

000, local currency, from sales of opium in the colony. [See vol. xvi, p. 805.]

PRESS OPINIONS

Reversing the Dartmouth College Decision.

Dubuque (Ia.), Telegraph-Herald, December 8.—Ever since it rendered the decision in the Dartmouth College case, a decision that unduly exalted the rights of private property, the Supreme Court of the United States has been modifying its position until now, in a case from Kentucky, it has decided that rights conferred by charter are not absolutely irrevocable. In the original charter of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, granted in 1850, maximum freight rates were fixed. For many years the company carried at special rates to and from points within the state barley, malt, corn, rye and other raw material for distilleries. Then it raised charges on these commodities to standard rates. The latter were less than the maximum rates authorized by the charter and, when the State Railroad Commission directed the company to return to the still lower rates, the company pleaded its charter rights. Justice Hughes says in the deciding opinion in the case that, notwithstanding the contention of the irrevocability of a charter, the repealability of charters has been frequently asserted and the contention sustained by the Supreme Court. The Justice also held that "a statute permitting the State Railroad Commission to fix rates potentially repealed that part of the charter which named rates." Unless we mistake the meaning of the court, this decision means that notwithstanding charter rights a corporation may enjoy, with respect to rates these rights may be modified by legislative enactment. This conclusion being warranted, the decision marks a long step forward and puts it within the power of the generation of today to correct injustices imposed upon them by preceding legislatures, and covered in the term, "vested rights."



Have Good Cause to Rebel.

Cleveland (O.), Press, December 8.—Without land, water and air, man couldn't live. Whoever can corner one of these gifts of nature will have humanity at his mercy. The air is free. Private corners on water, once common, are fast ceasing as communities learn to own their own water supply. But land remains largely in private ownership, often with startling results. . . . In Mexico 11,000 landlords own 44 per cent of all the land. Forty-two per cent of all the property in Mexico is owned in the United States, and much in England and Germany. The working masses in Mexico own less than a fifth of the land and much less than a fifth of the other property. In other words, they are disinherited. In the country of their birth, where they and their children must live, they must pay rent for the means of living and are without voice in determining what the rent shall be. . . . In the state of Morelos, before Zapata raised the standard of revolt, there were 28 landlords and 200,000 tenants. Today there are approximately 200,000 landlords and no tenants. The

peons have simply swept the land monopolists out of the way and, by the right of superior numbers and strength, have taken over the land themselves. It is clear that what is happening in Mexico is fundamentally an instinctive refusal of the workers to be pushed off the earth.



Squinting Toward Singletax.

Saturday Evening Post, November 1.—Assessed valuation of real estate in New York increased this year by one hundred and sixty-eight million dollars, but of this increase one hundred and forty million dollars was due to added improvements—that is, to new buildings—and that addition was taxed at the same rate as the land itself. In Manhattan the value of land alone, exclusive of new buildings, increased seventeen million dollars. In Brooklyn there was an increase of twenty-six million dollars, due wholly to new buildings which numbered nearly twenty-four hundred—showing that they were mostly comparatively small, inexpensive residences in the outlying portions of the borough. A great many of them, we may safely assume, were homes built by persons of modest means. Now the twenty-six millions of value that was created in Brooklyn by the effort of men was taxed at substantially the same rate as the seventeen millions that was created for the landlords in Manhattan with no effort or abstinence whatever on their part. Certainly that's no way to tax. Here are ten vacant lots worth a thousand dollars apiece, and the tax rate, say, is two per cent. Nine men buy a lot each and build homes costing five thousand dollars apiece. That improvement makes each of the lots worth three hundred dollars more. The improvers are taxed a hundred and twenty-six dollars each and the non-improver, who has had three hundred dollars' value given to him, is taxed twenty-six dollars. City real estate taxes must be overhauled.



Anti-Imperialist League's Good Work.

Christian Science Monitor (Boston), December 10.—There is ample evidence in the proceedings of the annual meeting of the Anti-Imperialist League, held this week in Boston, that its members regard their purpose as a continuing one with its possibility of constant application to national policies. It is neither a lost cause nor one fully accomplished. . . . In any fair estimate of the changes in prevailing opinion, the stand taken by this group of men in 1898 must be seen to have come to be essentially the attitude of the American people. The demand it then made for the establishment of the independence of the Philippines, winning as it did denunciation as disloyalty, has come to be, we judge, the demand of the people of the country. The doctrine of benevolent assimilation is no longer preached and the policy of holding distant islands either as subject or dependent is not now justified on any of those humanitarian, military or financial grounds which were at first curiously mixed in the defense of the new venture. The violent difference over the independence of the Philippines has been modified to a tempered discussion of the time when it shall be accorded. . . . So long, however, as the soberer thought

of the nation, better in accord with its declared standards of human liberty and equality, remains but partly fulfilled, the sentiment for freedom of the Filipinos will need its organized expression and its insistent proponents. . . . The great nation's promise is clear on all points except as to time; but the promise has evident need of its organized friends to make its application definite and to bring it from a generality to fulfilment. . . . There is need of every means of refreshing the thought of the primary truths of the Republic's being, and to the extent that the Anti-Imperialist League performs that office its continuance is the common gain.



Municipal Ownership Pays in San Francisco.

The Star (San Francisco), December 13.—At 11:59 last Wednesday night, 84 men were working 10 hours a day at an average of about 27 cents an hour for the Presidio & Ferries Railway Company—a private corporation. One minute later, those 84 men and twelve others began working eight hours a day at 37½ cents an hour for The People of San Francisco, because at midnight the city took over the street railway line and began to operate it. Those figures and facts are worthy of consideration. In addition to that, last Wednesday afternoon the city drew its check for \$50,000 from the profits of the Municipal Railway, and gave it to the Presidio & Ferries Railway Company as the first payment for the new addition to the Municipal Railway. The line will be paid for out of the \$3,500,000 bond issue for Municipal Railway extensions, but the bonds are not yet on the market—and the city had \$50,000 of profits from the Geary street line to use for that purpose. The newly acquired line has been making a profit of \$14,000 a month.



Tragedy of a Race.

Gorman H. White, in a letter in New York Herald, December 21.—To begin my letter I will not say what sort of a man I am, for if I did it might not be read, and if read the matter would be biased from the outset. This is the Christmas week, and those who want to give something that won't cost them a penny and will make the week happier for many good and honest men may read this letter. If you had been barred from good theaters for a year, stared out of countenance when you took a seat in any car, laughed at when you got dressed up a little bit, and given pennies as change for every purchase you made during the year, together with as many petty and unkind things as your mind can possibly conjure up, you would appreciate what it would mean for a week of decent treatment to suddenly come along. I am a negro man, and I speak of decent negro people.



Teacher.—“Now children, can you tell me what are the national flowers of England?”

Class.—“Roses.”

Teacher.—“And France?”

Class.—“Lilies.”

Teacher.—“And Spain?”

(Silence for a minute—then small voice at back of the schoolroom.)

“Bullrushes, ma'am.”—Life.

**RELATED THINGS
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THE DISINHERITED.

Vorley Wright in (London) Everyman.

I.

I saw a million rabbits
Where a thousand men might be,
Yet a bent and ancient husbandman
Was the only man to see.

And amazement leaped to a question:

“What manner of land is this?—
Voiceless and vermin-ridden,
Empty and man-forbidden,
Where the field hath forgotten the harvest,
And the furrow forgotten the plow.”

(The face he turned was a Viking face,
His hair was white as the white sea-mew,
And his eye was a Viking blue.)

“I remember the time, m' marster,
When the countryside was filled
With flock and herd and folk, sir,
And a mort o' the soil was tilled;
But the lords o' the land dwelt elsewhere,
And the rents were racked and short,
So the land was leased to a millionaire
Who coveted it for sport.”

“And where are the folk, O ancient friend,—
The heritors of toll,
Who clogged with their impoverishment
The profits of the soil?”

“What comes o' the birds, m' marster,
When the breath o' the winter blows!
Some o' them live and some o' them die,
And nobody counts or knows:
A many a man's turned vagabond,
And many a woman worse;
Many a young 'un's over the sea,
To be shut o' the landless curse;
And the old, they wait in the poorhouse
Their turn in the parish hearse.”

II.

I saw a hundred gentlemen
Where a million men might be,
Yet gentlemen and serving men
Were the only men to see—
Save one of a tattered raiment,
Who quickened his steps from me.

But I flung out a word and checked him:
“What blight-bitten land is this?—
Wasted and weed-perverted,
Barren and man-deserted,
Where the forest reconquers the farmstead,
And the meadow succumbs to the moor.”

(The stamp of his race was on his face,
As he stood there, stark and stern: