

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 pettifoggery? 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,

by the organs of Senator Hanna during the recent campaign, was that he had vastly increased taxation in Cleveland. There was shrewdness in the charge, for taxes there have risen, the expenses of the city have been increased. But those who made it counted without the possibility of all the facts coming out, and this possibility has now been realized. The statements of the city auditor and the county auditor, just published, show that most of the increase was caused by the Republican machine, and that Mayor Johnson is chargeable not only with a small porportion, but that this is due to the better paving, the cleaner streets, the better lighting and other improvements in the public service which Johnson has introduced.

To be more specific the total increase of the city taxes of Cleveland for 1903 is \$520,000, of which \$402,000, fully itemized, is directly attributable to the acts of the Republican legislature and to the Republican attacks upon the city charter. The remaining \$118,000, for which the Johnson administration is responsible, is distributed as follows:

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Street repaving .....  | \$80,000         |
| Street cleaning .....  | 20,000           |
| Improvements in street lighting.....   | 10,000           |
| Interest on sanitary notes to meet smallpox epidemics.....                       | 10,000           |
| City farm school, a new institution for children now sent to the workhouse ..... | 18,000           |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>\$118,000</b> |

As the county treasurer is delivering an itemized copy of this account to every tax payer with his receipt, the Hanna party in Cleveland is not likely to profit much by their shrewd references to the increase of local taxation.

A preliminary report has been published by the West Virginia tax commission in which a recommendation is made that evokes this significant editorial comment from the Wheeling Register:

All of which is substantially the old familiar single land-tax proposition, the prime advocate of which in the United States was the late Henry George, senior. Mr. George was looked upon by the laity in general as a sort of crank or socialist, and it is an

illustration of the recurrence or the growth or evolution of ideas that so able, staid and conservative a body as the West Virginia tax commission should now suggest a trial of Mr. George's pet theory.

The recommendation in question is intelligently discussed by the Register. It seems that complaints were received by the tax commission from some municipalities that building lots owned by persons able to improve them are suffered to remain without improvements, while their value steadily increases by reason of the neighboring improvements made by other persons. In consequence of these complaints the tax commission has considered the advisability of experimenting with methods aiming to do away with the inequality and injustice complained of. One method suggested is to permit any municipality, after an affirmative vote of its citizens, to exempt from assessment and taxation, generally or for a specified time, the value of any improvements upon real estate in such municipality, thus allowing all taxes to rest upon land value and stimulating improvement. In its editorial comment the Wheeling Register presents in support of this plan the argument that—

at present the owners of unimproved city lots, without taking any risk or making any effort, profit by the increase in value given entirely by the enterprise and labor of the owners of neighboring property upon which improvements are constructed; that such a lot may be so situated as to make it difficult to improve other lots unless it be improved; that to remove taxes on improvements would encourage the investment of money in them, which is now supposed largely to escape taxation, would give employment to labor and increase the values of land.

The emperor of Germany has been making another speech. This time it is to workingmen and against the Socialists. As the cable reports him he said to the workingmen:

For years they had let themselves be led by agitators and Socialists under the delusion that they must belong to the party if they wished to better their position. That was a great lie and a serious mistake. These agitators, the Emperor declared, had tried to stir up the workingmen against their employ-

ers, against other classes, and against the throne and altar, and at the same time they had most unscrupulously exploited, terrorized and enslaved them in order to strengthen their own power, not for the promotion of the welfare of the workingmen, but in order to sow hatred between the classes and disseminate cowardly slanders, from which nothing, not even the grandest quality, the honor of German manhood, remained immune. With such people the working class, as honor loving men, should have nothing more to do. Emperor William concluded with asking the deputation to send a comrade from their midst—a simple, unpretending man from the workshop—into the national parliament. Such a man would be gladly welcomed as a working representative of the German working class. The representatives of other classes would willingly work together with such representatives, however many they might be.

No doubt it would please the privileged classes greatly if the workingmen of Germany would send to parliament "simple, unpretending" men from the shops—that is, men without principles or policies—who could be fooled with royal flatteries and unconsciously bought with petty legislative favors for their class. It may be that the Socialists of Germany do not offer the best principles and policies for German labor interests, but it is certain that those they do offer are better for workingmen than those the Emperor and the landlord classes wish to impose, and would impose if the Socialists didn't make such a hue and cry. So the German emperor's speech emphatically recalls that very instructive fable of Aesop's, which we here reproduce for convenient comparison:

Once on a time, the Wolves sent an embassy to the Sheep, desiring that there might be peace between them for the time to come. "Why," said they, "should we be forever waging this deadly strife? Those wicked Dogs are the cause of all; they are incessantly barking at us and provoking us. Send them away, and there will be no longer any obstacle to our eternal friendship and peace." The silly Sheep listened, the Dogs were dismissed, and the flock thus deprived of their best protection, became an easy prey to their treacherous enemy.

In urging the old Know Nothing policy of withholding suffrage rights