

nances or legislative bills to popular vote. If the people want to give effect to the ordinances or bills, their votes will confirm them; if the people oppose the ordinances or bills, their votes will condemn them. No matter how the referendum petition is secured, it is the referendum vote and not the petition that expresses the popular purpose. All this solicitude lest false referendum petitions be filed, is significant of a desire to secure, not pure referendum petitions, but impure legislation.

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Two Intellectual Diseases.

In Garrod's book on "The Religion of all Good Men," we find this most excellent apology of the author for publishing his opinions while he has the courage of them and before he may have substituted for the courage of his own opinions "the courage only of other people's opinions." For everywhere around him, he says,—his environment is Oxford,—"I hear the praise of the 'middle course,' of compromise, of suspended judgment; and I see the love of truth corrupted into the sophistic passion for believing both sides of a contradiction." And he adds a searching comment: "I see the folks of my little world the victims, all of them, of one of two diseases—the disease of having no opinions ('the balanced mind'), or the disease of not expressing them ('moderation'); yet we all know that the just balance is motionless: nor have we ever seen in history intellectual progress born of an elegant *laissez-faire*." How could this thing, so much needing to be said, have possibly been better said? The "balanced mind" a motionless mind; the "moderate mind" stationary. These are indeed intellectual diseases as obstructive to human development as is the greedy and the grasping mind to human moralization.

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The Ownership of an Inland Sea.

Long Island Sound is a great inland sea, open at all seasons and affording constant shipping opportunity, both to the ocean and to the great railway terminals, for a string of manufacturing cities. It is the private property of one railroad company—the New York, New Haven and Hartford. The story of this monopoly has been gathered from the reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission and put into readable phrase by Willis J. Abbot for Collier's, in which it appeared on the 16th. The railroad in question has control of practically all the railroad transportation that connects with the shipping of Long Island Sound,

including all the electric roads of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Only one boat line pretends to independence, and that also is believed to be controlled by the railroad monopoly. The manner in which the Sound is monopolized is graphically described by Mr. Abbot: "The water is there, the channel is there, surveyed and lighted by the United States government. The harbors are there, made by that Great First Cause to which all mankind owes all that it may be. The people are there, the business is there, all is there to invite the participation of Americans in the maritime carrying trade through this placid piece of water which leads from the metropolis of the United States to all the chief towns of the greatest manufacturing section of this nation. But if one desires to enter upon this honorable, this helpful service of coastwise shipping, the owners of the great railroad monopoly of New England hold up a warning hand. 'You can have no docks!' they say. And if by chance or skill or diplomacy one is able to defeat this prohibition, his first ship bringing a cargo of New England's goods to New York to be forwarded thence to customers in the West is met at the wharfs of this city by the officials of our great trunk lines, with the information that because his happens to be an 'independent boat,' his freight charges will be almost twenty per cent. higher than those exacted from the boats owned by the great New Haven corporation."

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Public Improvements and Property Values.

A typical instance of distorted reasoning with reference to the distribution of the financial benefits of public improvements is furnished by the leading editorial in a recent issue of the Pasadena Evening Star. A correspondent had objected to a general tax for the construction of a boulevard, on the ground that the financial benefits would all go to neighboring land owners. The Star undertakes to show that on the contrary the financial benefits would be distributed generally, and it invents numerous illustrations. One takes the form of a question: "If thousands more people come here annually to live, permanently or temporarily, will there not be a readier market at more remunerative prices, for the fruit, vegetables, butter, eggs and all the produce of the ranch?" The question may be answered by a counter question: If there should be a readier market at more remunerative prices, would not this in turn induce a larger supply and consequently a restoration of the present less remunerative prices? A similar

interrogative reply would fit the Star's intimation that there would be a greater volume of trade, and consequently a greater aggregate of profits for merchants. Would not that bring in more merchants to compete for the higher profits until they were reduced to the old level—less what the land owners appropriated in higher rents in the competition for store locations? All the numerous illustrations of the Star are like one or the other of those two. The flaw in its argument is not in its statements of primary probabilities; as far as they go these statements are true enough. But it overlooks the reactionary probabilities. Greater demand and consequent higher prices for houses and other products, caused by a boulevard, would be offset by greater supply; greater profits for merchants would be depressed by more merchandising; greater demand and consequent higher wages for workers, would be neutralized by an influx of more workers. But the higher prices and rentals for building-sites and neighboring ranches, caused by a boulevard, could not be offset by an influx of more building-lots and ranches. The financial benefits of the boulevard would, therefore, under the law of competition, flow into the pockets of the owners of building-lots and ranches beneficially affected by the boulevard.

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Labor and Land.

It is reported that a church to cost \$1,000,000 is soon to be erected in New York upon a site valued at \$2,500,000. The comment evoked by this report rarely goes beyond the point of contrasting a \$3,500,000 temple for the worship of the Nazarene Carpenter, with the humble cradle in which his infant body was laid. But there is a far more important consideration. Let it be noted that while the site is worth \$2,500,000, the structure, though a grand one, is to cost but \$1,000,000. Now consider what that difference implies. Every dollar of structural value represents human labor; the site value represents nothing but land monopoly. The laborers who plan and erect the church, thereby adding another building to the aggregate of buildings, are to get \$1,000,000—scant wages for their work; but the monopolists of the site are to get \$2,500,000, two and a half times as much, without adding an iota to the utilities of mankind. Here is a difference which makes a more important contrast than the comparison of an expensive temple of worship in the twentieth century with the manger in which the infant object of the worship was laid in the first century. It is the contrast between the munificent incomes which idle Christians get from the labor

of their brethren for the usufruct of the Lord's earth, and the earnings that working Christians get for building objects of beauty and use—the contrast between those who get and those who earn, between Christians who eat bread in the sweat of other men's faces and those who eat it in the sweat of their own.

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Mallock's "Ability" Theory.

Mr. Mallock, the English essayist and lecturer who is now furnishing legalized looters in the United States with specious academic arguments in support of economic conditions favorable to their lootings, makes a grand flourish with "ability" as a factor of wealth production in addition to labor. By this he must mean either one of two things. If he means "ability" to get service without giving equivalent service, he is introducing larceny into economics; if he means "ability" to give service in extraordinary measure, he is merely subdividing "labor." And if he means to subdivide "labor" there is no end to the possibility. He could say that the factors of wealth production, besides "land," are "labor," "ability," "skill," "education," etc., etc., etc. But ability, skill, education,—these are after all only qualities of labor, tending to render it the more effective and serviceable. In the last analysis there are but two conditions of industry. One is "land," which varies in degree of serviceableness according to natural qualities and social location; the other is "labor," which varies in degree of serviceableness according to natural abilities and acquired qualities.

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The President's Land Message.

In a message to Congress on the 13th President Roosevelt urged the policy of leasing instead of selling public lands containing coal. Though not the best possible method, this is better than no method at all for conserving public rights in a country the great majority of the inhabitants of which are fast becoming landless. That the proposed reform comes only after half the coal lands of the West have passed from public to private ownership, is not the President's fault. But it is emphatically the fault of the preachers of contentment with whom this country has long been cursed,—those who protest against theorizing and exalt the practical. It is always impracticable with them to close the barn door until the horse is out of the stable; and after that, to mix metaphors somewhat absurdly, they object good naturedly to crying over spilt milk. There is one way