

THE GOSPEL OF WEALTH.

It was Micky from the dump to Pat in the trench who said: "Av yez had yez chice, Pat, phat business would yez wurruck at?" To which Pat replied, rubbing his brow with grimy fist, "Be-gorra, av Oi had me choice Oi'd be a bishop; sure it's a clane, aisy job." This belief of Pat and Mickey, and of all whom they represent, has done more than any one thing to estrange the masses from the modern church, and it is to the credit of the church of Pat and Mickey that it has managed to keep nearer to the people than have most Protestant communions.

Bishop Newman, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is a well fed bishop whose "clane, aisy job" has made him so much in love with worldly cleanliness and ease that he seems likely to forget the spirit of him that founded the church, and especially to lose sight of or to misinterpret that hard saying of the Master touching the relative ease with which a camel goes through the eye of a needle and a rich man enters the kingdom of heaven.

Bishop Newman recently preached a sermon upon the "gospel of wealth." He declaimed among other things, "I believe in accumulated wealth. The acquisition of property is a divine gift. . . . To amass great fortunes is a special endowment." Now, wealth is a relative term, and it means different things in the mouths of different men. To interpret the word aright we must take into consideration the habits, associations and mental attitude of him by whom it is uttered. As we are reminded by the Texas Union-Workman Bishop Newman is the man who accepted \$5,000 from Leland Stanford for preaching a fulsome eulogy over the dead body of the multi-millionaire's son. Doubtless the bishop had in mind Mr. Stanford and others who are rich through the ownership of natural opportunities when he defended, as we understand from the Union-Workman, these "gifted with the vision of a seer," who should "anticipate the flow of population and its effect upon real estate."

So when Bishop Newman speaks of wealth he means millions and millions gathered, if need be, from the value that increasing population confers upon land. Does Bishop Newman know that to earn even one of Mr. Stanford's millions it would require that a man, working at the average rate of day laborer's pay in the United States, should have labored every day from the birth of that Christ whom Bishop Newman professes to serve even unto this time? Truly, the cleanliness and ease of Bishop Newman's job have dulled his sympathy with those whom toil has robbed of such ease and cleanliness. It was by men of wealth like Bishop Newman's friends and by the priests who fed at their tables that Christ was crucified.—The Standard.

PRIVATE TAXATION.

When the British Parliament increases the income tax a penny in the pound there are stout protests and earnest threats to unseat the ministry. When the Congress of the United States increases the tariff on any article of general use, at least half the people burn with a sense of outrage. When any local governing body announces an increase of a few mills per dollar in the tax rate there is a general outcry. Men have ever been sensitive to taxation imposed by government, and hence the invention of various insidious means of collecting revenues, chief and most iniquitous among them tariffs on imports.

But with all our impatience under governmental burdens, we bear the exactions of private taxation with cheerfulness and even make light of it as trifling. The most recent and interesting example of such taxation is presented by the coal combination. A

few enormously rich corporations, owners of vast natural opportunities, have combined to tax the people. They have shortened the coal product and coolly imposed a tax of at least 25 cents per ton upon consumers, perhaps an average of \$1 per year upon every family using the hard coal of Pennsylvania, to say nothing of the vastly larger exaction from all large consumers. "Ah!" say the friends of monopoly and of things as they are, "what is \$1 a year to any family that can afford to use four tons of coal per annum?" The sum is small, to be sure, but the aggregate is millions, and it is monstrous that any man or body of men should be able to levy such a tax for private benefit. It must be remembered, too, that a dozen other like combinations are levying similar taxes, and that the primary injustice which makes such levies possible is the private ownership of natural opportunities.

The current reply of those who defend monopoly is not so much a justification of this exercise of government's most arbitrary power by private corporations as an endeavor to show that only through the incentives held out by the possibilities of gain attendant upon such privileges can we obtain the benefits of modern progress. But for the prospect of private wealth to accrue from cheapening the process of production, runs the argument, those processes would remain crude and expensive. As a matter of fact the inventors of labor-saving machinery have not usually reaped the material benefits of their inventions, and of the saving that results from the economies of combined capital so much is held by the combination that the masses naturally begin to look around for some other method of accomplishing the same result. The mere removal of protective tariffs will not give us free trade so long as a dozen private tyrants enjoy the right to levy taxes upon every important article of consumption. The free trade fight is a broader one than those who began it supposed. It is a fight that leads to individual liberty of the broadest and noblest sort.—The Standard.

NEW YORK LABOR LEGISLATION.

During the recent session of the New York State Legislature several laws of special interest to working people were placed on the statute books.

One of those measures aims to regulate the employment of women and children in manufacturing and mercantile establishments by requiring that there shall be posted in such establishments a notice of the number of hours of labor required from employees therein and the hours of beginning and ending of such labor, and no one shall be required to work longer hours or to begin earlier or work later than the notice stipulates. No change is to be made after the beginning of any week except by express permission of the Factory Inspectors, nor shall any child under sixteen years of age be employed where its life, limb, or health is endangered. No child under fifteen shall be employed to run an elevator, and no person under eighteen years be employed to run an elevator running more than 200 feet a minute.

No person shall be employed in any tenement house, or building in rear of any tenement house, in making clothing, feathers, cigars, etc., unless with the consent of the Factory Inspector, which permit may be revoked at any time.

A clause which is directed particularly against the "sweating" and overcrowding systems in the cloak workshops provides that not less than 250 cubic feet of air shall be allowed for each person in a work room in the daytime, and 400 cubic feet at night.

There is another bill become law which requires that all special peace officers employed in cases of local excitement for the protection of property shall be residents of the county in

which they are employed. This law has been enacted on account of the many complaints made against the Pinkerton Detective Agency for importing strange men in cases of strikes and lockouts, and whose presence has so often resulted in violence and bloodshed.

A third law supplements the one first mentioned clause directed against the "sweating" system, and prohibits the manufacture or sale of clothing made in unhealthy places.

The Mechanics' Lien law has been amended so as to make its provisions apply to municipal as well as private contract work.

Another law applies to steam railroad service, and provides that no engineer, fireman, conductor or trainman who has rendered twenty-four hours' continuous service shall thereafter, under ordinary circumstances, continue service or resume service without first having had at least eight hours' rest; second, that the working day of every engineer, fireman, conductor and trainman shall not exceed ten hours of service rendered within twelve consecutive hours, and third, that if any such engineer, fireman, conductor or trainman shall render more than ten hours' service he shall receive comparative compensation for the excess, in addition to his daily compensation. The Governor vetoed a similar bill applying to surface and elevated roads.

The bill to establish a State Printing House, which occupied quite a share of the public discussion during the State campaign last year, was passed by the Legislature, but vetoed by the Governor. Some other bills, such as those demanding weekly payment of wages by steam railroads, and repealing the anti-conspiracy laws failed to pass.

This record in the securing of practical legislation bearing specially upon the protection of organized labor against the pressure of competition with cheaper labor and against the aggressive steps sometimes taken by employers to coerce the employees in case of a strike or lockout, shows that it still exerts a potent influence in shaping the affairs of Government, and is recognized as one of the great institutions of our form of Government. In the face of those facts what possible excuse can there be for any person enjoying the privileges of American institutions declaiming against them or giving countenance in any form to those who avowedly seek their overthrow.—Irish World.

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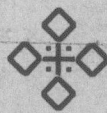
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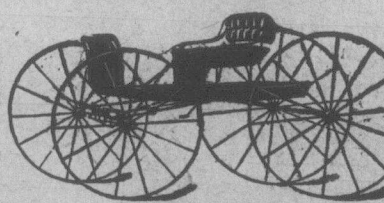
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