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THE COAL COMBINE RAMPANT.

Combines and trusts are about the hardest commercial factors with which the public have to do, and illustrate at times with wonderful force and precision how men may not violate any law of man and still be lawless—worse, sometimes, than those who do violate statutory enactments. In a quiet, unpretentious sort of way, which leaves no palpable ground for suspicion and no possible opportunity for a legal action, a few men sometimes get together and by uniting their capital and facilities upon some corner of the market which has distinctive features in the matter of supply and demand and which everybody must have, they just as noiselessly (on their part) control the trade, undo all recognized rules of traffic and ignore every protest, threat, demand or claim that comes their way.

There never was a fairer or richer field for the sinister performances of this genre than Salt Lake City, this having particular reference to the coal business. From 500 to 1000 tons a day are consumed by families and business houses alone, every ounce of which is purchased from one of a half a dozen firms acting jointly with the railroads. There are no other means of getting it and no one can do without it, especially at this time of the year. What a steady, unvarying market to operate in! How sure the supply, how certain its disposition and how secure the pay! With such a field of operations people at a distance would look for square dealing and reasonable profits, on which terms a good living could be made by those engaged in the business; but those at a distance don't know. It is computed that at \$4 a ton the net profit to the dealer here would be twenty-five per cent, providing he is reasonably equipped for the traffic, which all of those spoken of are. It does not require an insight into the situation to make commercial men anywhere understand that any business in which there are no risks to speak of and which yields such returns is illegitimate or else there is something abnormal in the market; but what would he say if told that even that is not satisfactory to the dealers—that they charge thirty per cent more, and by means of short measure and worthless stuff mixed with their goods bring the amount which the consumer has to pay up about 100 per cent, or \$8 per ton! And of course the increase in the price is all profit, or nearly so, because exacted mostly from shrinkage and worthless trash.

Now, when men combine to keep up this kind of thing, are they guilty of nothing at all? And when the grand jury takes the matter in hand and the

municipal government enacts a law requiring at least honest measurements in the traffic, if the dealers announce that they will have to advance prices if the ordinance is enforced, does it not look very much like a confession of guilt? Suppose a grocer were called upon by the sealer of weights and measures and notified that his scales were untrue, by means of which those who bought a pound of anything only got fourteen ounces; or that his gallon measure had shrunk so much that it would hold only seven pints, and were thereupon to notify the merchant that he must at once conform to the standard, what would he most likely do? If an honest dealer he would show that he was in previous ignorance of the shortage, express regret that there had been any such transactions in his place of business and proceed at once to not only rectify the wrong but, so far as practicable, make restitution to those who had been losers by it; if a dishonest man he would complain of the law's arbitrary methods and announce that by complying with it he would be compelled to advance his prices to meet the difference in his receipts. Is it not so?

This is all wrong, and wrong-doing sooner or later brings loss and disaster to those who persist in it. There can be no reasonable objection to men combining their means and uniting their force for the accomplishment of legitimate enterprises in a lawful and proper way. It is in this manner that the greater business affairs of life which one or two could not create are brought into existence and successful operation, whereby everybody is benefited. It is only when such combinations are effected for the purpose of taking advantage in an unfair as well as illegal manner that the right to complain is recognized. Let it not be supposed that a rightful complaint coming from a whole people and continued so long as the evil complained of is practiced, will be ineffectual for a great length of time; the remedy, sooner or later, will suggest itself and be applied. There is surely enough of profit in selling coal anywhere in this city at \$5.50 per 2000 pounds without dust or dirt; there would be at a dollar less than that, but no matter as to that just now. So long as we get what we pay for, the question of prices can be determined later. Meantime, it would be the part of wisdom to increase the tension no further; if the coal men do as other departments of trade do, the goose may continue laying golden eggs for a season longer, but not beyond that we hope and believe.

A PECULIAR CASE.

Prince Bismarck occupies a peculiar position, one that is more so than any he has yet been in, and his life of late years has been far from exempt from annoying situations. He would have it appear that he interpolated the concluding sentence of King William's reply to the French minister at Ems in 1870, this being the direct cause of the minister's recall and the declaration of war by Louis Napoleon. Bismarck's opponents and enemies claim the other way, that the king himself wrote the entire message and was alone responsible for its contents. It thus ap-

pears that the prince is trying to convict himself of forgery and those who are against him in everything are determined that his innocence shall be established!

That the master mind of the great chancellor and patriotic German was a constant guide to the sturdy Prussian monarch is admitted on all sides; how far such guidance went no one but Bismarck himself can tell. If he made the change claimed by him he did a most shameful thing, the only defense to which is the doubtful one of the end justifying the means. He claims that the interpolation was what provoked France into declaring war, and as a result of the war Germany became a confederation with the former king of a part the emperor of all, implying that the ruler's reply as it came from his hand would not have been such provocation nor resulted in its author's promotion. Can the annals of history furnish a more peculiar case of strategy, not to say criminal, statecraft than this?

THE HOLY SEPULCHER.

Public interest has once more been awakened to some extent in the subject of the true location of the holy sepulcher, by the fact that the English people have been appealed to for the contribution of £4,000 by which to purchase a spot of ground by some supposed to contain the sacred tomb. It is situated a short distance from the Damascus gate and contains about four acres. The high price is accounted for by the fact that the ground in question is in the hands of German speculators. The purchase is recommended by many leading ecclesiastics, among whom are the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops of Salisbury, Ripon and Rochester and the archdeacons of London and Westminster and Professor Stuart Poole.

The question, where was Christ buried? is probably one of the most difficult ones in the whole sacred topography to answer. The cave which is now shown tourists as the holy sepulcher has a very ancient tradition in its favor. The first foundations of the beautiful structure that now covers it date at least as far back as Constantine. And yet recent explorers almost unanimously reject the claim. The sacred historian states that Christ was laid in a tomb near by the place where he was crucified, and no place near by this grave seems to answer the description of Calvary. It is further argued that a place of execution could not have been within the city walls, as this grave is and probably always has been, and that, consequently, the grave must be looked for somewhere farther north. To this argument, the reply is, however, that the grave actually does exist within the walls, and if it could be made there at all, it might certainly be the one which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea and in which the body of the Savior was laid, as well as not. Calvary might have been situated outside the walls and the grave inside and yet be near by that place of execution, since the distance in reality is not very considerable. But, as has been already stated, the best biblical scholars reject the tradition as without foundation in fact.