

more dangerous to his political associates than a man like Hopkins. Put the matter in its worst light for Hopkins and in its best for Harrison, and still the old saw holds good that a candid enemy is safer than a treacherous friend. That was the way in which the matter appeared to Gov. Altgeld, and that was the reason Altgeld encouraged and aided in organizing Hopkins's now well-nigh successful contest against Harrison. Although he realized the objections to Hopkins, he believed that they were of minor and temporary concern as compared with the importance of putting Harrison out of the saddle in local politics. There is no reason yet for supposing that Altgeld was mistaken.

A check, temporary at least, has now been put upon the postmaster general's policy (p. 84) of establishing a press censorship in the postal department. His arbitrary rulings on the admissibility of second-class matter have been enjoined by the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. Judge Bradley, of that court, granted an injunction before he died (p. 84) and that injunction has now been continued by Judge Barnard, pending the trial of the case in which it has been issued. Judge Barnard sensibly holds that the power claimed by the postmaster general would make him a censor of the press and open the door to other grave abuses.

The Isthmian canal controversy is now doubtless settled; and so far as non-experts can judge it has been settled right. The way has been left open for adopting the Nicaragua route, if insuperable obstacles should prevent the adoption of the Panama route; but the latter is preferred. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the commission of experts. They were unanimous with one exception, Mr. Haupt, and he finally joined in the report. Of course the commissioners may be mistaken; Mr. Haupt's attitude is significant of that possibility. But

Senator Spooner's point, that no one with authority is competent to overrule them, is unanswerable.

As Civil Service Commissioner Foulke now states that President Roosevelt's recent interpretation of the civil service rules was issued two months before the Rebecca J. Taylor case came up, it must be assumed that the interpretation was not made to fit that case. Yet there is confusion somewhere. Miss Taylor was formally asked by the secretary of war if she had written the political letter complained of, and if so what defense she had to offer. She replied that she had written it, but that under the civil service rules she was not required to make a defense until a charge had been preferred. Evidently she had not heard of the President's wide open interpretation of the rules. Neither had the secretary of war, apparently, for he took no further action until the interpretation in question had been published as well as "issued." This occurred apropos of nothing, so far as the public could surmise, and a few days later Miss Taylor was peremptorily dismissed without charges of any kind. Despite these suspicious circumstances, however, Mr. Foulke's word is sufficient assurance that Mr. Roosevelt did not issue the interpretation with a view to Miss Taylor's case. Nevertheless, its general effect is the same. It opens wide the door for party spoilsmen; for when the head of a department can discharge without assigning cause he can discharge for political reasons. It was actually done in Miss Taylor's case.

Great ado has been made recently by the Chicago Chronicle over what it is pleased to call "socialistic" tendencies in the Democratic party. It alludes to the municipalization of public monopolies, such as the street car systems. But the Chronicle proves itself to be more socialistic than the municipal ownership Democrats at whom it fires that epithet. In one of its anti-socialist editorials it says: "If we municipalize the trac-

tion companies, we ought to be consistent and municipalize everything." Now, that is precisely the way a socialist would look at the matter. Like the Chronicle he sees no difference between public ownership of public monopolies and public ownership of private business. But precisely at that point lies the dividing line between socialistic aspirations and true individualism. The latter distinguishes the difference between public monopolies and private businesses. The former do not. They bundle them all together, just as the Chronicle does. The only difference is that the Chronicle would have public monopolies privately owned because private businesses ought to be, whereas the socialist would have private business publicly owned because public monopolies ought to be. The true individualistic principle is that of the law books, illustrated by the leading railroad-condemnation case which we summarized at page 165, and recently approved by the Inter-State Commerce Commission, that a business which in its nature requires a concession or delegation of power from the public is a public and not a private business.

"The Negro is utterly incapable of comprehending our system of government," writes Bolton Smith, a Northern man resident in Tennessee, in a pamphlet advocating the repeal of the Fifteenth amendment. Mr. Smith thereupon demonstrates, unconsciously, however, that at least one white man is in the same predicament.

#### SETTLING THE TRAMP PROBLEM— A FOURTH OF JULY REVERIE.

The substance of a recent significant news item is given in the following editorial paragraph which appeared in the Chicago Record-Herald of June 26:

The Kansas farmers have overcome the physical inertia of the hobo. They did it with a gun. The deficiency of farm hands in Kansas is estimated at about 10,000 men. The harvest fields, with their golden seas of overripe grain, are calling for men. A freight train westward bound was wrecked

near the town of Pratt. On the train were 50 or 60 tramps bound for Colorado for their health. The farmers heard of it and offered them \$2 per day and plenty of good food and shelter. They declined the offer. Thereupon the farmers tried shotgun persuasion with the result that nearly all of the tramps are now toiling in the harvest fields of Pratt county, and they will be kept at it until the wheat is all garnered. The picturesque feature of the episode is furnished by the women of the farms, who are acting as guards, each armed with a shotgun. If the Pratt county idea spreads it may offer a solution of the whole tramp problem.

It is quite possible, even probable, that no such event ever actually occurred. The story may have been the product of some impecunious and irresponsible penny-a-liner's imagination. If, therefore, its importance depended upon its being a fact, it would have no significance unless verified. Nor would it have much then, for, as one swallow does not make a summer, neither would one incident like this Kansas episode be any indication of a general economic condition or a general state of the public mind.

But when a reputable and usually thoughtful metropolitan newspaper, a Republican paper at that, though somewhat independent on occasions, treats such a story as if it had in fact occurred and as if it were a good thing to have occurred and something to be seriously and favorably considered as an example, there is more ominous significance to the story, though a fiction, than there would be if it were true but its example were condemned by papers like the Record-Herald. In these circumstances it is another of the fast accumulating indications that we are swinging around in the development of our economic history to the "merrie" times in England when vagrancy became common for the first time.

Thorold Rogers has shown that prior to the reign of Henry VIII. there was a veritable golden age for English laborers, when the working classes were more comfortable and prosperous than they have ever been since. Masons in Oxford, for instance, got better wages, relatively to general social conditions, for a 48-hour week in the 15th century than masons in London got for a 56-hour

week toward the latter part of the 19th century. And this in spite of the drastic decrees of crown and parliament compelling laborers, under heavy pains and penalties, to work for low wages. But during the latter half of the reign of Henry VIII. there came a radical change in this flourishing condition of English labor.

Landlordism, till then unknown in anything like its modern character, took root in the confiscation and sale of the monastic lands, which constituted a third of the area of the kingdom. The king was a ready seller and he found eager buyers. To own land came to be instead of a feudal trust a serious and profitable industry. The wealthy merchant classes began to invest in land largely, and for half a century a violent land fever raged in town and country, out of which came the "rack rent."

The rent theretofore known was a tax, levied by the "superior" upon the "inferior," by the landlord upon the tenant, not as a quid pro quo for the use of land, but "in consideration," says Thorold Rogers, "of a real or pretended protection of the tenant." So the amount of the rent usually remained unchanged century after century. But when the merchant investors began to buy the confiscated monastery lands of Henry VIII., they carried over into the management of their landed estates the same business methods to which they were accustomed in commerce. To quote from a careful investigator, the Hon. Joseph Leggett, of San Francisco, in a brief but comprehensive and luminous paper in the San Francisco Star of January 25, 1896, "they figured out the cost of an acre of land and fixed its rent at interest on that amount, and as competition for land raised the price they raised the rent to correspond." The rack-renting example thus set by the purchasers of abbey lands was quickly followed by all the landlords of England, and the golden age of English labor came naturally enough to an end.

In a few years England swarmed with "vagrants" and "sturdy beggars"—"tramps" and "hoboes" we should call them now,—and the English saw for the first time, as Green's history tells us, "a distinct criminal class in the organized gangs of robbers which began to infest the roads,

and were always ready to gather round the standard of revolt. The gallows did its work in vain. . . . The social disorder, in fact, baffled the sagacity of English statesmen." Ground down by the unaccustomed low wages through the commercializing and rack-renting of land, the stronger and more independent spirits among workingmen had rebelled.

For the relief of the docile who suffered, private benevolence was at first depended upon, but it became necessary to supplement this with the poor rate, which was established in 1601. The treatment of this impoverished class was in essential character singularly like that to which American public sentiment is now growing accustomed. Church collections were ordained by the law, the curate of every parish being required every Sunday and holiday, after reading the gospel of the day, to make "a goodly and brief exhortation to his parishioners, moving and exciting them to remember the poor people and the duty of Christian charity in relieving of them, which be our brethren in Christ, born in the same parish and needing their help." There were numerous acts of parliament of that sort. At first only voluntary gifts were demanded of the rich; but soon compulsion followed. The rich but covetous man, who remained obdurate, was to be sent to gaol and an assessment levied on his goods. How suggestive of the exhortations to the rich so common now, to "Give!" "Give!" "Give!" upon the benevolent theory that God has made them trustees of their wealth that they may in some way—from libraries to soup kitchens—be his almoners for their poorer brethren.

But the English "vagrant" laws of that time were even more strikingly suggestive of public opinion in our own day regarding tramps, as indicated by such things as the editorial quoted above from the Chicago Record-Herald. One of these laws provided that "any able-bodied vagrant might be taken to the nearest town and there tied to the end of a cart naked and whipped "till his body be bloody by such whipping." If he persisted in his vagrancy after that he was to have the upper part of the gristle of his right ear cut off; and if he still persisted he was to be tried

and executed as a felon. One archaic writer tells: "How Henrie the Eight, executing his laws verie severlie against such idle persons . . . did hang up three score and twelve thousand of them in his time." They were not at all queasy in dealing with the tramp problem in those days.

After Henry's time similar laws were enacted and barbarously enforced. Pursuant to one of them a vagrant might be marked with a letter V and adjudged to be the slave for two years of the person buying him. If he ran away he was to be branded on the forehead or ball of the cheek with the letter S, and adjudged his master's slave for life, and if he ran away a second time he was to be executed as a felon.

Now, in what respect does that last English vagrant law differ from the Kansas method already noted? It is more primitively brutal in some details, but in principle there is no difference at all between the two, except that in England enslavement of vagrants was in accordance with regularly enacted law, whereas in Kansas the enslavement of the tramps was utterly lawless and so downright anarchy?

Yet a leading Republican paper of one of the largest cities proposes this anarchistic Kansas episode—whether seriously or flippantly makes no difference in so far as it is a reflection of "reputable" public sentiment—as an example for the solution of the tramp problem!

The "tramp" problem of the present has an origin precisely like that of the "vagrant" problem of the time of Henry VIII.

We, too have had our golden age of labor. As Leggett, from whom we have already quoted, observes:

During the first century of the existence of this government American land of the best quality was open to American labor at an annual rent of a little over six cents an acre (the government price of \$1.25 an acre divided by 20). So long as that condition of things lasted American labor was prosperous. But as soon as the supply of government land became exhausted the same phenomena that followed the sale of the church lands in England began to appear in this country. The scrambles for government land at Oklahoma, at the Sisseton Reservation, at the Cherokee Strip,

and at the Kickapoo Reservation have merely served to make patent to the general public a fact that has been fully known to thoughtful observers of passing events—that is, that the supply of government land fit for occupation and use had given out. No one who will give the matter consideration can fail to observe how close is the parallel between the social and industrial conditions that developed in England about the middle of the reign of Henry VIII. and the social and industrial conditions that have developed in this country during the last 12 or 15 years, since the supply of public land has become practically exhausted.

There is the explanation of our "tramp" problem. It is part of the old social problem which was forced upon England by the commercialization of the abbey lands and the consequent rack-renting of all lands, and has been forced upon us by the commercialization of our public domain and the consequent rack-renting of every rood of land in the country from the coziest corner in Wall street to the broad acres of the Kansas prairies. Labor must therefore beg employment, except at odd intervals in odd places where there is a special and temporary demand; and in consequence we have, as in Henry's time in England, an impoverished docile class for whose relief we are learning to demand alms of the rich, and an impoverished rebellious class whom we denounce as tramps and whose natural rights we are ceasing to respect.

That the tramp is a parasite is conceded. He does not work. He lives by beggary. But he lives very poorly. When he begs even successfully his prize is seldom better than a bone. It doesn't cost much to keep him.

Not so with the millionaire parasite. He doesn't work either. But he lives well. And although he doesn't live by beggary, he lives by something worse—by appropriation. It costs a great deal more to keep the appropriating millionaire "hobo" than to keep the begging tramp "hobo."

Why concern ourselves so much, then, with the problem of the latter while neglecting so persistently the problem of the former? Let us concern ourselves more with the problem of the millionaire "hobo" who gets by appropriation so much that he

doesn't earn and therefore must be extorting it from those of us who do earn, and we shall not need to concern ourselves with the outcast begging "hobo" at all.

Both are products of the same conditions. The institution whereby the one class is enabled to appropriate, is the very institution which has driven the other class to beggary. Solve the idle millionaire problem and the idle tramp problem will solve itself.

## NEWS

The first session of the Fifty-seventh Congress, which met on the 2d of December (vol. iv., p. 552), adjourned on the 1st of July. This session will be memorable for legislation of an extraordinary character. The Senate ratified the Hay-Pauncefote treaty (vol. iv., pp. 583, 602), which paved the way to the control of an Isthmian canal by the United States; and both Houses passed an Isthmian canal bill preferring the Panama route but providing for the adoption of the Nicaragua route if satisfactory rights to the other cannot be secured, the project to be under the direction of the President. A temporary tariff bill was enacted for revenue purposes in the Philippine islands, and in the last hours of the session a bill was enacted for the establishment of civil government there. One of the notable measures is the act abolishing the war revenues, which went into effect on the 1st of July. The oleomargarine law is another. It imposes a small internal revenue tax on all oleomargarine and a heavy one on oleomargarine colored so as to resemble yellow butter. The policy of forbidding Chinese immigration was continued by a new exclusion act; and legislative adjustments were made for establishing diplomatic relations with the Republic of Cuba. One of the most important bills to pass was that for the expenditure of moneys, received for public lands in certain states and territories, in the construction of irrigation works for the reclamation of arid lands; and another was the bill establishing the census bureau permanently. Some of the bills of importance that failed to pass were also of extraordinary character. Among them was the ship subsidy bill, which only passed the Senate; bills for the admission of Arizona, Oklahoma and