capacity to express a political opinion at the polls), and the Chinese puzzles were all worked out by enough voters to make it dangerous, a process of debauchery came into vogue.

It has been related that in certain enterprising communities, enjoying banking facilities, large deposits, say some thousands, made in a fictitious name on the day before election, have been checked out in hundreds of very small amounts on election day. Account closed, checks cashed, vouchers returned and all records dead and silent as Rameses, ten minutes after the official crier closed the polls.



The point, however, is that the auctioneering of votes may be reached by an ascending or descending stair. Where slave and helot were the basis of what now the basis is sale of votes, should be considered evidence that some progress has been made. Instead of no vote at all, a vote that may possibly be sold indicates a rise in the civic scale; the same practice where slave and helot were never known, spells progress backwards—meaning that slave and helot are there even now far along in the process of creation.

The creature who sells a vote never has brains enough to conceal the fact. A wretched, incompetent, tatterdemalion, unkempt, unshorn, unshod for months before election day, suddenly blossoms forth in a suit of store clothes, shoes, hat, a shining cheek and poll, with a cigar threatening the outside corner of now this and then the other optic. And general business is "generally good" during "election week." Selling votes is very similar to a practice that did once and may still obtain in the West: Indians trading blankets for drinks of whisky. Similar but very much more disastrous is the former, because the vote seller sells not only his own rights but the rights of every other voter, while the Indian does his own suffering.

But out of it all will come good, even among those least favored with early advantages. The consciousness is growing that ballot laws, the grandfather clause, etc., etc., are tricks and tools of monopoly, fakes pure and simple; Negro domination, the ignorant vote, simply the bogle man behind which monopoly has gathered into its control practically every opportunity of any value.

Desperately does monopoly contend to retain that control. It is possible that not everyone who wishes "time to consider" reform measures is an agent of monopoly, but you may wager the limit that every agent of monopoly is doing his level best to extend the "time to consider."



On the Eastern Shore there is the identical prob-

lem presented by a traction question in the metropolis, although there is no street car in hundreds of miles. Franchise problem? No. Transportation, ballot law, conservation problems? Not at all. It is a monopoly problem, always and everywhere, at bottom a land and a land-owner problem. Land owner with helot and slave, or land user with a race of freemen, that is the issue.

WESTERN STARR.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of The Public for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, May 7, 1912.

The Labor War in Chicago.

What one side calls a "strike" and the other a "lockout" began in the principal Chicago newspaper offices on the 3d—the Tribune, the Record-Herald, the Examiner, the American, the Inter-Ocean, the Journal, the Evening Post and the Daily News. The whole truth about its origin is difficult—practically impossible at present—to discover. On the surface, however, it appears to have begun with a quarrel between the Hearst papers, the Examiner (morning) and the American (afternoon), although charges are made that this action of those papers was only the first open move in a plan of the publishers' union to break up the various printing-trades unions in detail. However that may be, the strike (or lockout, whichever it is) actually began in the press rooms of the Hearst papers.



Mr. Hearst seems to have had a contract of his own with the Web Pressmen's Union—the union of men who operate printing presses that print from continuous sheets of paper in rolls. His contract had been made before his papers joined the union of employers, which is known as the American Newspaper Publishers' Association and is a national combination with a Chicago "local." This contract expired on the 30th of April. Having meanwhile been admitted into the Publishers' Association, the Hearst papers notified their pressmen on that day that they would substitute for the expiring contract the contract of the Publishers' Association. Whether this notification was accepted by the pressmen as a substitution of contracts is in dispute, but it appears to be clear that no written or other formal substitution was agreed to by the pressmen's union. Questions regarding the matter arose on the following day, with reference to which each party asserts an offer to arbitrate and a refusal of arbitration by the other.