

Asserting that Gov. Altgeld "apparently sympathized with the rioters," he declared nevertheless that "that can hardly be regarded as a reason why the federal courts should have enjoined them from rioting and punished them for contempt when they disobeyed." So at last the Nation understands the iniquity of government by injunction, and understands it so well as to criticize, though tenderly, the proceedings against Debs. The objection to those proceedings was not that Debs or anyone else ought to have been shielded from punishment for instigating or participating in riots, if guilty; but that the injunction proceedings deprived him of his right to an orderly trial.

In the admirably conducted labor department of the Philadelphia North American, which is under the management of Henry George, Jr., Mr. George sums up the trust question in a nut shell when he says that—

while the remedy for artificial monopolies is to abolish privilege and establish competition, the remedy for natural monopolies is to preserve the exclusive principle, but to take it out of private hands and to operate it publicly. To put the matter in another way, the simple, sovereign plan to meet whatever of evil there is in what is commonly spoken of as "the concentration of wealth" is to deal with the power of privilege, either by abolishing such privilege, as in the case of artificial monopolies, or by taking privileges into government hands, as in the case of natural monopolies. This principle, followed to the end, it seems to me, would clear the way for freedom of individual exertion and give to each in the production of wealth what he produces and only what he produces.

If the democratic party at Kansas City dared to adopt that principle in unmistakable terms, it would completely command the situation on the trust issue.

A good test of prosperity is a "want" advertisement. It is the best test, since the prosperity we are having is so microscopic that tests are needed. An illustrative example comes to us from Kansas. A gentleman in that state who needed two salesmen—not men to help him

make things, observe; but men to help him find buyers—put this advertisement in the Kansas City Times:

WANTED—Two salesmen in Kansas; men of good address; experience not necessary; give references; permanent position and good wages for right men. Address ARTHUR L. ROSE, Manager, Newton, Kan., for particulars.

It is very much to the credit of the Kansas City Times as an advertising medium that the advertisement brought over 30 replies. And most of the men who replied evidently had business knowledge and ability. But the prosperity for which McKinley became advance agent four years ago should "sing small" when a demand for two to fill a permanent position at good wages unearths 30 men who want the jobs.

In Scotland, too, they have been enjoying a season of "prosperity." It is very much like our own. One of our consuls, as quoted in the American Machinist, describes it so that the reader can hardly tell the difference. He says that skilled laborers in 1898 and 1899 had full employment, with increases of wages in most trades of from eight to ten per cent.; but that in Edinburg the cost of living has so far increased that "the earning power of even the best paid skilled labor has diminished."

Our democratic neighbors across the Canadian border are pestered much as we are on this side with patriotic fetish worship. From one of them—John Macmillan, of Victoria, B. C., a sterling public-spirited member of his community—we gladly give place to a letter on the subject, in which a proposition is made that is worthy of general consideration by all men and women who think of the world as their country. Mr. Macmillan writes:

Since the war in Africa began we have had a continuous outburst of flag worship. In boys' brigades, schools, churches, everywhere, men seem to be overwhelmed as with a mania, and those who do not join in are hounded as traitors and pro-Boers. For months the idea has possessed me that we can and ought to use this

flag worship for good. Cannot some one devise a flag that will be the emblem of Universal Peace? And will not men of our ideas be ready in every land to raise it on public occasions as an emblem of universal good will? This flag worship, when used for the spread of jingoism, seems to be infectious. Should its influence be all on one side? Give us a flag that is emblematical of peace. Let good men everywhere be asked to sign a pledge to hoist it, when other flags are raised, as a mute appeal in behalf of "peace on earth to men of good will."

The incidence of indirect taxation is often curious and not infrequently wicked in its effects. The profits made by Carnegie, Frick and their associates, amounting to \$46,000,000 in the last two years are examples. Though this astonishing sum of money was collected from the people of the United States, not a cent of it went into the national treasury. Carnegie and his accessories pocketed it all, McKinley's belief that the tariff is not a tax except upon the foreigner to the contrary notwithstanding. As most of this huge sum was extorted from the people by adding unduly to the price of structural iron and steel, it is not difficult roughly to follow its burden to the end. Most of that product went into office buildings in the larger cities. Their cost being enhanced just so much, the annual rents demanded and obtained by their owners are higher than they could otherwise be by an amount equal yearly to the interest on the increased cost.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

Once again the charity-giving world is stirred to its uttermost borders by piteous appeals for India, as another visitation of famine sweeps over that richly endowed but sorely tried land. From the Mysore to the Punjab, and from the western coast to the center of the peninsula, a territory of 300,000 square miles—equal in area to all the Atlantic coast states of the American Union which lie north of Georgia—the impoverished inhabitants are suffering from hunger. Sixty million people, equal in number to three-fourths of the population of the United States, are smitten with

the scourge; and 10,000,000, five times the population of Chicago, are consequently face to face with a terrible form of death. Thousands die every 24 hours. So overwhelming is the calamity that dead and dying in multitudes are found in fields and roadside ditches, food for vultures and jackals, while river and plain are polluted with the accumulations of decaying bodies.

This famine is conceded to be very much worse than that of three years ago, which aroused the pity of the peoples of the world. There are fears that it may be worse than that of 1877, when 6,000,000 actually starved. It bids fair to rival even the first great recorded Indian famine, that of 1770 in Bengal, in which the deaths counted up to 10,000,000.

To add to its horrors, the famine has opened the way to disease, and smallpox and cholera have become epidemic. One correspondent tells of 3,000 deaths from cholera in one place, and 2,500 in another, within the same period of four days. The hospital death rate in these places was 90 per cent. At still another place, where the thermometer registered 115 in the shade and he found the poorhouse death rate appalling, there was a corpse in every fourth cot and new patients crowding in were frequently placed face to face with the dead.

Measures for relief are themselves shockingly suggestive of the suffering the famine has wrought. We are told upon good authority that the British government in India is "organizing relief on a scale unapproached in the history of the world," and that a month ago the number of starving that were officially assisted in one day was 5,975,000. The demand for government assistance, says another investigator, is unparalleled. In one district 40 per cent. of the population is dependent upon the government for daily bread; in another the percentage is over 30; while in the impoverished territory generally at least 1,500,000 people have no sources of subsistence at all but government charity.

To supplement government charity, food has been furnished from different parts of the outer world. The

United States, with a characteristic leaning toward the sensational, has sent a steamer, chartered by the federal authorities, with a load of corn and other supplies. But relief in that form is useless. There is no lack of food in India. The people there are dying of hunger in a land of plenty. What is lacking is money with which to buy. The largest part of the relief afforded by the government is not in the form of food, but in money as wages for work.

At the government relief works, employment is furnished to 6,000,000 people—men, women and children. The work they do is breaking stones for highways, digging wells, transporting earth, etc. Peasants who have never before handled any implements heavier than the light tools of Hindu husbandry, here wrestle with the crowbar and the boring tool. When the men break the rocks, women and children hammer the fragments into smaller pieces. For this work the men get three cents a day, if they are able bodied, and the women get two and one-half cents, while the children get two. The low plane of living to which these people have been reduced may be inferred from the statement of an investigator that at these absurd wages "a full day's toil secures to every worker a sufficiency of food."

It is only to the starving ones who are so far gone as to be unable to work, that the government actually doles out food. Food for this purpose is supplied partly from the famine insurance fund, maintained by an annual tax upon the people, which is supplemented by private contributions. Lord and Lady Curzon have given \$3,000, and donations have been received also from England, the United States and other countries. A fund of \$1,000,000 has been raised by the lord mayor of London. Canada is collecting a fund. Subscriptions are being collected in Berlin and other continental cities. And in the United States a committee of 100, which has been organized with William E. Dodge as chairman and 73 Bible House, New York city, for headquarters, is circularizing the charitably disposed for a million dollars.

Mr. Dodge's committee makes it

clear that shipments of food to India would be folly. "Thank God," its circular reads, "relief may almost instantly pass, by cable, from this land of plenty to that India of starvation; accordingly, only gifts of money are solicited." Of course, the only relief that can pass by cable is through banking houses; and banking houses cannot get food at once to the starving Hindus unless the food is already there in sufficient quantity. The Hindus cannot eat money. The only use they can make of it is to buy food in their own markets. It is not a food famine, therefore, from which they suffer. They are dying by thousands within easy reach of an abundance of food. But they are unable to buy.

With these poor people dying of starvation it would be inhuman to refuse them help while coolly studying the causes of their awful condition. But it does not follow, as an eastern paper puts it, that "to study the causes leading to the present distress in India is useless now." Quite the contrary. This is of all others the best time for that study. To defer it until the present famine passes is to defer it until the next one comes, when, upon the same theory of procrastination, it would be useless again. Without discouraging in the slightest, then, the humane movement to relieve the famine sufferers, let us devote a few moments to a consideration of the causes of the famine.

The simplest as well as surest method of inquiry is to proceed from the known facts to those that are obscure—from obvious to ultimate causes.

We know, everybody knows, that this famine was immediately caused by the failure of the southwestern monsoon last summer. The seasons in the eastern and the western parts of India are reversed, the dry season of the one corresponding with the rainy season of the other. This difference is due to two regular monsoons, or winds. One comes down from the northeast in winter, laden with the moisture of the bay of Bengal; the other comes up from the southwest in summer with the moisture of the Indian ocean and the Arabian sea. But for these monsoons the

land they furnish with rains would be an arid waste. The eastern country is therefore dependent for its fertility upon the winter monsoon, and the western upon that of summer; and it is because the summer monsoon failed last year that western India now suffers from the famine we have described.

But superficial, indeed, must be the mind that would accept that explanation as final.

The monsoons have failed before. Nearly every decade since 1770, the year of the first great recorded famine, has been distinguished by a famine in one district or the other, caused by the failure of a monsoon to bring on the regular rains. The warnings have been abundant, and we know that the ingenuity of man is capable of profiting by such warnings.

All that the people need do to prevent famines is to anticipate possible failures of monsoons by making provision in good years for the shortage of bad ones. They should not trust absolutely to the monsoon, year by year, since industry and thrift would secure them against its failures. They should labor and save.

Had this been done in previous years, by the Hindu people, there would be no famine. With the money they had obtained from the sale of surplus crops in the past, they could buy food now, instead of becoming dependents upon a paternal government or the charity of the world as the only alternative to starvation.

As they did not make that provision, it is not an unreasonable inference that back of the failure of the monsoon as the cause of the famine lies the thriftlessness of the people. And this inference has been drawn by that class of comfortable folks who trace all poverty to the shortcomings of its victims.

It cannot be, however, that we have yet discovered the final cause of the Indian famine. If it is superficial to be satisfied with an explanation which attributes the famine to the failure of the monsoon, it is brutal to be satisfied with one which attributes it to the thriftlessness of a people who have for generations been systematically robbed to a degree that might

well make the very thought of thrift seem to them a mockery.

Security of property is the great incentive to industry and thrift. Take that away and the most industrious will fall into idleness. Take that away and the most thrifty will produce only enough to satisfy their needs of the season. Why should they produce more or save any if what they produce and save in excess of their wants for the season is to be wrested from them?

But security of property the people of India do not have. Whether they work with intelligence and energy or with neither, whether they save or waste, it is all the same; there is left for them but a bare living, and in either case a failure of the monsoon would bring on famine. It can make no difference to them, if a famine year finds them without food, whether this is because they have not raised and saved, or because what they have raised and saved has been confiscated. And so they become thriftless. Nor are they peculiar in that respect. Insecurity to earnings and savings breeds thriftlessness everywhere.

Not with the thriftlessness of the Hindu people; then, may we stop our inquiry into the cause of the Indian famine. We must attribute it finally to the conditions that make their earnings and savings perennially insecure. We must charge it to the confiscatory practices which prevail there.

And what are these? Some would promptly respond, British misgovernment. Whether this is wholly just to Great Britain or not, it is certainly just in degree, as a brief review of the situation will show.

The British government in India is a voracious tax eater. The expenditures in 1897, as shown by the Statesman's Year Book for 1899, at page 139, were £95,834,763—in round numbers \$460,000,000—of which £26,234,255, or about \$127,000,000, was expended in Great Britain. And it imposes taxes in such manner as to make them excessively burdensome upon the producing classes. Upon the same authority, at page 140, it appears that in 1897-98 the amount of land tax was £25,932,300, that the

customs tax was £4,577,400, and that the salt tax was £8,626,000. Thus we have something like \$125,000,000 of tax or rent taken by Great Britain from the occupiers of land, together with an indirect tax of some \$20,000,000 confiscated from consumers of foreign goods, and \$40,000,000 from consumers of salt. Of the land tax we shall have more to say farther on. The other two taxes, but especially the latter, are unquestionably burdens upon the common people. What a heavy burden the salt tax must be may be imagined when it is remembered in connection with its magnitude that the wages of an able-bodied man are but a few cents a day.

Among the expenditures by Great Britain in India in 1897-98, according to the Statesman's Manual, were £8,991,000 (say \$40,000,000) for collecting the taxes; £27,027,000 (about \$127,000,000) for the army; £15,721,300 (\$75,000,000) in civil salaries, and £3,499,200 (\$15,000,000) for interest on the public debt, which amounts to £237,325,160 (\$1,000,000,000). Of this public debt £113,883,233 (about \$500,000,000) is held in England. Among the annual expenditure is a salary item of £25,080 (\$125,000) drawn by Lord Curzon, who donates \$3,000 to the famine fund.

"God help the people of India!" exclaimed a member of Lord Curzon's council, who is reported in the Manchester Guardian, of April 21 last, as he began to explain that \$75,000,000 is annually paid to European officials employed in India, who send all their savings home; and that the land is so heavily taxed in many provinces that the peasant cannot save in good years for the years of bad harvest.

In the British house of commons it was shown recently that in Madras in the past 11 years the number of evictions for the nonpayment of rent amounted to 152,000, and that in the preceding 11 years it was 840,000. During the debate in which that statement was made, a member on the government side of the house, one who has spent a large part of his life in India, characterized the real cause of Indian impoverishment as heavy taxation. The Springfield Republican of April 25 quotes him as saying

that the salt tax is a most oppressive burden to the poor man, and as adding that all the resources of India are mortgaged to England; all the great businesses are in the hands of Englishmen, who draw large salaries and send their savings to England, and that the natives are forced to live mere slaves to village usurers. The trouble with India, he argued, is substantially the old trouble with Ireland—financially and industrially it has been made a mere tribute bearer.

How great the drain of tribute is may be seen by a glance at the statistics of exports and imports, which may be found in the Statesman's Manual. For the five years ending March 31, 1898, the value of exports exceeded the value of imports—merchandise, gold and silver all considered—by more than \$650,000,000, an average of \$130,000,000 a year.

The parliamentary debate referred to above was opened by a member thoroughly familiar with Indian affairs, Sir William Wedderburn, who moved "that in view of the grievous sufferings which are again afflicting the people of India, and the extreme impoverishment of the population, a searching inquiry should be instituted in order to ascertain the causes which impair the cultivator's power to resist the attacks of famine and plague; and to suggest the best preventive measures against future famines." Sir William said in support of this motion that the Indian peasant is not encouraged to provide against droughts; and the house of commons proved the justice of that remark by rejecting his motion.

We have said that we should give further attention to the land tax which Great Britain collects in India. As already stated, this tax amounted in 1897-98 to £25,932,300 (about \$125,000,000). It is levied on an arbitrary assessment of holdings, which is for the most part fixed periodically at intervals of from 12 to 30 years. The rate of tax in permanently settled tracts is conservatively reported to be about two-thirds of a rupee (say 30 cents) per acre of cultivated land, and as representing about one-twenty-fourth of the gross value of the produce. In temporarily settled tracts the rate is reported as somewhat less per acre and as repre-

senting about one-tenth to one-twelfth of the gross value of the produce. The tax is strictly not a land tax, but a produce tax; for it is imposed not upon land whether cultivated or not, but only upon cultivated land. And doubtless it operates in most cases of small holdings as an extortionate rack rent.

But the worst of the land tax is not revealed by statistics of public revenues. Back of the tax gatherer is the rack renting landlord. Nominally the government in India is the owner of the soil, but when the British began to govern there they found a system of tax farming in vogue, which, to the British mind, had the appearance of a system of large proprietorships of land. The native sovereigns were accustomed to contract with tax farmers called zemindars. A zemindar would pay a fixed amount for a particular district into the royal treasury, and then collect the taxes of the occupiers of the soil for his own benefit. Upon taking possession the British recognized these zemindars in some places as proprietors, while in others they ignored them and established a kind of peasant proprietary, under which the peasant holds directly of the government so long as he pays his land tax. Both these systems have resulted in grinding landlordism. The government tax, where it does not take all the economic rent or more, turns the workers over to the mercy of the proprietor, who squeezes out the rest.

Buckle wrote of this in his history of civilization. In the first volume, at page 54, he said:

In India, the legal rent, that is the lowest rate recognized by the law and usage of the country, is one-half of the produce; and even this cruel regulation is not strictly enforced, since in many cases rents are raised so high that the cultivator not only receives less than half the produce, but receives so little as to have scarcely the means of providing seed to sow the ground for the next harvest.

And the Statesman's Manual for 1899, at page 141, where it states that the tax in permanently settled tracts is one-twenty-fourth of the gross value of the product, explains that this is one-fifth of the rental. So even upon this conservative British au-

thority, though the tax takes but one-twenty-fourth of the rental, the cultivator loses five-twenty-fourths—one-twenty-fourth to the government and four twenty-fourths to a landlord. What is said by this same authority about taxes in the temporarily settled districts shows that at least five-twenty-fourths of the gross product is taken from the actual cultivators for the use of land, most of which has little or no economic value.

So it appears that between the British government, the zemindars and the petty proprietors, from one-fourth to one-half or even more of the earnings of the Hindu farm workers is confiscated as land exactions in addition to the confiscations through a variety of taxes with the onerous salt tax at the head of the list. When the primitive methods and laborious processes of production among these people are considered, it is apparent that only a hand to mouth existence is possible where so much of the laborer's product is extorted from him.

"The poverty of India," said Dr. Clark in the British house of commons last spring, "is caused by a system of rack renting the peasants." Dr. Clark was right. The peasants are forced to pay so much for the land they use that the partition wall between famine and their accepted standard of living, above which all attempts to rise are hopeless, is thin indeed.

Here, then, is the reason for that thriftlessness of the Indian people, which explains why the failure of a monsoon invariably causes a famine. The terrible famine now scourging western India is chargeable to the established system of confiscating the earnings of the people for the benefit of government tax eaters and private landlords.

Let it not be supposed, however, that Great Britain originated this condition. She is to blame for failing to better it. But she did not make it. Hindu peasants had their earnings confiscated in order to buy for native princes such glittering barbarian toys as ivory thrones and peacocks made of costly gems, long before Great Britain confiscated them to maintain a horde of foreign

office holders, to support a great army system, and to feed foreign bond holders. In his world-famous book, "Progress and Poverty," Henry George writes that—

In India, from time immemorial, the working classes have been ground down by exactions and oppressions into a condition of helpless and hopeless degradation. For ages and ages the cultivator of the soil has esteemed himself happy if, of his produce, the extortion of the strong hand left him enough to support life and furnish seed; capital could nowhere be safely accumulated or to any considerable extent be used to assist production; all wealth that could be wrung from the people was in the possession of princes who were little better than robber chiefs quartered on the country, or in that of their farmers or favorites, and was wasted in useless or worse than useless luxury while religion, sunken into an elaborate and terrible superstition, tyrannized over the mind as physical force did over the bodies of men. Under these conditions the only arts that could advance were those that ministered to the ostentation and luxury of the great. The elephants of the rajah blazed with gold of exquisite workmanship, and the umbrellas that symbolized his regal power glittered with gems; but the plow of the ryot was only a sharpened stick. The ladies of the rajah's harem wrapped themselves in muslins so fine as to take the name of woven wind, but the tools of the artisan were of the poorest and rudest description and commerce could only be carried on as it were by stealth.

No, the charge against Great Britain is not that her government in India has introduced the conditions that cause famines. It is that she has perpetuated those conditions by methods only less crude and palpable, and has made them worse. As George goes on to say—

The millions of India have bowed their necks beneath the yokes of many conquerors, but worst of all is the steady grinding weight of English domination—a weight which is literally crushing millions out of existence, and, as shown by English writers, is inevitably tending to a most frightful and widespread catastrophe. Other conquerors have lived in the land, and, though bad and tyrannous in their rule, have understood and been understood by the people; but India now is like a great estate owned by an absentee and alien landlord. A most expensive military and civil establishment is kept up, managed and officered by Englishmen who regard India as but a place of temporary exile; and an enormous sum estimated as at least

£20,000,000 annually (raised from a population where laborers are in many places glad in good times to work for 1½ to 4 pence a day), is drained away to England in the shape of remittances, pensions, home charges of the government, etc.—a tribute for which there is no return. The immense sums lavished on railroads have, as shown by the returns, been economically unproductive; the great irrigation works are for the most part costly failures. In large parts of India the English, in their desire to create a class of landed proprietors, turned over the soil in absolute possession to hereditary tax gatherers, who rack rent the cultivators most mercilessly. In other parts, where the rent is still taken by the state in the shape of a land tax, assessments are so high, and taxes are collected so relentlessly, as to drive the ryots, who get but the most scanty living in good seasons, into the claws of money lenders, who are, if possible, even more rapacious than the zemindars. Upon salt, an article of prime necessity everywhere, and of especial necessity where food is almost exclusively vegetable, a tax of nearly 1,200 per cent. is imposed, so that its various industrial uses are prohibited, and large bodies of the people cannot get enough to keep either themselves or their cattle in health.

Written 20 years ago, those passages explain the underlying causes of the terrible famine in India to-day. It is not due to scarcity of food in India. Food is abundant there. It is not because silver has been demonetized. Silver had not been demonetized when other great famines were produced by the same causes that must have produced this one. It is not the failure of the monsoon. That is only the immediate cause, the mere accident which has precipitated the famine but did not create its conditions. Thriftlessness, which has prevented the accumulation of capital by the peasants and the extension of their industry, is indeed a cause. But it is only a little farther removed than the monsoon failure; it is really itself an effect of a deeper cause. The true cause of this famine, as of all that have preceded it, is confiscation of the earnings of the people by means of labor taxation and landlordism.

While these causes exist, famines will appear and reappear. Robbed perennially of the property they annually produce, the Hindu peasants are held down to the same degraded plane to which generations of such

confiscation have sunk them; and living on the verge of starvation from season to season, they become victims to famine whenever the monsoon fails to water their crops. There is no help for this condition short of removing this cause. And while that remains, though no one should be deterred from helping the famine victims with such charity doles as he can spare, yet let none imagine that he thereby buys redemption from his responsibility for the awful social crime against man and God the world over to which this Indian famine so shockingly testifies.

NEWS

Reports from China at the time of our last week's issue told of the seizure of the Tientsin-Pekin railroad by 1,500 allied foreign troops who were repairing it with the view of advancing upon Peking, where the foreign population was believed to be in hourly danger of extermination by Chinese mobs. These troops appear now to have numbered 2,500, British and Russians being largely in the majority. There were 100 Americans in the number. The force was under the command of Admiral Seymour, of the British navy, who had permission from the Chinese viceroy at Tientsin to advance to Peking. His expedition appears, however, to have been a failure, Admiral Seymour being now reported to have been obliged to return. Communication with Peking is, therefore, still cut off. But Admiral Seymour's retreat, however humiliating, loses much of its interest in consequence of reports of a battle between the allied fleets and the Chinese forts at Taku.

Taku is a fortified place on the Gulf of Pechili at the mouth of the Peiho river. Official information of the battle there is not yet available, and the unofficial dispatches are variable in their accounts. It appears, however, with reasonable certainty, that the foreign naval commanders in the Gulf of Pechili, after conferring on the 16th on board the Russian flagship, sent a joint ultimatum to the commanders of the Chinese forts at Taku, demanding that they withdraw their troops before a specified hour on June 17. This was done because the Chinese were planting torpedoes in the river and assembling large bodies of