

THE ANTI-TRUST CAMPAIGN.

BY ALBION W. TOURGÉE.

HISTORY is the story of an endless conflict between the strong and the weak—the strong grasping always for more, the weak striving ever for enough. Sometimes the struggle is for dominion ; sometimes for possession. It matters not ; in the last analysis both mean the same—control. Sometimes the strong win by physical prowess, sometimes by intellectual acumen. At first, their weapon is the sword ; anon it is the law. Sometimes they compel through fear, sometimes through want. The weak battle sometimes for life, sometimes for liberty ; sometimes for parity of right, sometimes for equal opportunity. Sometimes they strive for security ; sometimes for sufficiency ; sometimes with the hope of superfluity. At first they ask only a chance to live ; anon they desire comfort and security ; after a time they demand parity of privilege and equal opportunity. To-day they appeal to law ; rest secure in its shelter ; observe its behests. To-morrow they begin to chafe under its restrictions, seek to break through its meshes, and either yield to its force and sink into dependency or break through and begin again the curious struggle. The loaf they beg to-day, they spurn as a stone to-morrow.

The strong are not always bad nor the weak always good. Indeed the average of the strong is often, perhaps always, better than the average of the weak, because their opportunity is greater. The strong are often unconscious of the wrongs they perpetrate. This is because the law, which is the creature of power, is silent as to evils which spring from its exercise ; while it denounces all that tends to disturb the harmony which power has established. Crime springs out of weakness, oppression out of strength. The law sanctions the act of the strong in taking bread out of the mouths of the weak ; but if the weak take but a loaf from the store of the strong, even to save himself from perishing, it punishes his act as a crime.

Dominion and wealth are mere complements of control. Do-

minion is control exercised through force or favor ; wealth is control exercised through inclination or necessity. Both are products of social life. Alone upon the earth a man would have neither power nor property ; for none can rule where there is none to obey, or possess aught unless another is forbidden to enjoy.

The laws of human impulse regulating the acquisition, establishment, and restriction of these two forms of control which one man may exercise over his fellows are substantially the same. Considered together they constitute the science of relation between the strong and the weak. This science rests on one immutable principle : Given more power than is needful to enable a man to repel the aggressions of his fellows, and he becomes himself an aggressor. Or, taking the other aspect of control : Given more wealth than is needful to defend him and his natural dependents against the rapacity of others, and a man begins at once to despoil his fellows. In both cases the act may be without any purpose to do harm or even with a sincere desire to do good. The ruler believes his right to rule divine, and counts it divinely ordained for the good of his subjects. He who has the control of values believes the right to do as he chooses with his own to be equally divine. All forms of government and all laws regulating possession are the result of this tendency. Because of this the anarchist would abolish government and destroy property, in the foolish hope thereby to avoid oppression and prevent want. He forgets that the principle he would exterminate is the very root of liberty and the only safeguard against poverty.

The impulse to acquire power is altogether healthful up to the limit of individual strength needful for self-defence. The greater the proportion among any people of those who have reached that point of self-reliance, the less is the danger of tyranny and oppression. So too, the impulse to possess, up to the limit of such acquisition as may be needful to provide against rapacity, is altogether healthful. The more there are who have enough, the fewer there will be who have too much. The power of the rich depends on the weakness of the poor, and the evils of poverty disappear precisely in proportion as strength and self-dependence increase. Undue power is always the result of special privilege ; undue accumulation, of special opportunity.

The only effective remedy for the evils of power in the hands of the few is the extension of privilege so as to enhance the power

of the many. The remedy for the evils of undue accumulation by the few is the enhancement of opportunity for the many. In other words, healthful progress demands both the stimulation of this impulse up to a certain point and its restriction after it reaches that point. One-half the problem has already been solved—and that the most difficult phase. What remains is only a corollary. The world has learned how to restrict power won by the sword and symbolized by the sceptre. Divine right to rule, as the prerogative of a few, is dead; but it is risen again as the immortal heritage of all; the crown upon the freeman's brow; the symbol of equal and universal right to rule our fellows as we submit to be ruled by them; the holy law of equal right and equal privilege for all.

In every age and every land the story of prerogative has been, in its essentials, the same. A thousand years ago one Strongarm slew a robber who was despoiling his fellows. Thereupon they praised him greatly and begged him to keep on killing robbers. He agreed, and they furnished him food and arms, a house and, by and by, retainers. Then he quit killing robbers and took to robbing, himself. After a while one Longhead undertook to relieve them of oppression. He overcame Strongarm and stepped into his shoes, took his castle and possessions, and, naturally, assumed his privileges. He flattered the people, despoiled their neighbors, scattered the plunder, brought back many slaves and made his people so drunk with luxury and the pretence of power that they contracted with him that he and his heirs should rule over them forever. It was such a very solemn affair that it was decreed that whoever should deny his right or that of his children should have his head cut off. So he established his favorites, nobles, and dependents throughout the land, and, when some murmured at his exactions, he cut their heads off as the law provided. That made people cautious about questioning his right.

After a time many of the weak grew to be strong and they proposed to one of his successors that he yield some items of his claim, but he refused—whereupon they tied his hands and took what they cared to have. One of his successors, however, with the aid of his nobles and their followings recouped what his ancestor had surrendered, and made laws still more stringent. Nevertheless, the people at length grew restive again; and when he did refuse to have his hands tied and to content himself with the shadow

of rulership, they cut off his head, and abolished the offices of his favorites and the privileges of his nobles. When they had thus broken up the "combine," they found it not so hard to govern themselves, because each one was afraid to take more than his share of power lest the others should subject him to the same treatment. Now and then one tried it, but found that when privilege was once expunged from the law of the land it was a very hard task to set it on its feet again among the people. The truth is, every one likes so well the honor of being even an aliquot part of a sovereign that, though he may use his power very ill or hardly be able to see that he has any, he has no notion of allowing another to take it away.

The Strongarms of the past ruled by brute force; but the Longheads added to force the control of opportunity and material resources. The process is well illustrated in the story of Joseph. He took, during the seven years of plenty, one-fifth of the produce of the land. This was the tribute which the people paid their Strongarm, Pharaoh, for protecting them from robbers; then, during the years of famine, Joseph, who was only a hired Longhead, sold the corn back to those who had raised it and took in exchange their lands. "For the Egyptians sold every man his field because the famine prevailed over them; so the land became Pharaoh's." "Skin for skin; all that a man hath will he give for his life." Pharaoh made an excellent trade; but how about the people? If government is "for the people," can it permit the impoverishment of the many for the enrichment and exaltation of the few? But the corn was his, and a man has a right to do what he chooses with his own, says the objector. Is the right of property a thing so divine that all other rights disappear before it? If he had a right to refuse to sell except at his own price, he had a right also to leave the people to starve. He might have kept the corn and had the land, too.

Let us give the story a modern application. Suppose a thousand capitalists, having certain knowledge that there will be a famine in our land some years hence, should procure a charter—that is the equivalent of Pharaoh's ring on Joseph's hand—to buy, store, and sell wheat. They buy, build granaries, hire guards, mount cannon. Then the famine comes. They refuse to sell except for land: "Your land or your life!" is their demand. They are invincible to any force that may be brought against

them. They have the power of government behind them, for it is bound by its contract, the charter ; and as "every man has a right to do what he chooses with his own," the company who have "cornered" the world's cereals have a right to fix their own price or not sell their wheat at all. Why should not such a "combine" play again the game which Joseph played for Pharaoh ? It has not been done, and is not likely to be attempted in its completeness, because of the uncertainty of modern meteorological predictions ; but in its elements it is attempted every time a "grain pool" "corners the market ;" only, instead of an actual scarcity, the price is inflated by an artificial one.

The protest against the power of unrestricted accumulation comes late in the world's history, for many reasons. First among them is the fact that not until very recent times has it been clearly recognized that the power of wealth is separable from the power of privilege, of which it was in the past most frequently an incident. Indeed, while privilege was dominant, mere untitled wealth was subordinate, and so very often cast its strength with the weak, who fought against prerogative. Every hereditary nobility was also a hereditary plutocracy, and dread of the power of wealth was merged in the more intense dread of privilege. It was thought, too, that mere parity of right to acquire would so stimulate competition as to prevent harmful accumulation ; but it was overlooked that a mere right to do is fruitless unless linked with opportunity. He who is born only to poverty and an appetite cannot compete in acquisition on even terms with one whose inheritance needs not his strength to make it grow. He may do it, and sometimes may even overcome the disadvantage, but for every one who is able to do so there will always be a thousand who will be overwhelmed by such disparity of opportunity.

Especially was it not realized that the almost universal application of intelligence to the work of material acquisition, the opening of unexpected vistas of controllable values, and the material progress which science and invention have made possible would enable the almost incredible accumulations of to-day to be applied with inconceivable rapidity and ease to the accomplishment of the most remote and unrelated purposes ; that the power of wealth would be multiplied by unheard-of legal devices and the opportunities for combination and coöperation in the appli-

cation of capital would be so enhanced that whole peoples may be subjected to the will of a "combine" of to-day as easily as a single purchaser or tenant to his creditor's demand a hundred years ago. The truth is only of late becoming clearly apparent that the danger resulting from prerogative is greatly enhanced by, if not strictly dependent upon, the facility with which many great holdings may be united under one control and applied to a single purpose. As combination was the strength of privilege, so it has now become the right hand of plutocratic power.

"The Western crusade against trusts," as the sentiment which for some years has been showing especial strength there is sometimes termed, is merely the most pronounced form of the protest against the most evidently dangerous feature of plutocratic control. It is not a crusade against "wealth" any more than democracy is a crusade against power. It is only a demand for the restriction of power exercised by combined accumulation, as democracy was a crusade against the power of combined privilege.

The term "trust," in its general acceptance, includes all combinations of capital intended to take advantage of the necessities of the many for the benefit of the few. "What do you mean by a 'trust'?" was asked of a wage-earner of exceptional intelligence, who had stoutly declared his antagonism thereto. "A 'trust,'" was his reply, "is a combination of capitalists to run things in their own way for their own profit, and without regard to the interests or needs of others."

The specific forms of combination are as various almost as their purposes. A, B, C, and D furnish each a certain sum of money to form a "blind pool" to "bull" or "bear" a specific stock or "corner" some staple. It is simply a voluntary agreement to use the values they control to create a fictitious scarcity or a false demand, whereby other persons are to be deprived of values they now hold or may acquire for the benefit of the men who constitute the "pool." It is just as much business, and of precisely the same character, as wrecking by the display of false lights. The "lambs" are "plucked," which means that the dead are plundered and the weak are stripped of the means of self-support. F and G, having control of the only means by which one of the prime necessities of life can be carried to those using it, agree with H that they will carry it for him at a certain rate, but will charge others two or three times as much. I, J, K, and

L, owning the greater part of the stock on hand and the majority of plants by which a certain article is manufactured, combine to share production and sale among them in specific proportions, agreeing not to compete with each other and to join with each other in underselling all other competitors. The purpose of each combination is to limit the supply, destroy competition, and so regulate price and monopolize profits. The mechanism by which it is effected is sometimes a secret agreement; sometimes a deed of trust giving certain parties control of their plants, stock, and good will, and sometimes a corporation which issues stock, fully paid up and non-assessable, in specific proportions for the various businesses it absorbs. Sometimes it is an assignment of all the specific interests to a managing body bound to divide the profits of manufacture and sale in a specific proportion between the combining parties. In all cases the effect, if the "combine" is strong enough, is to drive competing parties out of business and leave them to advance prices as they may see fit. The number of "trusts" substantially of this character is very great, and embraces an infinite variety of manufactured products.

By such means the power of the individual capitalist is many times increased, and not only the consumer, but the rival manufacturer, suffers by the suppression of competition. Such agreements are so manifestly iniquitous that no party to one has ever yet asked a court to enforce its conditions against another member.

It is often alleged that the effect of "trusts" is to lessen to the consumer the cost of the products they affect. The statement is so incongruous with the known and avowed purpose of the "trust" that only a people fond of "fine distinctions" would give it a respectful hearing. The number of Americans who desire to be thought "smarter" than others is, however, so great that such a paradox finds many to give it harbor and reiteration until they themselves, no doubt, come to believe it. The sole object of a "trust" is to prevent competition, and thereby enhance the profits of the parties interested in it. That these parties, having taken the pains and been at the expense of destroying their competitors, should voluntarily reduce their own profits, is a theory at war with the very principle upon which the "trust" is based—the principle of "get all you can and hold all you get."

Such a display of organized charity is not only paradoxical, but inconceivable.

But, aside from the question of the cost of an article of prime necessity to the consumer, the public has a very material interest in the distribution of the profits of production. The ultimate objective of government is the quality and character of those subject to it, and the purpose of all political economy should be to improve the general conditions in order that the quality of the citizenship may be enhanced. To attain this end the highest possible average of intelligence and self-dependence is necessary. This does not always result from the highest average wealth. One man worth \$10,000,000 and 1,000 men worth only one dollar each would give a remarkably high aggregate and average of wealth. Yet only one of them would have a shred of manhood or independence. A nation constituted in that proportion would be at once the richest and the poorest in the world. It would be a paradise of wealth and a hell of infamy and degradation. Only a very general distribution of wealth can give a high average quality of citizenship and self-dependence; and this is directly prevented when the profits of production are centred in few hands.

The more men there are who are self-employing and self-directing and the fewer there are who are dependent on the will of others for the employment that means life and comfort to them and their families the better. Ten thousand men worth a hundredth of a million dollars a piece are worth a thousand times as much to a nation and the world as one man worth a hundred millions. Every man who runs his own business offers opportunity for a higher grade of workers, and the stimulus of this opportunity is felt by the very lowest. A hundred such will give employment, perhaps, to an equal number of superintendents, overseers, book-keepers and junior partners—all winning their own way to independency. Unite these businesses, and instead of an aggregate of three or four hundred assistants we have perhaps a score hardly better paid and with much less prospect of independence before them. The others are driven to some other avenue of self-support, adding just so many families to the army of dependent laborers. Thus the over-enrichment of one means the impoverishment of many and adds to the competition impelled by necessity, which is the means by which the many are deprived of opportunity. "Skin for skin; all that a man hath will he give for his life," and

the greater the number of those who are shut up to wage-earning for a livelihood the greater the competition which drives the lower ranks into want and desperation. It is always the lower stratum that feels first and most keenly the force of harsh conditions, because upon it rests the weight of the entire superstructure. Whenever the number of the employers of labor is reduced, the number of the employed is increased; and when the numbers of the higher grades of employees is reduced the ranks of the lower grades are swollen to that extent. With this cumulative pressure the numbers of the unemployed are necessarily enhanced, and the weakest of the weak feel first the pangs of absolute dependence. It is from them that the cry for amendment always comes the first. Their methods of amendment may be wrong, usually are in fact, but their prescience of evil is unerring. They know where the shoe pinches, though they seldom know how to remedy the defect.

We often meet the claim that the evils of this sort should be tolerated because of the benefits derived from the benevolence of those who profit by them. The strong have always pleaded their good works in extenuation of the wrongs they did. The Roman emperors pointed to the games they established, the free baths they constructed and the temples they erected, as potent reasons why the people should uphold their power. Similar claims have been put forward by every class who have absorbed an undue share of power, both before and since that time. Let us not depreciate the benevolence of those who, in whatever manner, have come into control of vast accumulations, but it is well to remember that charity does not change the complexion of evil. The fact that Dick Turpin scattered money among the poor did not make his crime in robbing the rich less heinous; nor would Captain Kild have been counted a benefactor of mankind even if he had used his treasures to found colleges and theological seminaries, instead of hiding them "on strands forlorn as he sailed." The difference between the moral quality of robbery committed by false signals under a black flag and robbery committed by false reports or a fictitious scarcity on a black Friday is not easy to state, though it is easy to see that in motive they may be very far apart. The law takes cognizance of the one as a crime and not of the other. Because of this the man engaging in the one is duly advertised in advance of the true character

of his act ; while in the other case one might well say : " This cannot be very wrong, since the law does not forbid it."

Even an unintended wrong cannot have its moral expunged, however, by the mere dedication of a percentage of its results to a good use. There is, in fact, something too farcical about a man giving what he has wrongfully taken from another to benevolence as a palliation of the wrong to permit its serious consideration.

There is, however, an aspect of this plea for toleration because of resulting public benefits that ought not to be lightly passed over. There are four methods by which the public derives benefit from the individual control of values, or individual wealth : (1.) The owner is enabled thereby to support himself and family, and prevent them from becoming a charge upon the public. (2.) By the payment of taxes for the support of government. (3.) By voluntary benevolence in promotion of charity, education and religion. (4.) By the undertaking and achievement of enterprises requiring large initial investments.

The first of these is much greater in amount, and of vastly more importance, than any if not all the others. This, of course, is best subserved by many small accumulations than by a few great ones. It is far better that one hundred families should have independent self-support, on a capital of \$10,000 each, than that one family should enjoy the income of a capital of \$1,000,000. In like manner, the support of government by taxation is much more sure and certain in the case of small than of large holdings. The man of moderate means has little opportunity to avoid taxation, the man of very large means very generally finds some way to shirk a part of the burden which seems all the heavier because the aggregate is swelled by his accumulations. A million dollars having a hundred owners will, as a rule, bear a much larger part of the public burden represented by taxation than the same sum under the control of one owner. So far as private voluntary benevolences are concerned, the same rule prevails. If we add together the great fortunes of any land and set over against them an equal aggregate of moderate ones, we shall find that the same amount of wealth yields more voluntary benevolence when in the hands of the many than when held by a few. It is not the great fortunes of the country that have built and supported its churches, schools, and colleges, but men of moderate and often straitened means who have done

the major part. When a man gives \$50,000, \$100,000, or \$1,000,000 to such a purpose, it is always heralded to the world as a wonder. It takes a thousand subscriptions of \$1,000 each to balance it. But it always is balanced and much more. Counting the aggregate of social and religious benevolences which are supported by those of moderate means, it is not too much to say that every million dollars owned by many gives to private charity and benevolence many-fold greater tribute than the average \$1,000,000 controlled by a single individual.

There remains only the consideration of great enterprises requiring large investments for their initiation. In this respect it is perhaps true that the public advantage is subserved by immense accumulations. In the financial history of the last half-century or so, however, this is not altogether apparent. Nearly all the great enterprises of that time have been inaugurated and carried well towards success by the subscriptions of men of small means, while the great capitalist has gained control and added to his over-accumulation by "freezing out" the original investors and absorbing the values created by the enterprise of lesser men. The difficulty seems to be not to inaugurate great enterprises by the coöperation of small investors, but to protect the small investors against the rapacity of larger ones.

It is natural that the sentiment against this form of control should take a more definite form and find more general expression in the West than in the East. A much larger proportion of the population of the West than of the East are self-employers and naturally dislike the process of reduction to the ranks of the dependent employee which threatens them. Besides that, the West has drawn from the East, by a process of natural selection peculiar to our past, the most independent and vigorous of its elements—not necessarily the best, but the strongest. The young man who preferred hardship and independence to the conditions which faced him at the East went West. The man who failed in business in New England, whose pride would not permit him to serve where he had once directed, went West. The volunteer soldier who found the avenues of business closed against him on his return from the war, packed his kit and camped on the frontier. The immigrant who sought the West from abroad, also, as a rule, was of a more self-reliant character than those who stopped in the East: they sought homes, and were largely

agricultural in their character; those who tarried in the East were largely servants and employees who sought only a better service, not individual adventure and self-supporting homesteads. This process has been going on for half a century — perhaps to a large extent from the very date of settlement. Such a population is naturally more restive under conditions which they believe are both dangerous and remediable than one which has inherited the idea that, however harsh they may be, they are quite incurable; that the only way to avoid being crushed on the lower levels is to lie down and try to worm one's way to the upper ones. The demand for remedy and restriction is therefore louder, more emphatic, and more general in the West, for which reason some have identified the crusade against trusts with the West. The feeling of apprehension is perhaps quite as general in the East, but different conditions incline the Eastern man to greater caution and oft-repeated inquiry as to how any amendment may be secured; while the Westerner, perhaps, too readily responds: "Anyhow."

The relation of this sentiment to the Populist party is not easy to define. That only a small portion of it is represented by that party is evident to any careful observer. While antagonism to trusts is one of the tenets of that organization, it has so many others, and they are of so heterogeneous a nature, that they seem to have driven from its support many of the more conservative of those with whom this antagonism is deepest. The strength of the movement does not consist of men who are either socialists or revolutionists. They do not expect the world to be made over in a moment, nor believe in any untested cure-all for economic ills. They simply believe that a great and growing evil exists and must be remedied.

There is no occasion at this time to consider the remedies that might avail or the means by which they may be applied. There is no doubt that the same conviction which has made the principle of the Granger cases an integral part of our law and has forced all parties to admit the right of State and Nation to regulate corporate control of transportation will find a way to restrict the power of capitalistic "combines" of every sort and character, and relieve our civilization of the peril of a feudalism based on wealth.

ALBION W. TOURGÉE.

SILVER LEGISLATION AND ITS RESULTS.

BY THE HON. EDWARD O. LEECH, LATE DIRECTOR OF THE MINT.

FROM the formation of the Government our coinage legislation has been out of touch with the rest of the world. The first Coinage Act (1792) authorized the unrestricted mintage of gold and silver, at the proportion of 1 of gold to 15 of silver—a ratio not in accordance with the commercial value of the two metals. Gold being undervalued in our coinage system gold coins did not circulate, but were exported in exchange for commodities at the commercial value of the pure gold in such coins. To remedy this, in 1834 (and supplemental Act of 1837), the quantity of gold in the dollar was reduced and the ratio in coinage was fixed at 1 to 15.988,—practically, 1 to 16. This change did not correspond to the commercial value of the two metals,—silver being undervalued,—and, as a consequence, silver was shipped abroad, so that from 1834 to 1873 gold constituted our only metallic currency.

In 1873 Congress abolished the silver dollar—a practically obsolete coin—and gold was made the sole standard of value. At that period this country had exclusively a paper circulation, the depreciation of which was measured by gold. The law of Feb. 12, 1873, was the logical sequence of the legislation of 1834–37, confirmed and strengthened by the legislation of 1853 (making fractional silver coins subsidiary), which laws practically made gold the standard of this country. In discontinuing the coinage of the silver dollar in 1873 Congress, therefore, simply recognized an existing fact by dropping a coin which had formed no appreciable portion of our circulating medium for nearly half a century. The entire coinage of silver dollars from 1792 to 1873 had aggregated only 8,031,238 pieces, none of which were in circulation. Had not the demonetization of the silver dollar taken place in 1873, it must necessarily have taken place a few years later, when the European countries, one after another, abolished silver coinage,