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The Venezuelan situation is by no means satisfactory to peaceably minded Americans who believe in the Monroe doctrine. For the invasion of Venezuela by Great Britain and Germany has raised the alternative of a war between this country and those powers, or a back down from the Monroe doctrine by this country, to the level of a reasonable probability. Should the assault which Great Britain and Germany have made upon Venezuela ripen into war, as now seems highly probable, they are almost certain to do something either in the prosecution or the settlement of the war which would give them a footing upon South American soil in contravention of the Monroe doctrine. We should then be obliged either to acquiesce or to fight.

Even the possibility of that alternative might have been avoided by polite diplomatic intimations from Washington. What Germany and Great Britain are trying to do is to collect private debts by ultimatums and ships of war. This should be abhorrent to American sentiment, and those governments should have been so advised. Had they been notified that the United States could not consider, without concern for the integrity of the Monroe doctrine, an attack upon a weak South American republic by powerful European monarchies for such a cause, they would not have made the venture.

But how will it be under the circumstances as they exist? The United States have assented to the war which the European powers have

now begun, and in assenting they have made only the bare condition that the Monroe doctrine shall be respected. With that encouragement from the United States, for encouragement it clearly is, Great Britain and Germany have begun a conflict in which, should it progress very far, they would do more than seize and destroy Venezuelan ships. They will occupy Venezuelan soil and acquire Venezuelan territory. When this has been done, an intimation of displeasure from the United States will come too late. To recognize such an intimation at that time would necessitate a backdown on the part of the invaders, which they in their military pride and the consciousness of having acquired a foothold, would not for a moment consider. Thenceforth the responsibility would be upon the United States of deciding whether to modify the life out of the Monroe doctrine or to become the aggressor in making war. Neither Great Britain nor Germany has a record at all reassuring for getting out of countries which they have once got into.

In the pulpit of Plymouth church, Brooklyn—Beecher's old church—the Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis preaches. If any one doubts that Mr. Hillis is a demagogue playing to the boxes, his sermon of November 9 last, on "Labor's War Upon Labor," which is being extensively circulated, should dispel the doubt. Purporting to be a pious and liberty-defending sermon, it is nothing less than a violent appeal to the prejudices of the classes that "chip in" handsomely when the contribution plate is passed.

Mr. Hillis's condemnation of labor unions may be left to the consideration of those organizations; but men in general who believe in human

rights will want to know what advice he has to give to the despoiled working class, looking to their protection from spoliation. It is at this point that the violent Mr. Hillis becomes as gentle as a cooing dove. Would they increase their wages? He tells them that the way to do it is to increase the quantity and quality of their work. Does any one suppose that Mr. Hillis really believes that if the quantity and quality of their work were generally increased by the working class, they would get better wages? Is he so simple as not to know that competition for a job at doing better work would then be as keen as competition is now for poorer work, or so ignorant as not to understand that it is competition for jobs and not quantity or quality of work that determines wages in general? "We can double the income from the soil," he tells the working class. But he carefully refrains from reminding them that those who own the soil and not those who do the doubling will get the difference.

One feature of the Hillis sermon is common to all that is being said and printed in behalf of non-union men. It is the fact that the speaker in no sense represents non-union men, though he speaks in their name. A criticism of Mr. Hillis and Whitelaw Reid, which Henry George, Jr., made a week ago in one of his excellent syndicate articles, goes straight to the mark. Mr. George asks who they are that make the plea and shed the crocodile tears for non-union men, and then he answers:

Not nonunion men. We hear a great deal about nonunion men, but never from them direct. If they do not speak who are their spokesmen? Let us apply this question to the two men we have quoted, Mr. Reid and Dr. Hillis. The fortune which bought Mr. Reid's newspaper for him and made him em-

inent in the public world was derived mainly from two sources of privilege, gold and silver mines and railroads. The audience that he addressed when he spoke of the right of a man to sell his labor befitting the atmosphere of an institution established and endowed by the Carnegie fortune, which, as we all know, is based mainly upon mining, patent, tariff and other taxation and transportation privileges. How many workingmen, even nonunion workingmen, are in Dr. Hillis's congregation? Perhaps not one. His people are made up of the rich and those dependent upon the rich. The men most prominent in the congregation are Wall street men, who promote and traffic in special privileges. Of course neither speaker would be inclined to utter sentiments that would violently clash with the interests of either audience. On the contrary, both would probably utter sentiments harmonious with the material interests of their hearers. All this talk, then, about the cause of the nonunion man must really be considered to be in the interest of those who possess special privileges. It is much like the interest foxes might be expected to take in the welfare of poultry. For what is it the special interest wants in its relations to labor? That the laborer shall give the maximum of effort at the minimum of wages cost. What is it that the laborers want and which they combine to obtain? That they shall get the maximum of wages for the minimum of effort. Which is it reasonable to suppose the special interests will prefer—the organized condition of laborers, where high wages may be obtained, or the unorganized condition, where the workmen are left individually to make terms?

And with it all Mr. Hillis discovers a new factor in wealth production "greater if possible" than "land, labor and capital." This magical factor is "ability." Must we insult Mr. Hillis's intelligence by supposing he does not know he is here indulging in the most transparent kind of petteffogging? Ability produces nothing, so long as it is inactive. Though a man had the physical ability of Hercules, it would not lift a pebble if he did not use it. It is the same with mental ability. But when ability is used, it is labor—one of the three factors to which he subordinates ability. Labor is nothing but an economic term for applied ability. Doesn't Mr. Hillis know this? Doesn't he suspect it? Or is he so intent on making out a case for his clients, whose ability is for

the most part applied to the process of getting privileges instead of producing wealth, that these elementary things escape him?

In this sermon of his Mr. Hillis is doing something akin to what Mr. Beecher would have been doing if from the same pulpit half a century ago he had opposed the abolition of chattel slavery, explaining that the slaves could free themselves by increasing the quantity and quality of their work, and that it was lack of "ability" and not the black code that enslaved them.

It is well known that certain exploiters of American franchises have extended their business to the other side of the Atlantic and are trying to acquire private franchises to do public work, such as street car service, in Great Britain. It is also well known that recently the London Times, now controlled by the Rothschilds, has published columns of figures to show that British municipal ownership of such public works has turned out to be enormously unprofitable. But no one, so far as we have observed, has connected these two facts. Yet the relationship is quite obvious, especially when it is known that Robert P. Porter, who has long been figure-purveyor in ordinary to privileged interests in the United States, was the statistician that furnished the London Times with its statistical material. The suspicion is not at all a strained one, that Mr. Porter was sent upon this mission by the American monopolists who want to exploit the rich fields of British municipal utilities, and that he took part of his figures along with him.

Of course the plutocratic press of the United States has republished Mr. Porter's conclusions, as given to the Times. Such papers as the Dallas News and the Cincinnati Times-Star, not to mention any others, have indicated their delight at this discovery—through Mr. Porter and the Rothschilds' London organ—of evidence in Great Britain that it is

better for municipalities to farm out their public services by long and fat franchises, to be owned by such "widows and orphans" as Hanna and Yerkes, than to attend to their municipal business themselves. But Mr. Porter's figures have been exposed. They are now flat, stale and unprofitable, and the American papers that make them a basis for further plutocratic jubilation must stand convicted of either ignorance or fraud.

The subject is briefly and very judicially summed up in an editorial in the Chicago Record-Herald of the 7th, which is worthy of quotation in full:

Municipal ownership has come out of the controversy which was raised by the hostile articles in the London Times without any permanent damage or any prospect of a reversion to old policies. While it is generally admitted that there are faults in the working of the system, neither the articles themselves nor the enormous mass of correspondence which they called forth have contained a convincing indictment of its great essential features. There has been quite a flurry over aldermanic junketing, as if that were impossible under any other system. Much has been said also against the principle of municipal ownership and concerning the inherent improbability that the members of an elective municipal government should be able to manage so many diverse affairs. But on a comparison of facts and figures the defense has undoubtedly had the best of the argument. The replies of John Burns and of the former lord provost of Edinburgh and others have shown that there are enormous assets to set against increased expenses; that there is an immense improvement in the public service; that the transformation in the slums of great cities has been wonderful; that there has been a remarkable gain in sanitation and in many other particulars which it is needless to mention. And now it seems that a student who has gone over the subject thoroughly has made an exhaustive statistical showing in the Municipal Journal which indicates that the local taxes, even at this incomplete stage, are lower than they would have been without municipalization. The Times' attack has had the effect, while calling attention to some evils of the system, of emphasizing its advantages and of awakening new enthusiasm for it.

One of the accusations made against Mayor Johnson, of Cleveland,