

Enforcing the General Property Tax.

State's Attorney Hoyne of Chicago is trying to enforce the absurd and iniquitous tax laws of Illinois by arresting citizens who have failed to make personal property returns. Unless Mr. Hoyne's historical education has been neglected he must know that legal penalties, far worse than any modern court can impose, could not bring about general obedience to these laws. Unless his economic education has been neglected he must know that strict enforcement of the general property tax laws would be a greater calamity than a destructive earthquake or conflagration. Unless his moral education has been neglected he must know that robbery of industry by the state through enforcement of unjust laws is as indefensible as robbery perpetrated illegally by individuals.

S. D.



Barking Up the Wrong Tree.

A man who has succeeded in business to the extent of accumulating \$20,000 in a general store, writes this: "I am disgusted with both the Democratic and Republican parties. I am becoming a Socialist. I am worse, I am nearing the anarchistic stage. Is it worse to assassinate the Rockefellers and the Morgans, than to be starved to death by them?" The question arises: When a man in such circumstances harbors these ideas, what is the state of mind of the poor laborer, with low wages, part time, and a large family to support? It is a matter that should give the defenders of things-as-they-are, pause. The natural kindness of the human heart prompts man to suffer much before he resorts to force; but there is always a limit to forbearance, and it is the height of unwisdom to press him too far. Violence begets nothing but violence; and when exhaustion brings peace, reason must then step in and do what she might have done in the beginning, had she had a chance.



Violence fails because it is never directed intelligently, that is, it is not opposed to the real cause of the evil. Our successful merchant asks if it is any worse to assassinate Rockefeller and Morgan than to have them starve us to death. This betrays lack of reason. Action following such a conclusion would inevitably lead to bad results. Rockefeller and Morgan—and these names are used generically—are in no wise to blame for the present industrial muddle. Had they followed absolutely the precepts of virtue, the lot of Labor would not have been bettered to the

slightest degree. The industrial laws of the country make for spoliation of the producer. The more honestly they are observed the more oppressive they will become. Their foundation being false, they tend inevitably to destruction; and the reason that the whole social structure does not come tumbling about our ears is because the statute laws governing the production and distribution of wealth are not constantly observed. Strong men, men of boldness and imagination, will not succumb without resistance; and the reason society as a whole is not swallowed up in a grand social cataclysm is because relief from oppressive laws comes through the rebellion of these strong men.



This is not to condone the acts of the Rockefellers, the Mellens, or the Morgans; nor to commend them for defying statutory law; but it is to call attention to the fact that it is the system and not the men, that is to blame. To illustrate: Certain lessees of lands in Chicago belonging to the public schools are charged with having made fraudulent bargains, by means of which they are paying less to the public than they should pay. But these lessees are paying something for the land they use. The rest of the occupants of land in the city—land that is made valuable exactly as the school lands are made valuable—pay nothing at all to the people, save the general property tax. Does it make any practical difference to the starved schools of Chicago, or to the imperfectly educated children, whether the land values created by the community are withheld by dishonest tenants of school lands, or honest owners of other lands? Honesty is to be commended over dishonesty; virtue is more estimable than knavery; but as slavery was slavery whether the master was honest or dishonest, so unjust laws work evil regardless of the personal integrity of individuals. Our economic ills come from laws that controvert the order of nature, and the Rockefellers and the Morgans are no more to blame than any other individuals of like prominence and capacity. The remedy lies, not in assassinating individuals, or in making war on classes; but in changing the laws; and this remedy is wholly within the hands of the victims.

S. C.



Involuntary Philanthropy.

Eleven thousand dollars for relief of the sufferers of the Empress of Ireland disaster has been contributed by the oil consumers of the United States and other exploited ones, through