

symbol the Holy Grail meant the personal presence of Christ.

The plain, simple-minded enthusiasts upon the plains of Saskatchewan dispense with the symbol and seek for the Christ himself. Who shall say that in a thousand years from now the striking drama enacted beneath clear autumnal skies in western Canada by the 1,600 sincere and devoted seekers of the Master may not form a fitting subject for the pen of the laureate of that distant day.

Let us hope that as the world grows older it will grow more charitable toward the meek and humble in spirit and that some day the great mass of mankind will appreciate that high devotion to an ideal which the simple Doukhobor is so sincerely though perhaps clumsily seeking to express.

ANTHRACITE COAL, AND OTHER THINGS.

An extract from a personal letter to a young friend, published by permission of the writer of the letter.

The ideas herein expressed are not new, but they seem pertinent. Whether they are evolutionary or revolutionary is not as important as whether they are sound or unsound.

The anthracite coal operators say in effect: "We have a right to do as we please with our own. Give us federal troops to protect us in our rights." The miners say: "We are a species of serf chained to the soil, and have a right to a better life out of our labor in mining coal—and no one shall come between us and our right." The public say: "We have a right to the bounty of nature—coal."

In my opinion the miners and the public are nearer the truth in their "rights" than are the operators. If the coal operators actually own the coal lands in fee simple, they have by the feudal law of a thousand years ago, which we have preserved till to-day, the actual and exclusive ownership and control of a pyramidal wedge from the center of the earth to the coal area, with a base at the earth's surface of the size and outline of the coal area, or not exactly a base, but a cross section, for, by the extravagant liberality of the feudal law of a thousand years ago, the owner of a piece of land owns also all that section of the air and the firmament which rests upon it, even to Arcturus, the Milky-way and beyond.

By the law of to-day, therefore, if the coal operators chose to bite off their noses, they could shut down all operation and say to the inhabitants of the earth: "The coal is ours—trespass not—even though we refuse to work the mines at all." The operators are not likely to do this for selfish reasons—but a true right fails nowhere; therefore in testing a right we ought to view the outcome when that right is pushed to an extreme. It becomes instructive, therefore, to consider that, by their present legal title and so-called "right," the anthracite coal operators could, if for any reason they saw fit, put a paper fence about the coal fields, and refuse to work the coal mines themselves or permit anyone else to do so to the end of time.

I believe the anthracite coal area of this globe is about 500 square miles in the states of Pennsylvania and West Virginia, principally in Pennsylvania, and is all owned by some four or five sets of men. If instead of anthracite coal this were a lake of fresh water, and the people of Pennsylvania and New York had no other water supply and must take from this lake or die, the "right" of private ownership would be brushed aside in a minute; yet the difference is only one of degree, and we feel instinctively an absurdity in applying to these valuable natural deposits an antiquated law made for feudal barons, in a state of society that was radically different from ours, and when what was below the earth's surface was a matter of no consequence to anyone.

The remedy oftentimes spoken of is socialism, or government ownership—a most undemocratic theory advocated by the Democratic convention of New York. This seems to me so unsatisfactory an alternative that I, in common with a mass of others, pause. To me government ownership seems the worst "trust" of all, and I believe, attracted by rich spoils, a scheming few would control that socialistic government in their own interests, just as they control this one whenever it becomes worth their while to do so. For example, the great prize in every country is man's inheritance—the earth; and I'll venture to say this country and its people would be better off to-day if congress had never had any control over the public domain. The land bounties, railroad grants, swamp land acts, desert land acts, have all resulted in the valuable bulk of the public domain go-

ing into the hands of scheming rings which stood back of each of these ostensibly public and general acts. The stone and timber act gives every citizen 160 acres of land valuable only for stone or timber. What does a citizen want with an isolated 160-acre tract of such land? Obviously not to use it himself, but in practically every instance he secures it only to sell it at once to the timber speculators, who thus have gathered at nominal prices about all the timber land not in railroad grants (often calling perjury and fraud to their aid, and taking up the land by their own employes). President Cleveland, to preserve river sources, set aside certain mountain areas as timber reserves—a worthy act; but the grafters by their willing friends in congress passed an act permitting any person having land in a forest reserve to exchange it for an equal quantity (not value) out of the reserve. This exchange being wholly optional, railroads (and others) have kept all their good timber land inside the reserve, but have exchanged all their stony or burnt or otherwise worthless sections inside the reserve for choice timberland outside the reserve, till now there is but little good timber left in the public domain. What the babies to be born 50 years hence will say to this question of private ownership of all the timber, we cannot tell. It is a favorite axiom of the modern feudal baron that everyone has an equal opportunity. Obviously the babies to be born 50 years hence will not believe this as to timber, coal, iron, water power and other natural foundation stones of wealth. But let the babies give their own answer in due time. I digressed merely to give one instance from many, showing that wherever a government, national, state or municipal, has held lands, franchises or other rights of value, that government has been controlled by the shrewd few who coveted these things; and I cannot believe in government ownership till human nature be wholly changed to perfection.

To return to the coal mines: The fact is, if we divest ourselves of our inbred habits of thought, and think down to the ground, we shall see more or less clearly that we have few absolute rights. Our unqualified rights are those inherent and natural: I should say the right to life and liberty, so long as we respect the same rights in others, and the right to maintain that life by the

actual use and occupation of so much of the earth's surface as (according to conditions) is required. All other rights are conventions, concessions, customs or, as may be said, gifts from society. They are generally supported by some existing law. But notwithstanding our various constitutions and judicial decisions to the contrary, I think there are philosophically no vested "rights" in any property, except that which we have ourselves created by our own labor. The value of the Broadway street car franchise lies in the fact that it is in New York. On the desert of Nevada it would be valueless. The street car company did not make New York, nor the people. It does not own the street. It has received the gift of a use from the people of New York, and the people of New York may, in fundamental good morals (court decisions to the contrary notwithstanding), take it back or modify it at any time. If the street car company paid value for the franchise it would not alter the moral relation, except that it ought always to be made whole in every respect.

I think the old feudal idea of the title to all the land being in the king, or, in our case, in the state, as an individual, to be given to this one or that as the state (that is, in reality, a few politicians) may choose, is as erroneous as the idea of an infeasible vested right in a franchise.

The discoverer of a mine, like the discoverer of anything else, is entitled to the use of his discovery. That is to say, he has a squatter's right at the point of discovery to so much as he can use. But the right of transfer or alienation must be denied. When once this is the accepted custom there is no hardship in it. In my opinion, if the right of alienation in fee simple were denied, and title depended on actual occupation and beneficial use, the anthracite, the timber, and many other "baronial" questions would be settled. For instance, if the people elected to say: "Vested rights, as given by will of the people, may be revoked by that same will; and we of this generation revoke the law of our ancestors as to fee simple ownership, and exclusive ownership in mines and mineral deposits, and declare that no one can hold title to any coal field, except as to so much as he and his employees are in good faith actually working, or reasonably require for a future fixed period, according to the custom of the district," the operators

could only hold those mines which are in actual operation, and the miners themselves, or anyone, could go to other parts of the natural deposit and open it for market. This would be the freest competition, the most perfect private ownership, and bottling the mines in idleness would be impossible. Their operation would be limited by the law of supply and demand. A less novel road to the same end would be the Henry George plan—the operators paying to the state the full rental value of every acre of coal land, whether they used it or not. No operator could then afford to hold, at such a price, more land than he could actually work. True, the operators in either case would in good faith feel outraged in their "divine rights." So did Charles I., and in good faith. But the world must move nevertheless.

The radical and essential fault in strikes is never with the day laborer; it cannot be. It lies always with the superior power engendered by some special privilege to a few. The striker strikes because of necessity. No matter what his faults, ignorances and misdeeds, the fact remains that the striker is without any special privilege whatever, save to earn a mere existence by his daily labor, and he strikes because his lot is unendurable—a sort of serfdom. To compare his position with that of the few specially and (as we all at heart feel) unduly privileged monopolists of a God-given bounty, is to rail at the fish for its struggles in the net of the fisherman. Strikes will not be ended till the private monopoly of valuable natural deposits be ended. This will undoubtedly be done in time. The question is: What is the best way?

C. E. S. WOOD.

Portland, Ore.

But the little Nation side-stepped, and, countering cleverly, rushed the Big Nation against the ropes.

"Foul!" roared the Big Nation. "You hit me below the belt!"

"I can't reach above it!" protested the Little Nation.

"Precisely!" retorted the Big Nation. "Haven't I insisted all along that the only honorable course for you is to yield?"—Life.

Mrs. Emma P. Ewing is treasurer of the "Dinner Delivery Company," lately formed at Pittsburg, Pa., with Mrs. Bertha L. Grimes as president, and Mrs. Maud P. Kirk as secretary. It cooks and delivers dinners

and other meals at private residences in any part of the city. By a recently invented apparatus for retaining heat, it is enabled to deliver meals warm, and in as good condition as those dished up in the average home kitchen. Each meal will be inspected by Mrs. Ewing or some other culinary expert, and none will be sent out that does not meet the inspector's approval. The company is already doing a lucrative business.—The Woman's Journal of November 8.

The Reformer could not help but observe that the Office, prior to seeking the Man, as was now again become its custom, always consulted a certain ponderous volume.

"What book is that?" the Reformer finally asked, for his sense of civic duty would not suffer him to remain silent, once his curiosity was aroused.

"Bradstreet's," replied the Office.—Puck.

Liveryman—Th' only thing this horse is afraid of is that he won't get enough to eat.

Smith—Why! Ain't that the same horse that ran away at an "auto" yesterday?

Liveryman—Certainly! But there wuz two millionaires in it that are trying to corner oats.—Puck.

BOOK NOTICES.

Bishop Spalding's "Socialism and Labor, and other Arguments, Social, Political and Patriotic" (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. Price, 80c net) is a disappointment in almost every respect except its luxuriant eloquence. Instead of a thoughtful and fairly comprehensive, or at least profound, discussion of the relations of socialism to labor, we have one brief essay, platitudinous to a degree, which barely skims the surface of the subject. That Bishop Spalding must have written this opening essay without preparation is evident from his confusion of one of the most elementary distinctions—utility and value, or as socialists would say, "use value" and "exchange value." For instance, in one place he illustrates his contention that "values cannot be estimated in terms of labor," by asking: "How shall we determine the worth of the labor expended in perfecting a plan such as that which led Columbus to discover America? What is the worth of Newton's labor in evolving the theory of gravitation, of Shakespeare's in writing Hamlet, of Wagner's in composing 'Parsifal,' of Gutenberg's in making his type, or Watt's in building his steam engine?" The worth of these things in the sense of their usefulness, is very different from their worth in the

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