

the matter, and are fully convinced that the entire proceedings were an attempt on the part of political manipulators to discredit an antagonist.

The New York World, which neglects no opportunity for a fling at Mr. Bryan as the author of all the ill-fortune at the polls of the Democratic party, allowed its correspondent at Saratoga, on the eve of the Democratic State convention, to set forth as a prominent feature of the improved fortunes of the Democracy, with Hill in the saddle, the following described state of affairs:

While the party in this state possessed the taint of Bryanism, the big railroads as well as other corporations withheld their usual contributions to the Democratic cause. This year, however, when the Democrats have a chance of regaining control of the State government, the corporations are expected to again contribute liberally to the Democratic managers. In view of this situation the belief here is that Mr. Hill and his associates will not allow the convention to adopt any canal plank which may alienate the financial support of the railroads.

The newsgatherer of the World was more candid than its editor. The editorial comment of the World has steadily ignored the influence of Mr. Bryan in creating anew the vital moral tone in the party which has made it till now idle for the plutocratic forces to approach it with bribes. The paper of Mr. Pulitzer has persisted in seeing nothing but silver-advocacy in the Kansas City platform and Mr. Bryan's leadership. In employing this pretext for opposition to Bryan, it parrots, in a way most discreditable to a leader of any claim to dignity or following in the Democratic party, the disingenuous cry of the "reorganizers" everywhere. A deeper slough than the Democratic party has ever wandered into awaits it if it surrenders to the mercenary New York professionals who consider it a triumph to be in a position to draw again upon the corruption funds of the predatory plutocracy. This is to be the test between the assistant-Republican Democracy and the democratic Democ-

racy: "Are you bidding for the money that the Republican party draws on?"

COAL DEPOSITS AND COAL PRODUCTION.

A dramatic incident affecting the common life of the people is teaching them better than they could possibly learn from books, the vital difference between property in the products of man's labor and property in his natural sources and channels of supply.

Between a coal deposit on the one hand, and on the other the machinery and excavations for extracting coal, together with the coal when extracted, there is a natural difference which no man can rationally deny, and which the people are now coming suddenly to see. Even to the extent that they are not yet noting the difference distinctly, their vision is growing wonderfully clear as to one of its phases. They are realizing as great masses of men have never realized before, that the riches of Nature cannot justly be property.

Probably they would not so formulate the thought. Their formula would more likely run into some sententious expression to the effect that "God didn't make the coal deposits expressly for the pious Mr. Baer." But their meaning and its significance would be the same.

Prominent instances of this tremendous awakening are too numerous to admit of special mention; but of the popular impression, what better proof could be desired than that a Democratic convention of New York state, controlled by David B. Hill, an astute seeker for votes, has demanded governmental ownership and operation of coal mines?

The crudeness of the plan proposed by this convention fairly reflects the crudeness of popular thought upon the subject. There is no necessity for ownership or operation by the government, in order to secure full enjoyment of the common right to coal deposits. So, also the proviso that full compensation be paid reflects the vagueness that still continues regarding the difference between property in labor products and property in natural sources of supply. If property in the bare privilege of permitting coal to be mined is not just property, then it would be unjust to make the people pay for terminating it. To award compensation for ending this predatory priv-

ilege, imposed upon the people of today by the "dead hand" of generations long since turned to dust, would amount to reviving the same privilege in another form. It would transform the owners of coal deposits into owners of a burdensome and unjust public debt.

But the crudeness of the plan proposed and the weakness of the compensation proviso, are of minor moment. When public sentiment once realizes the enormity of property in the natural sources and channels of supply, it will make short work of the compensation folly, just as it did when it realized the enormity of slavery. If owners of coal lands are expecting to take advantage of the sentiment against property in these natural deposits to sell out to the government at a fancy price, they are to be disappointed. Nor will the public be at any loss for a simpler and better plan than the New York convention proposes of securing common rights.

The encouraging thing about the demand of the New York convention is that it arrayed itself definitely against the principle of property in coal deposits, and did so under the pressure of popular sentiment. When that sentiment has become more pronounced, it will have the intelligence to see that all the advantages, with none of the disadvantages and dangers, of public ownership and operation of coal mining, can be accomplished with no more drastic change than the general exemption of labor products from taxation.

If this change were made, industry and commerce would be encouraged by the abolition of its greatest burden; and natural opportunities for industry could no longer be withdrawn from use.

Consider a moment the effect of such a change upon the coal strike situation.

The anthracite coal trust owns thousands of acres of coal deposits. It also owns mining equipments and the value of excavations for mining purposes. If taxes on labor products were abolished, the value of its equipments and excavations would be exempt. But so would similar property, which competition might produce; and that would make it much easier to compete. Very different would be the status of coal deposits. With taxes on production abolished, it would pay better than ever to use these deposits; and as they would then be taxed well up to their value