

## MUST BE OWNERSHIP.

## HOW INTERSTATE COMMERCE LAW WORKS.

Under Government Control the Railroads Generally Do the Controlling—A Good One from the Chicago Express.

We have what is called an "Inter-State Commerce Commission" whose business it is, or is supposed to be, to see that railroad companies comply with the laws, do not form pools and other combinations, or otherwise band together to cheat shippers, especially small shippers.

It's a nice thing—on paper.

This Commission was provided for by Congress, with the consent of the principal railroad companies, if not at their suggestion, to pacify and conciliate the demand of the people for government ownership of railroads.

This law was to be "government control" of railroads, you understand.

This Inter-State Commerce Commission, so it was given out, was to be clothed with the authority to bring any railroad up standing for transgressing the laws regarding railroad traffic; that is, the commission was to act as a spy on the railroad business, file information and institute legal proceedings against railroad companies, and then the injured public could have the blessed privilege of going to law in the United States courts, presided over by ex-railroad attorneys acting as judges, most of which judges received their appointments from either Harrison or Cleveland, both ex-railroad attorneys.

It's a beautiful scheme, this "government control" through an "Inter-State Commerce Commission," beautiful beautiful—for the railroad companies. Let's see how it works.

There is a law prohibiting railroad companies from charging more for hauling a quantity of freight a short distance than for hauling the same quantity of freight a long distance.

The enforcement of this law devolves upon the Inter-State Commerce Commission.

When prosecutions for violations of this law were first made, it was found that to secure conviction it would be necessary that the books of the company showing shipments of freight be produced in court.

This the railroad companies refused to do, on the ground that they did not propose to furnish evidence tending to criminate themselves.

Now, there don't seem to be any difficulty in making an ordinary business man or merchant produce his books in court in the progress of an ordinary lawsuit. Not only that, but instances have been known where officers of the law have broken into a man's private desk and produced in court evidences tending to prove the guilt of the owner under charge of violating the law.

But to thus serve a great monopoly—whose influence makes laws, appoints judges, makes and unmakes presidents—would be little short of sacrilege!

So an accommodating ex-railroad attorney, serving as administrator of justice for the people (!), decided it was unconstitutional to thus compel delivery of the books and papers of a railroad company to be used in court against said company, and another ex-railroad attorney, serving as judge of the highest tribunal of the land, sustained his decision, and since then the prosecutions of railroad companies for violations of law have been little more than a farce.

But these commissioners want to make a show of earning their salaries, and the railroad monopoly and the old parties supporting them want to make it appear just before election that "government control" is not altogether a failure, so an accommodating ex-railroad attorney, serving as judge in the supreme court, has handed down an opinion on the "long and short haul" clause of the law, that at first glance seems to be more in favor of small shippers, particularly farmers.

Commenting on this decision, Charles A. Pillsbury, manager of mills in Minneapolis that produce one-fifteenth of the flour made in the United States, is reported as saying:

"No matter what the decision of the courts may be, railroad companies have it in their power and it is to their interest to ignore the law relative to long and short haul. If they don't dodge it one way they will another."

"I can deliver a barrel of flour from my mills to Philadelphia or in France for fifty cents, and that is what I would have to pay to have it delivered at my residence only two miles away."

There is the whole policy of plutocracy in a nutshell.

The Pullmans and the Pillsburys, the railroad monopoly and every other monopoly, "have it in their power and it is to their interest" to run their business to suit themselves, and our laws are such that they can snap their fingers at their employees, or the government of the United States, or any other power on earth that may object.

And though they may not express it in words, their acts virtually and insolently ask the question, "What are you mudsill people going to do about it?"

In brief, we predict that this long-suffering and monopoly-ridden people will pay the extortions demands and submit to the tyranny of plutocracy railroad combines but little longer before they will arise in their might and wipe out our statute books every vestige of law authorizing the existence of railroad corporations, and in its stead will write in bold letters which cannot be erased.

"Government Ownership of Railroads."

Supreme Court Justices may con-

tinue for a time to smirch their judicial ermine through unjust decisions; railroad corporations may brag and bluster and mock at the law of their own making; the old parties may hedge and dodge the issue before election, and prate about fanaticism and socialism after election; populist "leaders" may seek to exclude the demand from the "great popular platform" they are going to get up if—but it's bound to come, and that right speedily.

Government Ownership of Railroads. No truer statement is contained in that grand document, put forth at Omaha four years ago—which all true populists swear by and all monopolists and platform trimmers swear at—that was:

"We believe that the time has come when the railroad corporations will either own the people or the people must own the railroads."

When this question is settled there will be but one result:

Government Ownership of Railroads!

And that is what the people are going to do about it.

## NOTES AND COMMENT.

Snapshot Taken at the Passing Procession.

The democrats in Tennessee have come as near adopting a populist platform as the gold element and a proper respect for the seventh commandment would permit them. They declare, in their state platform, for a rigid restriction of the federal power, for the largest measure of individual freedom; for local self-government; for free silver at the ratio of 16 to 1 regardless of the action of any other nation; that both gold and silver shall be a legal tender from Dan to Beer Sheba; against the issue of interest bearing bonds; against payment in gold of government obligations; for the repeal of the 10 per cent tax on state banks; opposition to national banks and so down to 19thly.

That is to say they get on nineteen sides of the dear people in one platform and not a breath of suspicion of "ism" in it. In the populist platform proper there are about nine distinct demands or propositions, and we are accused of wanting the "earth and the fulness thereof." But this Tennessee platform outreaches us at a ratio of 16 to 1 regardless of all that has been said heretofore. And not a hint, not a horn toot in favor of trimming it. And now the question arises: how would the populists look trotting along side of such an imposing structure with a little bobtailed platform that didn't have anything in it that wasn't in the democratic platform, and with an apology on their lips from bringing that out in the race for political pie?

And the Arkansas democrats are going to follow now in a few days. They will not be a whit behind their brethren in Tennessee in building their platform. They have got up their free silver steam, and will have their anti-bank and bond pitchforks on hand. If they will take a pointer from us we'll tell them how they can discount the Tennessee fellows and take all the wind out of the populist sails. Declare for the referendum. Of course they won't know what that means but most of them will likely be too drunk to ask any questions, and if they do they can be told that it is a new kind of ballot box that will withstand the X rays of a populist investigation. Just do this boys and make the Tennessee democrats mad with envy. Of course it don't make the least bit of difference what you promise, you don't intend to perform it anyway.

Old Uncle Ben Colvin lives at St. Charles, Michigan. He is an old greenbacker, one of the anti-fusion and anti-compromising kind. He has held his town in line against both old parties for twenty years. Some one wrote and asked him to give the difference in the cost of a \$100 bank bill for 20 years. Here is his reply:

"A national bank \$100 for 20 years costs the people \$230 to keep it afloat, while the government \$100 costs the people nothing but the printing of it to keep it afloat for 20 years. Now to prove: The bond under the bank drawing 4½ per cent in twenty years would be \$90 without compound. A banker never loans his money below 7 per cent. That would be \$140 in 20 years without compound; adding that to the \$90, there is a clear robbery of \$230 drawn out of the people and handed over to the banker. That same \$100 government bill is the redeemer of the national bank bill. Why not the government issue the money and save that to the people?"

The union carpenters of Cripple Creek have given an example of what some people will call foolishness, but the more thoughtful will characterize as an unusual example of the spirit of fairness to and consideration of their fellow men in distress, which should, but does not, find imitators in other callings. After the recent fire had destroyed the greater part of that city the Carpenters' union met in special session and resolved that the question for an advance of wages, which had been under consideration before misfortune had overtaken the city, should be indefinitely postponed, and that no advance on the old rate of wages would be asked pending the rebuilding of the burned district. Those having stocks of lumber, hardware and other building material in hand were not so thoughtful of their unfortunate neighbors who were burned out. The business men took advantage of the prevailing distress and extraordinary demand for building material and provisions and advanced the prices of everything exorbitantly. There was none of that "fellow feeling that makes us wondrous kind" to be found among the business men.

There are many examples of this kind occurring every day that prove a more sympathetic feeling among the lower walks of life than there are among the pillars of the commercial world. It is true that the rich and powerful stand together better than do the working classes, but then it is for the purpose of more easily robbing the weak and unprotected. They are not producers and their whole time is given to the study of the science of fleecing their fellow man without running the risk of getting into the penitentiary. And this is called business. Collis P. Huntington secured an extension for the payment of the Pacific railroad debt and the right to fleece the people for another long term of years. It may have cost him several million dollars. What is that to him? The people pay the freight. The people are controlling the railroads, you know. The burning of towns and disasters of cyclones don't disturb Huntington and his class.

The Star and Kansan says: "Up at Leavenworth last week there was a destitute woman with nine young children, who had to be provided for by charitable people there. Her husband was in jail for defrauding the United States government. Ignorant of wrong he had used a cancelled two-cent stamp in mailing a letter; and for this crime he was sentenced to the federal penitentiary for two years! That is the same sentence the republican state treasurer of South Dakota received for stealing \$350,000. Think of it. A poor man with a large family dependent upon his labor for support, and our wise and just and humane government gives him two years in prison for robbing it of two cents. Carnegie cheats the government out of hundreds of thousands by furnishing defective armor plate, and President Cleveland remits most of the fine imposed on him. But the poor man who defrauds Uncle Sam of two cents is left to rot in jail, while his family starves. A beautiful system, a noble civilization and a grand government, surely! Can't we improve upon such methods and punish the big thieves a little more and the small ones a little less. Can't we approximate a little more closely to justice and reason in our penalties? If we can't, it's about time to conclude that the experiment of human government is a failure. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' A social system based on the ideas of interest, rent and profit for rulers, at the expense of the toilers, can't work out any better, though. It is the worst imaginable form of anarchy."

The old harpstrings quaver, the old voice is shaking, In sighs and in sobs moans the yearning refrain, The old vision dims and the old heart is breaking— Kathleen Mavourneen, inspire us again!

## FAVORITE SONG.

AMES WHITCOMB Riley has addressed the following verses to Prof. Crouch, the dying author of "Kathleen Mavourneen": Kathleen Mavourneen, the song is still ringing As fresh and as clear as the trill of the bird.

In the world-weary hearts it is sobbing and singing.

In pathos too sweet for the tenderest word.

The old harpstrings quaver, the old voice is shaking,

In sighs and in sobs moans the yearning refrain,

The old vision dims and the old heart is breaking— Kathleen Mavourneen, inspire us again!

"No," said the doctor, throwing his arm over the back of a chair and settling himself comfortably for one of the long stories he delighted to tell and we to hear, "I have never been able to understand it."

"Understand what?" asked Charlie Brown, lazily. "What is it which is too much for your wondrous comprehension? Unburden yourself at once, my dear fellow, and tell us all about it."

"Well," answered the doctor, nothing loath to comply with this request, "we were talking about John Hinkleman. You know he is married at last."

"Why at last?" queried Charlie, lighting a cigar with his usual indolent grace and winking at us to express his satisfaction at having started the doctor off on the entertainment of the evening, "has he been in danger of committing matrimony before?"

"Do you mean to say you never heard of his love affair?" the doctor almost shouted, actually sitting up in his astonishment. "Why, he has been in love with a wife for seven years and has proposed to her regularly every three months during that time. And what we were wondering about is why she accepted him at last."

"Well, fire away with the story," spoke up Arthur McCafferty from his usual recumbent position on the floor, and after lighting a fresh cigar the doctor complied.

"You all know, of course, about the yacht which John owns," he said, when the operation had been successfully completed. "Well, it was this yacht, the Oneida, the boat which he always declared was wife and family to him, that led to his marrying her."

"He was very fond of cruising about Lake Michigan, and one summer afternoon, after spending several days upon the water, he came to a little river which ran away from the lake out into a beautiful wild country. No river doesn't exist in my imagination alone, Charlie; it really runs through a neighboring state, or part of it, and manages to make a little island of one spot a hundred miles or so away from where it joins the lake. To reach this island from Chicago it is necessary to travel first by train, then by boat, then by stage—impossible as this last sounds in this day and generation. And to reach the home of John's wife a distance of six miles or so must be traversed by foot and over the loneliest road in the world, too. But from the river the island is easily reached, and the day John's boat ran into the little bay just below the farmhouse it looked like an oasis dropped into a desert of water.

"A pretty girl came down to the shore presently, and after the first glance at her John was never himself again. His stay upon the island was prolonged until his companions were impatient, and he only left at last because one of them looked admiringly at the girl he had fallen in love with at first sight. Two days later he went back again, and after that everybody began to suspect something queer. And never a week of summer passed but the Oneida ran into the little bay and poked her nose up toward the farmhouse. And never a time did she go but she carried some pretty or useful present for the girl who had charmed particular John until he could see nothing but her in all the world. One day she carried a jeweler's tiny box and on the pretty pink cotton inside it lay a shining ring, with a big solitaire diamond gleaming like a star in a sunset sky.

The above ebullition was prompted by the declaration of Evan P. Howell, of the Atlanta Constitution. Mr. Howell said: "If we can't get what we want in Chicago we will walk out and go off and form a party of our own."

The Globe-Democrat admits that the heat coming from such a man as Howell "means more" than it would to John Tillman and other wild men who are talking in this strain. Says the Globe-Democrat:

"There is a chance, of course, that one or the threats which have been made of bolts at Chicago are bluff, designed to irritate the sound money into submission, and are not intended to be carried out. Tillman's fiery talk, or most of it, is probably of this order. Yet Tillman controls the delegation of his state, and very likely can make it do his bidding, even to the extent of repudiating his party's candidate and platform if these are for gold."

To be sure, the primacy in the southern states which South Carolina snatched from Virginia when Calhoun went to the front in the '30s, and which she held along to 1861, has been lost since, yet possibly if she left the convention some of the other states of her locality would follow her as they did when she left the union. A large part of the south is tainted with the free silver virus in 1896, as it was with secession poison thirty-six years ago.

A bolt engaged in by Georgia, the Empire state of the south, would be especially dangerous."

## A Mistake.

Railroads in Russia are almost entirely under control of the government, which is a great mistake, for it prevents private companies from exercising in that country the great American privilege of robbing the people. See—Coming Nation.

If you want the rich to bear their share of the burdens of taxation, vote the People's party ticket; it is the only party that favors making them do it.

John knew that as his sweetheart would not be married until spring he could not see her until the warm weather unlocked the lake and river, so he consoled himself with writing long flowery answers to her short, business-like epistles, and sending her a present every week. He was the happiest man in creation.

"Then one day I went to see him and found him in the depths of a black despair. Slowly and with much work I dragged the story out of him. She had written him a curt note breaking the engagement. On the table at his elbow lay the jeweler's tiny box with the beautiful ring inside.

"I took it up and looked at it, wondering meanwhile why a girl should refuse a man like my friend, rich, fine-looking, tenderly loving, able to give her all the things for which she longed, and desiring nothing in the world but to fly at her beck and call. After a little I put her question to him:

"'What reason did she give?' he answered, looking up with wild, bloodshot eyes. 'None! She merely 'desires to break the engagement.' And yet I know she has no other lover. Who is there upon that desolate island who could be attractive to her? And I have a letter from her mother, dear, kind soul, in which she tells me that Irene's conduct is a mystery to her. But it is of no use to discuss it. I shall go mad soon enough without that."

"Nor could I rouse him from this state of despairing sorrow. He went from bad to worse until I was forced to attend him in my professional capacity, and at last I yielded to his solicitations, and consented to accompany him upon a trip to the island.

"It was bitter winter weather and I shall never forget how we suffered with cold during that awful trip. Even after we reached the island we had that horrible six-mile walk to manage, and we were spent with cold and fatigue when we arrived at the farm. John was too weak and exhausted to do more than yield passively to the ministrations of myself and Irene's mother. But the next day he commenced to seek for an opportunity to talk with the obstinate girl.

"But it was useless; she evaded us both, for I would have spoken in behalf of my friend. She kept out of our way with a persistence and success which was marvelous, considering how closely we were all kept together by the cold, which made outdoor life an impossibility, and we were compelled to return home at the end of a week without having wrung so much as a word from the girl herself. Her father, mother and sisters were upon John's side and it was evident that the girl herself was suffering deeply. But she bade her lover good-by with an icy handshake and returned to her work in the kitchen before we were out of the barnyard.

"John was in despair, but he is persistent by nature, and as I said at the beginning of my story, he wrote and proposed regularly every three months. And so several years went by.

"At last, one day about a month ago, he called me up by telephone and began to talk wildly and a little incoherently about how happy he was and nonsense of that kind.

"'What is the matter with you?' I asked at last, fearing that he was ill and delirious. I shall never forget his answer.

"'Can't you tell what is the matter with me?' he called back. 'Irene has written that we may be as we once were and I am too happy to be lucid.'

"Yes, that was what she had done, with woman-like unexpectedness. And John was almost too happy to live. He made a flying trip to the island—that is the going there was hurried. He was slow enough coming back. When he returned the day was set for the wedding. So two days ago he started back, the happiest man in the world, and last night I got a telegram saying that Irene was his wife, and, although she still refused to say why she had acted so strangely, he was quite satisfied to have got her at all and was supremely thankful.

"In that week he spent here in the city he furnished a beautiful flat, devoted himself to so doing, taking notes of things he saw in other houses to which he had the entree. Everything is ready for the coming of the bride tonight, even to the stationery, tinted her favorite color and marked with her monogram—her new initials, of course. Framed photographs of her island home hang upon the walls, he has prepared a room for her sisters to occupy when they visit her, and even the fires are laid. I must go now or I shall be too late to welcome them to their new home, which I have promised to do, as well," with a whimsical smile, "as apply a match to the fire in the parlor, so that when she steps inside the door, and I would not omit this ceremony for anything. No, Charlie, you can't go with me; I am invited, and I alone, so I must bid you all good-night. You can all send John a wedding present, of course, and no doubt he will invite you to visit him, and make the acquaintance