

give the Senate its desired excuse to suspend the commissioners and then quietly to repeal the law.

Ten years afterward the same thing had to be done over again. This time it was accomplished under the leadership of Caius Gracchus brother of Tiberius; but it was not enough that he should restore the land law that had been secured by his brother. That law, even while it was being worked at its best, was satisfactory to but few of its beneficiaries. The law was restored, it is true, but the prospect of leaving Rome, and going perhaps to some distant part of Italy to engage in hard work, was not much of a temptation to men who had spent any length of time in Rome, involved in its political strifes, and whose principal desire was to obtain money and the means of subsistence with as little work as possible. It required something more than the restoration of the land law to satisfy these, and Caius granted it.

With the "enthusiastic clapping" of every pair of poor hands in Rome, he secured the passage of a law decreeing that there should be established in Rome public granaries to be filled and maintained at the cost of the State, and that from these the wheat should be sold to the poor citizens, at a merely nominal price. This law applied only to Rome, because in Rome the elections were held. "The effect was to gather into the city a mob of needy, unemployed voters, living on the charity of the State, to crowd the circus and to clamor at the elections, available no doubt immediately to strengthen the hands of the popular tribune, but certain in the long run to sell themselves to those who could bid highest for their voices."—*Froude*.

This same thing was repeated over and over before the government became merged in an emperor. In fact it became necessary to repeat it; because, although it was easy enough to distribute the land, it was not so easy to keep it distributed. Those to whom the land was given lived far beyond their means and as the public granaries were open and the poor citizen could get the main part of his living for nothing those who received the land for nothing were not likely to cultivate habits of economy. Their lands were soon mortgaged and at last forfeited, falling back into the hands of the capitalists who, in the nature of things, at each successive turn became monopolists.

Thus at last the distribution of the land became an old story, the distribution of grain still remained a fixture, and as money had to be paid by the government in order to give to the citizen either land or grain, there next naturally grew up the demand that the money should be given direct to the citizen, and in the eyes of demagogues, political necessity justified this step. Cæsar gave to each soldier about one thousand dollars, and to each citizen about twenty dollars with house rent free for a year. In addition to this he provided a magnificent feast for the citizens who were supported by the public grants of grain. Twenty-two thousand tables were spread with the richest viands from which the two hundred thousand

State paupers feasted, while from hogsheads the finest wine flowed freely.

Then came Augustus, the Emperor in whom was merged all that pertained to the State and the people. He was *parens patriæ*. So long as Rome was in the full tide of conquest subduing populous and wealthy countries, levying upon them enormous tributes, robbing their treasuries, and rifling their temples, there was always money in the Roman treasury to furnish the lands, the grain, or even the ready money, which occasion might demand. But when the era of conquest ceased, as it did with Augustus, then also ceased the abundant supply of money. So far from the demands ceasing, however, they went on as before. As the demands were imperative, the money had to be secured from some source, and as now it could no longer be secured by conquest, it had to be secured by other means and other means were employed.

During the reign of Augustus there was need of money by many classes. The regular and legal system of taxation did not furnish enough, and logically enough confiscation was the next step. And why not? Was not the Emperor the father of the people? And may not the father divide up the patrimony amongst the children? If some of the children have abundance and others have little or none, may not the father see that there is an equitable distribution? It is the father's office to care for the children. The emperor in the exercise of his office of *parens patriæ*, did just the thing. Accordingly, says Suetonius, "As often as large sums of money came into his possession, by means of confiscations, he would lend it free of interest, for a fixed term to such as could give security for double of what was borrowed." Tiberius continued the same practice, for, says the author, "after the example of Augustus and to satisfy the clamors of the people, he loaned money without interest for three years to all who wanted to borrow."

But the *parens patriæ* had not enough money to supply all who wanted to borrow; accordingly, "he first compelled all money-lenders to advance two-thirds of their capital on land; and the debtors to pay off at once the same proportion of their debts. And still there were many who wanted to borrow. Five million dollars was yet required, and in order to obtain it he turned his mind to sheer robbery. It is certain that Cnæus Lentulus, the augur, a man of vast estate, was so terrified by his threats and importunities that he was obliged to make him his heir."

Several persons likewise, of the first distinction in Gaul, Spain, Syria and Greece, had their estates confiscated upon such despicably trifling and shameless pretensions, that against some of them no other charge was preferred than that they held large sums of ready money as part of their property."

This was Rome. Such was the system of government to which the Supreme Court of the United States appealed for guidance in the decision which we have considered. And such was the exercise of the dignity of *parens patriæ* by the government which originated it, and from which,

through the British copy, the dignity has now been adopted as a distinct feature of the government of the United States.

We have stated, however, that there is involved in this matter, that which is of greater importance than simply its adoption by the Supreme court. These very principles are being advocated by certain classes in this country. Some there are who demand that all the land shall be possessed, or rather held in trust, by the government for the people and distributed for their good. Senator Stanford has already introduced a bill in Congress which proposes to oblige the government after the manner of Augustus, to lend money—not exactly free of interest but—at two per cent. for thirty years to all who can give security to double the amount borrowed. In the same line with this the Farmers' alliance demands that the government shall build granaries throughout the land and advance money upon the farmers' crops as well as to loan money upon their land, and upon whatever other kind of security may be offered.

In these schemes there is involved the whole Roman system in its practical workings. If these things were done the government would inevitably become possessed of a vast amount of land and grain; and with the government in possession of such commodities and having obtained possession of it by such means, the next thing, and according to those principles reasonably enough too, would be a demand that the government should supply grain at a favorable if not a nominal price, to the poorer citizens. But back of all these enterprises, in which it is proposed the government shall embark, there lies the important question, Where shall the government obtain the money to lend to all who want to borrow, and to advance upon the crops of those who want to sell? This government is not engaged in wars of conquest as Rome was, nor has it opportunity to become so.

It is proposed, indeed, by those who advocate the scheme, that the government shall issue treasury notes to supply all the demands. But the more of such notes that the government issues, the less any of them will be worth. A promise of the government to pay is worth no more than that of a private individual, if it has nothing which to make the promise good. The government may print on a piece of paper the promise to pay a dollar or even one thousand dollars; but the only thing that makes that piece of paper worth a dollar, or whatever sum is promised, is the certainty that the government has that sum of real money with which to make the promise good. But if, without any such certainty, the government issues a certain amount of such notes to supply the demands of all who want to borrow and to all who want to sell, as they demand it, it would be but a little while till none of it was worth anything, and those who invented the scheme would discover this as soon as anybody else. Then they would be ready to demand real money, and not mere promises to pay.

But the government would not have real money sufficient to supply the demand, and even the government can not make gold and silver. What then?