

certainty that the swindle will never be perpetrated again.

As to a financial catastrophe, the timid cabinet officer whom Mr. Wellman quotes, may as well pacify himself. The crash is coming fast enough without reference to tariff tinkering. He himself shows how helpless the banks would be if a storm struck, no matter what direction it came from; and that a storm is gathering is evident from the news from the Northwest. Out there an agricultural land boom, the sure precursor of financial disaster, is now big enough to attract general attention. As all business, farming included, is dependent upon land of some kind, it is evident that rising prices of land, if they keep on rising, must in ever increasing degree crowd business profits to the wall. This process cannot go on forever. There comes a time when business profits can no longer stand the squeeze. Then the weakest fail. They bring down the stronger, and these those that are stronger still, until even the strongest sway in the gale. For several years this process of squeezing business profits has been going on. Land of all kinds has been rising. But the phenomena have seemed to be local or exceptional. Building lots have gone up in some places. In others the sellers' price has only strengthened without rising. Mining rights have gone up, but the rise in land prices has been concealed by the fact that the mines are represented by stock. As there are many kinds of land so represented, what has been a land boom has seemed to be a stock boom. But now the phenomenal rise in the values of the new agricultural lands of the Northwest leaves no room to doubt that the land boom is on. And as agricultural land values are usually the last to boom and the first to totter, it indicates also that the cataclysm is not far off.

From an article in the Chicago Tribune recently, it seems that bare land in the Northwest has doubled in value in the last two years, and spec-

ulation is rife. The director of the United States mint, George R. Roberts, is quoted as saying:

There is the greatest amount of land speculation going on west of Chicago that has ever been known in that part of the country. I believe the banks out there are loaning a good deal of money on these land enterprises, and that this is really the secret of the early movement of money westward. The people are everywhere organizing syndicates to buy land, and there is hardly a crossroads community in Iowa that has not organized a syndicate to operate in the Dakotas or in Canada. Prices have advanced 50 per cent. in the last two years and the upward movement seems still on.

Estimates furnished by well-informed real estate men of Sioux City make the following exhibit of the prices per acre for agricultural lands in that part of Iowa:

	1896.	1900.	1902.
Improved	\$15 to \$25	\$20 to \$35	\$30 to \$50
Unimproved ...	10 to 20	15 to 25	25 to 50

The reason given locally for the phenomenal leap of land values of which that table is typical, is that they have been caused partly by uniformly good crops and partly by the realization of the people throughout the United States of the coming scarcity of arable lands by reason of the rapid settlement of desirable government lands. This explanation, though true, is only superficial. The deeper reason is that a general land boom is on. But how much more can agricultural industry stand in the way of bounding prices for its raw material. For, let it be observed, that while these land prices may be due in part to the impulse of agricultural prosperity, they do not enrich agriculture. They are the premiums for natural opportunity which agricultural industry yields to land monopoly.

Last Sunday's sermon of a Catholic priest at Shenandoah, Pa., is reported as containing this sentiment:

Every man has placed upon him by the God who sustains him the responsibility of earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, and he must be permitted to do this without interference.

What a splendid truth! How gloriously different this world would be

if that truth were the mainspring of all our laws. But when a man utters it, spot him! No matter who he is—prophet, priest or statesman; rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief—let him be who or what he may, spot him! What does he mean? Does he mean that every man must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, or only poor men? Does he mean that he must earn it by the sweat of his own brow, or of somebody else's brow? Does he mean that no man must be permitted to interfere, or only strikers? These are searching questions. If you don't believe it, ask yourself what ought to be done to the strikers who prevent other men from working in the Pennsylvania coal mines by intimidating them; and when you have answered that, then ask yourself what ought to be done to the corporations that have preempted thousands of acres of coal deposits which they allow no one to work in. If it is wrong for striking coal miners to keep "scabs" out of the mines that are opened, why isn't it wrong for the land-grabbing corporations to keep both strikers and "scabs" out of the mines that are not opened? If you are tempted to say that one is contrary to law and the other is in conformity to law, then probe your conscience a little further? How can the grant of a defunct king or an act of the legislature make it right to interfere with men who want to earn their bread by digging coal out of natural deposits which no one else is using? Can you legislate wrong into right? We doubt if the Catholic priest of Shenandoah who expressed the splendid sentiment we have quoted, could stand this examination without either withdrawing from his splendid declaration or shifting his anathemas from the turbulent strikers to the placid owners of Pennsylvania coal deposits. When labor's unlimited natural opportunity is monopolized, even by law, we must not be too severe with laborers if they quarrel turbulently with one another over the few opportunities that the forestal-

lers invite them to bid for. The bitterness of our condemnation belongs elsewhere.

Yet the owner of these coal mines, who have clamped so many of them down so that no one can work them, appear in the light of benefactors when they let labor into them—upon a bidding that leaves only the barest of a bare living to labor. Not alone thick-headed workmen, but many a long-headed business man as well, may see his stupidity reflected as in a mirror by this little story which comes up from the coal regions of Fairmount, W. Va., where the Watson family has long monopolized a terranean plug extending like an inverted pyramid from the earth's center upwards without limit:

An agitator was laboring with a miner to join the strike. He used the usual arguments. The miner was half convinced. "Well," he said, finally, "mebbe I strike. But before I do I go see Mr. Watson." "What do you want to see Mr. Watson for?" asked the astonished agitator. "What did the Watsons ever do for you?" "What they do for me?" exclaimed the miner; "what they do for me? Why, old man Watson put all this coal in the hills here forty-odd years ago, and has kept us at work ever since digging it out."

One thing about the manifestations of violence in the region of the anthracite coal strike cannot have escaped general observation. It is the fact that the American and Americanized strikers are not the ones who have become violent, but that the violent strikers are Lithuanians. These are foreigners from a part of the world where governmental tyranny is so perfect that violent strikes are the only kind possible. They are not Americanized and do not appreciate the difference. When they see uniformed troops quartered in their midst they are unable to understand that these are simply citizens, temporarily massed in military organization for the preservation of the public peace. To their imaginations these citizen soldiers are the same as the imperial soldiery, the military machine composed of dehumanized

units with which they are familiar in their own subjugated homes. It is not remarkable, therefore, that they have stoned and mauled our citizen soldiers, any more than it is remarkable that they gave a violent turn to the strike. Nor would it be remarkable if, as their countrymen at home are even now doing, they broke out in open riotous revolt. But if they did, then where, as well for that as for what they have already done, should the moral responsibility rest? Plutocratic papers put it upon the officers of the miners' organization. But that is too obviously a special plea inspired by a special interest. No peaceable American strikers can be held morally responsible for the violence of unmanageable foreign mobs. The moral responsibility rests upon the managers of the coal companies. They have imported these violent classes for the purpose primarily of making a glut in the labor market to force down wages, and secondarily to have upon the ground an irresponsible mob which in times of strikes would create an excuse for calling out troops. Not only have they imported these men, but they have done so in violation of law. The presidents of the coal companies and the coal owning railroads, therefore, and not Mitchell and his associates, are the persons who are morally guilty of these crimes against the peace in Pennsylvania, and upon them the burden of moral responsibility should fall.

Once more Mayor Johnson, of Cleveland, is obstructed by the Cleveland street car ring in his unyielding efforts to secure three-cent street car fares for the people there. The story to this point has been told at length in these columns (pp. 274, 281), the last report being that the intermediate appellate court had dissolved the injunction of one of its judges forbidding the granting of a franchise by the existing city council. The street car ring has now procured a new injunction from a judge of the Supreme Court of the state, before whom a motion to dissolve it is to

be heard on the 15th. That this was done at the instigation of the street car ring, though in another name, is evident from the circumstances. When the suit was brought originally, its promoters disclaimed any connection with the ring, insisting that their only object was to prevent the laying of tracks in a certain street. Mayor Johnson thereupon vetoed the ordinance relating to that part of the route. There was then no reason for proceeding with the injunction. Yet it not only was proceeded with until it had been dissolved by the intermediate court, but it is now carried to the Supreme Court. Since the veto, the residents of the one street in question could have no motive in spending further money in a law suit merely to keep tracks out of their street. The object of the further prosecution of the suit, then, must be to keep three-cent fare tracks out of all the streets.

Mayor Johnson's equitable tax agitation in Cleveland has had a comical effect upon the public service corporations. Having the ear, and not unlikely able also to "pull the leg," of the supervising tax authorities, they thwarted the mayor's efforts to make them pay taxes upon the same basis of valuation as other property owners, and secured the privilege of virtually deciding for themselves how much or little taxes they should pay. But "rattled" by fear of what Johnson might yet do, the street car companies have voluntarily increased their returns of values for taxation this year (p. 275) by more than a million and a half over last year; and, following that example of those demoralized tax dodgers, the electric illuminating company has almost doubled its tax returns of last year. It raises its valuation from \$489,050 to \$718,197. This is still much below an equitable valuation, but the whole thing is significant. Down in Delaware they have a saying that "one hornet can break up a whole camp-meeting, if it is industrious;" and Mayor John-