

One of the welcome effects of municipal ownership in Great Britain is told by the London Daily News of April 19. Out of their profits for the preceding year, the gas committee of the local government of Manchester intend to turn over \$250,000 for reduction of local taxes, while the traction committee are to turn over \$230,000—\$480,000 in all. This effect of municipal ownership ought to be welcome to the owners of building sites, for it relieves them of that much in taxes without depreciating their property. Indeed, their property is increased in value by the municipal ownership policy. This has been the universal experience in Great Britain. It is no reason, of course, for abandoning the municipal ownership policy—this fact that the financial benefit goes from traction stockholders to local landlords; but in due time it will be a reason, either for reducing fares or for making site owners pay a fairer proportion of taxes than they pay now.

The extent of cheap bribing by public corporations of public officials was illustrated by the deluge of passes Mayor Dunne received upon his coming into office. On the 12th "he sent back," says the Chronicle of the 13th, "to the railroads, transportation lines, telephone company and other corporations, the 'courtesies' represented by innumerable passes, free tickets, franks and complimentary privileges received by him since his inauguration." Of course these "courtesies" are not given for nothing. Hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of such favors are distributed every year, and they all go to persons whose official position may make them useful to the companies. No string is tied to them, to be sure, but public officials who accept courtesies which are so manifestly bribes, need no string. Although the favors they grant in return may not be excessive, the relationship established by the offer and acceptance of passes is well calculated to make oppor-

tunity for securing larger favors in return for richer "courtesies."

There is something very significant in this connection about the action of the mayor of Chester, Pa., William H. Berry, and his own comment upon it. He had taken railroad passes. But something happened which induced him to return them all, and this was his explanation: "I am now more than ever satisfied that the whole practice is wrong, and certain facts make it impossible for me to accept the so-called courtesy of certain transportation companies."

A long stride has been taken by the legislature of Minnesota (vol. vii, pp. 646, 651) in the direction of just and scientific taxation. It has adopted an amendment to the constitution which, if approved by the people of the State, will free future legislatures from the absurd restrictions of the present constitution, under which all taxes must be approximately equal and all valuations of taxable property must be uniform. Consequently, Minnesota has found herself in the same category with other States that are constitutionally cut off from making fair fiscal adjustments. The amendment proposed requires, as to uniformity, only that "taxes shall be uniform upon the same class of subjects." As the Minneapolis Journal of the 12th describes the measure, it would require that taxes—

must be collected and spent for public purposes, and they must be uniform upon the same class of subjects; but after complying with these elementary requirements, the legislature at future sessions will have an absolutely free hand.

Great progress in fiscal methods, and the most beneficial results, may be looked for in Minnesota should this amendment be adopted by the people, as the indications are that it will be.

Immigrant Chinese were arbitrarily excluded from this country, and the Supreme Court of the United States found itself with-

out power to overrule the action of the executive officials who ordered it. An Englishman coming to the country was deported because he held opinions on government which any American is conceded to have the right to hold, and the Supreme Court of the United States found itself without power to overrule the action of the executive officials who ordered it. And now a Chinaman born in this country—a native born American citizen—who had left the country on a visit, is denied entrance upon his return, and the Supreme Court finds itself without power to overrule the executive officials who order that. If an American born citizen of Chinese ancestry must never leave the country, on pain of perpetual exile, when executive officers so order, is not an American citizen of African, German, English, or any other ancestry, subject to the same arbitrary treatment, and would not the Supreme Court be as powerless to protect his rights of citizenship? If not, why not? If otherwise, whither are we drifting?

#### JUG-HANDLED COMPETITION.

The address delivered by D. M. Parry, president of the National Association of Manufacturers, at the tenth annual convention of that association, at Atlanta, Ga., while a powerful defense of theoretical individualism and competitive industry, is a masterful evasion of the notorious fact that competitive industry, as a complete system—or as anything approaching a complete system—does not exist.

His laudation of the competitive principle as the greatest force for good in the realm of industry, is justified by the facts of history; but his assumption that competition has free play, and would continue to have, in the absence of government interference with the railroads, is so egregiously absurd as to baffle faith in his sincerity.

His demand for respect for individual rights, will be applauded by every man who comprehends the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution—by every man, in fact,



who knows social right from social wrong; but it is a great pity that the distinguished gentleman, while detecting an infraction of that sacred principle in the coercive measures of certain labor organizations, fails utterly to perceive any violation thereof in law-created privilege.

Organized labor, Mr. Parry believes, is becoming reformed, as the result of adverse experience. "Current events appear, in fact, to be forcing its reformation," he says. "Sooner or later," he continues, "it must see that it cannot make headway against the individualistic character of our institutions." A very safe assertion—"sooner or later."

Unhappily, it will probably be "later," if Mr. Parry is correct in his opinion as to the political tendency of organized labor. Organized labor is yet to march a weary distance backward before the advent of that happy day when it will be able to see that it cannot make any permanent and persistent headway against the individualistic character of our institutions; for organized labor gives strong evidence of a disposition to stampe into the quagmire of socialism.

If Mr. Parry's own vision were clearer, he would perceive that the element of monopoly which pervades the existing economic system, destroys freedom of individual initiative, robs the competing business-man and wage-man alike of much of the fruits of their labor and enterprise, and coerces them into mutually destructive conflict in blind and futile attempts at an equitable distribution of the rapidly diminishing proportion of their joint product which remains for competitive division.

The pitiful and utterly hopeless struggle on the part of organized labor to compel business men operating in the competitive field to yield up a larger proportion of what the monopolist leaves for the employer and his workmen to scramble for, is not a whit more disheartening than the blindness of Mr. Parry to the obvious fact that such a scramble is the inevitable result of monopolistic infractions of the principle of individual rights.

Mr. Parry's argument in favor of unimpeded operation of natural law in the whole field of human industry is unassailable. But his application of the principle lacks amplitude in its details.

For instance, how can natural law operate freely in the monopolized anthracite coal fields? How can natural law operate freely in the monopolized iron mines? In the monopolized coke industry of Pennsylvania? In the railroad monopoly, where there exists "an agreement between gentlemen" to charge all that the traffic will bear—and the power to carry out the agreement, too?

Mr. Parry's speech is admirable in its scientific aspects, from the theoretical standpoint that he occupies, but it is fatally inadequate to the actual situation that confronts him. If the premises were what he tacitly assumes them to be—that freedom of competition exists under existing laws and institutions—his argument, in so far as it deals with economic law, would be unanswerable. But as millions of American citizens deny his premises, it is incumbent on him to prove them before demanding acceptance of his conclusions.

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#### A PARADOX OF THE MODERN GOOD.

In a Baptist church of a country neighborhood there was a pious old deacon who always raised the tunes. Memory brings him back with his solemn, yet cunning, countenance. As he stood to lead the congregation of which he was the acknowledged chief, the tune rose with his body. It was he who led in worship, he who maintained the rigid moral laws of the community. It was he, who on one occasion, though there seemed to be extenuating circumstances, carried the day for the expulsion of a young man and woman from the church for having attended a dance. It was proved that they did not dance, merely looked on; but even this slight concession to the ways of the Evil One could not be condoned in the eyes of the sturdy deacon. He stood unflinchingly for the truth as he saw it, and thus to all the youth of the neighborhood he shone as the paragon of righteousness. They did not know that he had made

money by charging two per cent a month to needy neighbors, and it would not have meant much to them had they known. A mere matter of business seemed to them to have nothing to do with morality and religion.

A Presbyterian elder in a large city was known as one of the most liberal men. He gave a thousand dollars to begin the educational work of the local Y. M. C. A. Indeed, without his aid the night school could not have been established. He was a man of strictest piety. He would have marked any man for hell whom he saw enter a bar-room. He never failed to be present in church twice on Sunday, and at the Wednesday night prayer meeting. He was also president of a bank. As such he closed out a woman who thus lost her all; but this was business. This transaction and the donation to the Y. M. C. A. happened to take place in the same week. Why not? Business is business, and religion seemed to have nothing to do with the strict duties of a bank officer.

The chancellor of an Episcopal diocese, a lawyer of wealth and great prominence, served on many boards of charity in his native city. At a meeting of the board of an asylum for orphan boys, his great influence and dignity carried the point of concealing from the assessor certain securities which were not legally exempt from taxation. But it was entirely in the interest of orphans, and after all it was only the iniquitous public treasury that was outwitted. And the board were all honorable men. What had a mere matter of taxation to do with honor and religion?

The Rev. John Hutchins, of Litchfield, Conn., has written to the New York Tribune a letter telling of the beauty of Mr. Rockefeller's private life. Mr. Hutchins happened once to be thrown quite intimately into the Rockefeller family circle. He tells of the family prayers and other fine, homely customs. He had many confidential talks with the great man and in some of these talks he boldly ventured on a delicate question. He raised the point "How to reconcile private Christian character with the larger