

All this would be futile. As grand jurors are now drawn in Chicago—strictly from the business classes—there would be little possibility of indicting the packers for managing their business in the filthy manner in which they do manage it. The nasty condition described in the Neill-Reynolds report has been well known for at least two years in the city of Chicago, but the greatest pains have been taken to hide all knowledge of it—lest Chicago business interests might suffer. The local newspapers have been fully apprised of the facts, but have suppressed them. During the strike at the packing houses the conditions were even worse than now. They were heightened economically by the use of lower grades of labor, morally by the introduction of brothels for the accommodation of the strike breakers, and in sanitary respects by this degrading combination. The conditions were so exceptionally bad at that time that the strike was hastily settled to avoid the imminent risk of an outside exposure such as has now come. The packing house interests have not feared local prosecution or exposure. They are buttressed by all the interlaced financial interests of Chicago, including the newspaper counting rooms. Against this aggregation of business influence and financial power, which has almost successfully defied the Federal government itself, the police power of the city and the criminal machinery of the county would be weak indeed. Both as a matter of the Constitutional relation of the States to the Federal government, and as a matter of possible effectiveness, the regulation of the packing house industry, if there is to be any regulation at all, must be Federal.

* *

Economic Responsibility for Packinghouse Methods.

There is, of course, one way in which the disgusting management of the Chicago packing houses might be reformed without governmental interference. If the working classes were fairly paid for their work, every one who worked would receive a much larger income than now; and, as a result, every worker would be much more scrupulous about his working environment. Such conditions as are described in the Neill-Reynolds report would be impossible if the employed class were in a position to bargain upon an equality with the employing class. But when workers are plentiful and opportunities for work few, a one-sided competition for opportunities to work sets in which forces the workers to accept almost any

conditions of work, for their alternative is starvation. The natural effect is degrading to the workers; the inevitable result is brutish conditions both in living and in working environments. Governmental inspection may serve some use in improving working conditions. As a dam may hold back the running waters for a time and to a degree, so inspection may slightly check the degrading tendency. But the tendency can be reversed only by removing all possible obstacles to employment. Of this method, however, it is hardly worth speaking; for valuable vested interests, enormous vested interests, profit by such obstructions. And must not vested interests be maintained at all costs and hazards?

* *

The Bryan Wave.

That a Bryan wave, spontaneous and not manufactured, has set in is unmistakable to unprejudiced observers wherever they look. It is quite as obvious to Republicans as it is to Democrats. The New York Press, for instance, a Republican daily, concedes that "those who are watching the trend of public sentiment are convinced that Mr. Bryan is stronger with the American people to-day than he was at either time he ran for the Presidency, and that his strength increases with extraordinary force." And the Press finds good reasons "for the better opinion which Americans now hold of him than when they twice had the opportunity to vote for him." One of these reasons involves an error not unnatural to a Republican paper of the East. It is Bryan's supposed abandonment of "his free silver fallacy." Mr. Bryan has not abandoned what the Press calls "his free silver fallacy," which consisted in the quantitative theory of money—the theory that the value of money is determined by supply and demand. He was for silver coinage in order to increase the supply of money when gold was scarce; he has not concerned himself about silver recently because the increase in the supply of gold has augmented the quantity of money more than he had hoped for from the free coinage of silver. In other words, nature has supplied the quantity of money in gold which Bryan demanded of the government in silver. To say then, that he has changed his position is a misrepresentation. Aside from this, however, the Press very correctly accounts for Bryan's popularity. "The events of the last ten years," it says, "have proved that most of the charges which he made concerning the special privileges and defiant crimes of the great corporations are true. By bit-

ter experience in their efforts to correct the evils which Mr. Bryan preached were threatening them, the American people have been convinced that the abuses which he related from the stump are more virulent than the free silver candidate himself declared them to be. They have learned that so-called conservative programmes for correcting what is wrong in combinations of capital and in fulfilling the will of the people have failed to do what must be done. All over the country, therefore, the voters are turning to men of more 'radical' principles and methods for the solution of the problems which will not be laid aside until they are settled as public sentiment demands and has the right to demand they shall be settled. It is our judgment that unless a Ryan-Belmont combination can corner the Democratic convention two years from now as it cornered that of two years ago, virtually buying the delegates on the hoof, Mr. Bryan or some one like him will be the enthusiastic choice of the Democratic party; and if Bryan is nominated we have no doubt that he will poll the votes of all those who gave him their ballots in 1900 and hundreds of thousands besides." To the same effect is an editorial of another Republican paper, the Chicago Inter Ocean of the 6th, which foresees that the practical problem for the Republican party in 1908 will be "how to beat Bryan." The Inter Ocean, however, differs as to methods. Whereas the Press would have its party beat Bryan by being more radical, the Inter Ocean would have it "stand pat." But most significant of all signs with reference to Bryan is the action of the Missouri convention of the 5th, which, in obedience to a demand from the people of the counties, names Bryan as the candidate who was defeated by corruption in 1896 and who alone can unite the Democratic party in 1908. Such a union of the party is to be hoped for, for unlike the "union" of 1904, it means union under the leadership of a democratic Democrat.

* *

The Land Question in Russia.

Although the reports from St. Petersburg emphasize the struggle in the Douma over the land question, there is nothing to indicate that the land question in the form of a true issue has come before that body. The peasants need more land for agriculture, and are demanding a distribution of crown, church, and nobility lands. They are not now demanding individual titles to these lands; what they propose is to add them to the communal lands, the possessory right to which is redistributed at frequent inter-

vals. Through increase of population these redistributions have come to yield to the peasants for cultivation hardly more than seven or eight acres per family, and they are consequently obliged to eke out their meager living by working for large land owners. These are the economic circumstances that have generated the demand for expropriation from the crown, the church and the nobility.

*

If successful the demand would probably culminate in a peasant proprietary, resulting from taking the titles to agricultural land away from a landed class and giving them to one branch of the working class. Were that objection raised by the landed class, it would have merit. But it would also suggest the true distribution as an alternative, namely, the appropriation of the rent of all valuable land to common uses and the emancipation of all non-valuable land from monopolization; and this is a suggestion which the landed interests of Russia and everywhere else wish to evade. So the Russian landowners object to the expropriation of their titles as destructive of property rights. What an absurdity! How did they get property rights in the land of Russia? On what theory can any one have property rights in the planet? The logical culmination of such a claim is that a few inhabitants of the earth, or even one, might rightly own the whole earth to the exclusion of everybody else. That is palpably absurd. But it is no more absurd essentially than that millions might own the earth to the exclusion of one. Property rights inhere not in the natural and indispensable source of products, but in the products. Consequently the public policy that destroys property rights is not that which expropriates land from idlers, but that which enables idlers to expropriate products from workers. The latter is precisely what the great Russian landowners do and insist upon doing. They compel the peasants to part with some of their products as the condition of their getting access to the earth in order to produce at all. It is curious to observe the contrast of so much tenderness for the property rights of these idle monopolizers of natural working opportunities, along with so much indifference to the property rights of the busy users of such opportunities. It is highly significant of love of graft.

* *

The Typical Tax Dodger.

If all real estate observers were as acute and as candid as the editor of the real estate department