

no individual liberty of choice, is a dummy manipulated from without. I reply that society should permit no man to carry out orders which are against law and public policy, and that, if you will but put one or two conspicuous dummies in the penitentiary, there will be no more dummies for hire.

That this most excellent attitude toward the managers and beneficiaries of corporations should be looked upon as progressive, is a strong illustration of a reaction we have been going through in this country. Our executives, our legislators, our courts and our bar have drifted woefully, and the praise that Dr. Wilson rightly gets for that utterance of his proves it. Fifty years ago the applicant for admission to the bar anywhere in the United States who did not answer the question of criminal responsibility for corporate crime precisely, in substance, as Dr. Wilson answers it in his first three sentences quoted above, would not have fared well. The examiners would have considered him lacking in legal qualification; and if the committee on character had been consulted on the point it is not improbable that they would have regarded him as unfit morally. Yet a university president gains additional distinction now by uttering this sentiment, which once was and always ought to be elementary both in law and morals: "Corporations do not do wrong—individuals do wrong—guilt is always personal."

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Golf Links and Connecting Links.

Speaking of the Taft-Hammond aggregation, there is a chap of the name of James Hay, Jr., who writes with a flowing pen. One of his entertaining articles appeared in the Sunday Magazine of October 9. The Sunday Magazine is a factory-made supplement for the Sunday editions of daily newspapers, and a right good supplement too. Sewell Ford's frequent contributions alone would commend it. In Chicago this magazine is the Sunday supplement to the Record Herald; and, as we say, in the number of October 9 it contained an interesting and enlightening contribution from Mr. Hay. The title of that article is "The President's Crony," meaning John Hays Hammond, whom it describes as President Taft's "favorite playmate," especially in "twosomes," and now and then a "threesome" on golf links. Irreverent writers have hinted that Mr. Hammond gets more than fun out of his playmate. But that in passing. According to Mr. Hay, who describes this distinguished mining engineer and head butler of plutocracy as President Taft's "playmate" and "crony," John Hays Hammond is also—but let Mr. Hay tell it: "The playmate of Taft is also a friend of Porfirio Diaz, President

of Mexico. The last time he was in that country, Diaz greeted him with this in the palace: 'We are always glad to hear that you have come back, Mr. Hammond; for we regard you as our ally in developing the resources of our land.'" Need one go farther for light on the curious relations of "Barbarious Mexico" (p. 956) with our own "benevolent despotism"? Favorite playmates on golf links may turn out to have been connecting links.

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"Benevolent Despotism."

Professor Frederick Starr, the famous anthropologist of the University of Chicago, who has but recently returned from the Philippines, charges that the fact that the Secretary of War, Mr. Dickinson, received thousands of petitions for independence while he was in the Islands, has been suppressed. Professor Starr's word is good for his assertions. No doubt those petitions were presented, no doubt the fact that they were presented has been concealed. But isn't the concealment necessary? How can officials divinely consecrated to the work of governing the people for their own good (the good of the governed, to be sure), how can they perform their extraordinary governing functions if they don't pigeonhole liberty petitions and suppress the facts? Were they to pay attention to Philippine petitions, they couldn't govern the Philippines with that "benevolent despotism" which was instituted by the McKinley-Hanna regime; and if they disclosed the facts they couldn't govern Americans satisfactorily to the Taft-Hammond aggregation of governmental divinities.

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"UNEARNED INCREMENT" IN BOSTON.

Mayor Fitzgerald, of Boston, has begun an agitation in that city which not only calls for special mention, but makes distant observers wonder whether the criticisms of their Mayor by good Boston people may not possibly be misplaced. Or is he really a demagogue, selfishly watchful of the currents of public sentiment? Let the explanation be as it may, that which he now proposes is good in itself; and coming from a political leader it is significant also of a welcome tendency of public opinion in Boston.

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Mayor Fitzgerald's suggestion was made to John A. Sullivan, chairman of the Finance Commission, in a communication that appeared in the Boston papers of the 2d. In that communication he called

attention to a wonderful increase in the value of land of the late Andreas Tomfohrde, and decrease in the valuation of its buildings. The land had increased in 20 years from \$238,000 to \$695,100, while the buildings decreased in the same time about \$42,100. "This fortunate investor," the Mayor's letter explains, "is reported to have made no public bequests, yet he owed every dollar of this added value to the public." Following that pointed statement Mayor Fitzgerald's letter proceeds:

No intellectual or moral quality was displayed by him in acquiring it and no form of service was rendered. His only talent was to purchase and to keep. Meanwhile, the growth of population, the ever-swelling tides of travel and of trade, the expenditures of the public money on pavements, sidewalks, lights and fire and police protection, the building of a great court house on Pemberton square, in a word, all the multifold activities of the community at large increased and enhanced the value of his estate and would have enhanced it equally if its owner had been some absentee landlord instead of a restaurant keeper doing business on the premises. Of this huge unearned increment of value the owner returned each year about 1½ per cent in taxes. The inadequacy of this return does not require any special argument. Since ordinary processes of taxation fall in such cases, the question arises whether some method should not be devised for returning to the public, which creates it, a larger fraction of the increase of value. Under the present system, individuals are virtually permitted to tax the people; and too often, as in the instance cited, such individuals die without any fulfilment and perhaps without any recognition of their social obligation. The spectacle of unimproved buildings on land every inch of which has its appreciable value, is all too common in the older portions of Boston now dedicated to trade and commerce. In all such instances the natural relations are reversed. The community is not served but serves; the owner merely waits and profits by waiting. This practice should, as far as possible, be discouraged by law, in the interest not only of justice but of social progress.

And then Mayor Fitzgerald asks the Finance Commission—

to consider some plan by which a larger fraction of the increased value of land may go to the community, at least when this increase assumes abnormal proportions; and failing this, the owners may be compelled to maintain some minimum ratio of value between their land and the buildings erected upon it. While the subject is a difficult and abstruse one, conditions are becoming so acute that some form of relief would seem to be required.

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But the commission has refused to comply with Mayor Fitzgerald's request for consideration, and indiscreetly they give reasons. The question raised "is one almost as old as society itself;" they could not spare the time for it consistently with their other duties, which "would make the assumption

of this task exceedingly difficult if not impossible;" and, moreover, they wouldn't do it anyhow because, to quote them—

the Commission believes it both a sound economic principle and a just governmental policy which takes from the mass of citizens only the amount necessary for the honest and economical administration of government, and leaves the remainder of the citizens' earnings to themselves, to be used in productive enterprises that promote the general welfare. The city's revenues are ample now for all legitimate needs, provided the city's business be conducted honestly and economically. To increase the revenues by further taxes would be to divert money from productive industry and to invite extravagance in municipal expenditures.

This means that in the opinion of that Commission the land values of Boston—not earnings of its landowners but the financial expression of its growth, the earnings of the city itself, should be left to the landowners. The only exaction this Finance Commission would make upon them would be contributions to public needs from incomes they do not earn, in the same proportion as taxes take the earnings of other citizens.

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Whether Mayor Fitzgerald is a demagogue, as Boston folks say, we do not know. But his letter has no demagogic ring in it except to plutagogic ears. But regardless of his motives, demagogues are preferable to plutagogues, when the issue is drawn between them as clearly as it is now drawn in Boston between Mayor Fitzgerald and the Finance Commission.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

"THE BLIGHT OF BOURNE."

Portland, Ore., Sept. 23.

Oregon has more trees standing up straight than has any other State, and, unless the Portland Oregonian is violating the "pure fact" law, every tree in the State is full of Republicans who have fled in terror from Senator Jonathan Bourne. If you believe the Oregonian—and you don't if you live in Oregon—Bourne is the chief harvester for the Destroying Angel, the inventor and engineer of the original Besom of Destruction. Verily, it is a spectacle for lachrymose angels and joyous blue devils.

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And what's it all about?

With yells of anguish the Oregonian is megaphoning from Mt. Wilson to Chetco, and from Point Adams to the barren sage plains of southern Malheur County, that Bourne is a blight upon the Republican party and that the party must be "saved from Bourne."