

tained the Sunday laws on the ground that public policy demands that one day in seven be a day of cessation from work, and this being so that the legislature has full power to choose the day, the fact that it chooses a day of religious observance being merely incidental and having no bearing upon the question. That line of decisions appears to have been thrust completely aside by the New York courts in their efforts to nullify laws exactly like the Sunday laws in principle, but which are made for the protection of persons whom other laws have made helpless beggars for opportunities to work.

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A Test of Indecency.

Anthony Comstock's invasion of the Students' Art League in New York proves either that the Students' Art League or Anthony Comstock is indecent.

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The San Francisco Star.

It is with great satisfaction that we welcome again that able, brilliant, honest and fearless, but recently unfortunate weekly paper of the Pacific Coast—the San Francisco Star. After the earthquake and fire in San Francisco, in which the plant of The Star and all the business property of its owner, Mr. James H. Barry, were swept away, The Star ceased to appear until the 21st of July, when it resumed publication in larger form. In editorial characteristics, however, it is unchanged. Now in its 23d year, The Star has done much to promote genuine democracy and honest government in the State of California, and its beneficent influence extends all along the Coast and back to the mountains. It is one of the papers that is making for our time the kind of history from which those who come after us will benefit and of which they will be proud.

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The Animus of Protective Tariffs.

The true inwardness of the protective tariff tax has been exposed by an act of Congress imposing one hundred per cent. tariff upon a certain kind of cotton goods much in use by the Filipinos. This tariff, which was rushed through Congress last winter by protective tariff leaders, has for its sole object the exclusion from the Philippine Islands of that particular kind of goods, which American manufacturers cannot, will not, or do not make, in order that the kind which these manufacturers do make may be thrust upon the Filipinos. This has been justly denounced as a greedy and mean piece of legislation. Yet the sordid motives so

obvious in this case are precisely the motives of all protective tariff legislation. The only difference is that in this instance the Filipinos are the victims, whereas in tariff legislation in general the American people are the victims. Protection is robbery.

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Successful Municipal Ownership.

Within a few days dispatches from New York have appeared throughout the country stating that the city of Glasgow had made such a failure of its municipal telephone system that it had finally sold it to the post office department of Great Britain. The obvious intention was to arouse doubts as to the possibility of making the policy of municipal ownership successful. But the fact is that the telephone system of Glasgow, although sold to the post office department, was thus disposed of not because it had been a failure as a public enterprise but because it was operated at a disadvantage as a local enterprise. To quote from the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury of July 12th:

The sale of the Glasgow municipal telephone system to the government is probably the beginning of the end of municipal telephony. By this it should not be readily surmised that municipal enterprise in telephones has been without result. On the contrary, the fierce competition which has been seen in Glasgow has resulted in an advance of telephony such as no other city in the United Kingdom has experienced. The rates have been little more than half those charged in less favored districts, and the consequence has been that the domestic use of the telephone in Glasgow is far in advance of that particular use elsewhere. But rivalry in respect to telephones is a very difficult matter. Business firms are bound sooner or later to feel the irksomeness of belonging to two systems. The fact that the Corporation was opposed by the general telephone organization of the country placed an additional difficulty in its way. People who attempted to speak from an ordinary telephone in Liverpool to a Corporation subscriber in Glasgow were charged 58 cents, while for a conversation to a subscriber to the National Telephone Company's system they were charged 50 cents only. This placed the Corporation subscribers at a disadvantage in respect to trunk and long-distance telephony, and the consequence was that the Corporation had to pay a certain amount of the extra imposts levied for trunk calls against its subscribers. Now the whole system passes to the post office. It is well equipped. The department gets it cheaper than the original capital outlay. The additional impost to which we have referred cannot now be levied by the company, and altogether the post office has a fine opportunity of showing the world what it intends to do when it gets the whole system of the country into its hands.

Obviously, from this explanation there is nothing in the sale of the Glasgow telephone system to the

post office department to indicate any weakness in the policy of the public operation of a public service of this character.

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Another experiment in municipal ownership was for several months made the object of sneering remarks by the plutocratic press. This was the Staten Island ferry, the public ownership and operation of which were forced upon the city of New York less than a year ago by a conjunction of peculiar circumstances and the agitation of municipal ownership advocates. At first the plutocratic press took advantage of every little operating difficulty and accident, though incidental to the institution of any new enterprise whether public or private, to impress upon the public sentiment of the country the idea that this public enterprise was a failure. Of course, the purpose was to discourage similar enterprises in other cities of the country. After a little while, however, reports of the failure of this experiment in municipal ownership and operation ceased to appear in the press. The reason for the ensuing silence is now made plain. Says the *Elizabeth Evening Times* of July 17th, a Democratic paper, quoting from the *New York Press*, a Republican paper, "the New York-Staten Island ferry has, in the first year under municipal control, carried one million more passengers than during any previous twelve months, and the commuters from Staten Island, they having been furnished with excellent service and with prospects of a reduction in the fare, are exceedingly well pleased with this particular experiment in municipal ownership."

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OUR WRETCHED TAXING SYSTEM.

Napoleon said of China: "There lies a giant asleep—let him sleep!" Napoleon spoke from the standpoint of a warrior, of a civilized savage, whose trade was war, conquest of unlimited empire, and orderly, systematic spoliation of the conquered, at home as well as abroad. So long as the giant slept, there was no danger of his interfering with the imperial robber.

The present-day Napoleons of finance have enjoyed a long period of practically uninterrupted pillage, while the unconscious giant—the public—slept. But the public is awakened now, at last, awake as never before in the history of the world. The present awakening is very different in character from that of any previous time. We are not now rising to throw off the yoke of a foreign despot, but to purge our own institutions of the

elements of internal despotism; not the despotism of a personal tyrant, but of conventional error.

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Our laws and customs at the outset appeared to point all in the line of equity and truth. But the march of national progress has now extended so far along these lines as to reveal the fact that the farther we proceed, the wider becomes the divergence from equity. A new alignment is necessary. The unavoidable mistakes of our democratic infancy must be corrected by the mature judgment of experience. Though the fundamental principles of democracy are the same forever, statute law must always be regarded merely as the attempt of the political body to enforce those principles. And when statute law is demonstrated by experience to conflict with the fundamental principles of democracy, its abrogation is not only the right, it is the solemn duty of the people.

When the alternative is between loyalty to fundamental democracy—that is to say, justice—and a certain governmental enactment, then to choose the latter is to repudiate the sacred principle it was intended to enforce.

Justice is sacred; no one will deny that. Therefore no one can deny that a law that creates injustice should be repealed.

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The law that subjects personal property to taxation inevitably promotes injustice—monstrous injustice. And one of the most cheering features of the popular awakening is the fact that the men who are leading the vanguard in the economic revolution now in progress realize the pernicious character of this form of taxation, and assail it with a vigor and persistency that presage its speedy extinction.

The element of personalty taxation beclouds the general theory and practice of taxation, thereby vitiating the whole system. The facile possibility of dodging personalty tax inures men to the immoral practice of deception, and often to downright perjury. It complicates the matter so effectually that the public, forever baffled in the endeavor to enforce justice in regard to personalty, fails also in relation to land values. That is to say, the public, viewing all objects of taxation as economically identical and finding it impossible to effect equitable taxation of personalty, surrenders the entire field at discretion, the thought never occurring that land values are of such a nature as to afford a potential solution of