

LIVE QUESTIONS.

A Series of Articles Contributed by Advanced Thinkers.

THE VALUE OF FRANCHISES.

A year or two ago I was going by boat up the historic and beautiful River Rhine from Bonn to Bingen. I had pointed out to me an immense rock in the middle of the stream that had been converted at one time into a kind of fort or castle.

I was told that a few centuries ago the old German baron who held sway over that part of the world took a notion that there was an immense amount of commerce passing up and down the Rhine and through his domain, and that it ought to pay him tribute.

So he improvised a fort on this rock, and no cargo passed that way afterward unless it paid him a toll for the privilege. The founder of this fort is the originator of custom houses. He also in-



H. S. JULIAN.

vented the idea of a franchise. He was a genius and has been followed by many alleged statesmen and lawmakers. A river is a natural highway, which men from earliest times have utilized for purposes of intercommunication and exchange of surplus produce.

Where nature has not provided natural ways, such as oceans, seas and rivers, men have supplied roads, canals, railroads, etc.

The state may build them itself and charge a toll or stipulated price to recompense itself for the expense of building and operating, or it may grant the right to private persons or a private corporation to build the highway and equip it and allow it to charge a toll or a specified sum to reimburse it for its outlay. Such a grant is called a franchise. Kent defines a franchise to be "a particular privilege conferred by grant from government and vested in individuals." Blackstone says it is "a branch of the king's prerogative subsisting in the hands of a subject."

By virtue of this governmental privilege these persons or corporations can do the same things and exercise the same powers as the government itself in opening up highways.

So it is usually left to fix its own schedule of prices as to what it will charge for its services so as to reimburse itself. And the excessive charges that these corporations have collected are a great burden to the people. The railroads are the greatest sinners in this respect, for they control and carry nineteen-twentieths of the commerce of the country.

There is an opinion that the railroad companies own their roads and right of way. It is erroneous as a proposition of law. They no more own them than an overseer of a country road or a street commissioner owns them. They simply manage them for the public.

All that they have a right to charge is a reasonable amount to pay them for the expense of opening the highway and maintaining and operating it, but they have proceeded upon the principle of "charging" all the traffic will "bear." Our laws have, under the guise of a franchise, the same power to extort that the old German baron took to himself, and our modern baron has perfected it in detail, filed off the rough corners and made it more comprehensive. To give an example of how this "franchise business" is utilized to extort from producer and consumer alike: A few men get a right to build a railroad. They can go through anybody's land, because they are opening a public highway. They further have a right to immediately take charge of the highway, lay the tracks and operate the road. Suppose it costs them \$1,000,000 to do this, they would be entitled to charge enough to pay them a good return for their investment and the operating expenses. Investigate any of these concerns, and you will find that little attention is paid to what is invested, but rather, what can the commerce along their route be made to pay? The capitalization stocks and bonds usually run up to 5, 10 or 15 times the amount they have invested.

This is usually termed "water," and it is equal to the value of franchises. Garrison and Gould bought the Missouri Pacific railroad from the state of Missouri in 1873 for \$6,000,000. Were they at all punctilious about making it earn dividends only on \$6,000,000? No. They had the power under the laws of Missouri to fix their own charters. So inside of five years they increased their capitalization to \$70,000,000, the profits on which the people tributary to that road have been paying ever since. The New York Central railroad, extending from New York city to Buffalo, a distance of 401 miles, was built for about \$45,000 per mile, or \$18,045,000, yet the owners have capitalized it for \$152,000,000, or, in other words, the state, by giving them the right or franchise, made them a present of \$134,000,000.

The Western Union's plant can be reproduced for \$15,000,000, yet for years it has paid 6 1/2 per cent on a capitalization of over \$100,000,000, and in 1890, I think, had a \$18,000,000 surplus. Estimate the cost of a plant, deduct

the amount from the capitalization and the amount remaining is the value of the franchise. H. S. JULIAN. Kansas City.

"WHY IS CRIME INCREASING?"

The timely article by J. W. Caldwell, showing the discrepancy between the teachings of the last census report and those of President Cleveland's late missionary address, not only sets forth in plain light the lamentable weakness and sectional shortsightedness of the president of the United States, but closes with two questions, pertinent to the times, which the writer desires to see answered—viz: 1. "Why is crime increasing in the east more rapidly than in the west?" 2. "What shall we do to decrease crime?"

Both of these questions are answered by answering the first one. If one can point out the cause of increasing crime, then the decrease of crime can be accomplished by the removal of that cause.

To take up the first question, the general cause of crime is poverty. From actual conditions of poverty and from conditions which spring from these—such as the fear of poverty and the false standard of life which the fear of it and a corresponding worship of wealth sets up—nearly all crime springs.

Crime is greatest in the east because there is the greatest concentration of wealth, and because under our present system of wealth accumulation the increase of poverty regularly accompanies the concentration of wealth. If evidence is needed in confirmation of this terrible fact we might, from among many others who have given similar testimony, select the terse statement in "Progress and Poverty" made by Henry George: "In the United States squalor and misery and the vices and crimes that spring from them everywhere increase as the village grows to the city and the march of development brings the advantages of the improved methods of production and exchange. It is in the older and richer sections of the Union that pauperism and distress among the working classes are becoming most painfully apparent."

Or if one wished to go farther in evidence and to include England, where a similar concentration of wealth is taking place, and summon from thence such a man as Professor Huxley, who says in regard to his testimony, "I have no pretensions to the character of a philanthropist, and I have a special horror of all sorts of sentimental rhetoric; I am merely trying to deal with the facts," he might hear him saying in his "Social Diseases and Worse Remedies": "Any one who is acquainted with the state of the population of all great industrial centers, whether in this or other countries, is aware that amid a large and increasing body of that population laboring in misery reigns supreme. * * * And I take it to be a mere plain truth that throughout industrial Europe there is not a single large manufacturing city which is free from a vast mass of people whose condition is exactly that described, and from a still greater mass who, living just on the edge of the social swamp, are liable to be precipitated into it by any lack of demand for their produce. And with every addition to the population the multitude already sunk in the pit increases."

These conditions exist because they are the legitimate and necessary offspring of a system of business distribution and social production which has for its maxim "the survival of the strongest," and which is even now adding to that, as if that were not demagogical enough, "the survival of the greatest consolidations of the strongest individuals."

Every step gained in this select survival of the strong throws out a certain number of non-survivors to live as they can, and every step gained in the more exclusive survival of combinations of the strong doubles and quadruples the number already thus added to the ranks of poverty and the sources of crime.

The east is increasing in crime more rapidly than the west because the east furnishes freest scope for the social system of selfish individualism. On the shoulders of this brawny and promising child—but tyrannical adult—lies the whole responsibility for the increase in crime. To destroy crime we must destroy the system and put in its place some co-operative effort in the production and distribution of human necessities which would be controlled by the whole people for the public good.

But this we cannot do. Destruction other than by nature's laws of gradual modification is dangerous and futile. Humanity cannot skip any spot in its development, even though it be beneath the tyrant's lash and over ground wet with the tears of human suffering. The present system must wear itself out of itself, and the perception of threadbare garments, while announcing the end, does not justify nakedness.

In the meantime, however, evil may be checked. The lover of humanity must resist at every step the encroachment of the asserted rights of paltry gain upon the rights of human life. Life is the thing for which life's means exist. Men are our brothers—all men are. There is something nobler in life than the heaping of its tools. There is something better to develop in human nature than the greed for gain.

Who are the sufferers from this? All of us. Not the poor alone, though that were bad enough. The idle son of the wealthy father is as great a curse to society as the criminal and generally the direct or indirect cause of many crimes. He is a standing menace to society, a cause of nights of anguish to his mother and of a haunting dread that follows his father day and night. He is one of the products of the times and one of the causes of eastern crime.

It is something, perhaps, to see these things. We may not be able to remove crime by the removal of poverty because the cause of poverty is so thoroughly built into our present social structure, but we can do a man's work each in his own way in checking it, and especially at the ballot box.

W. G. TODD.

An exchange prints some unreliable information about dreams. "To dream that a policeman has you in charge is a sign that you will escape from some impending evil." Not if Officer Knorr has you in tow. "A dream of a new pair of shoes means that you will succeed against your adversaries." Not if your would-be father-in-law wears them. "To dream of clear water denotes success in business." But suppose you get in deep water. "To dream about a piece of bacon, particularly if it is on your own plate, means the death of a near relative." In other words, you are a pig, and your friend was previously killed. "If you see a candle go out in a dream, some misfortune is impending." Just so. You are left in the dark.

Easy to Take Easy to Operate

Are features peculiar to Hood's PILLS. Small in size, tasteless, efficient, thorough. As one man

Hood's Pills

said: "You never know you have taken a pill till it is all over." Dr. C. I. Hood & Co., Proprietors, Lowell, Mass. The only pills to take with Hood's Sarsaparilla.

One of the Few

certainties in treating disease is counter irritation—the effect, usually, of plasters. But Johnson's Belladonna Plaster is more than a mere excitant of the skin; it relieves and cures also by the absorption of its medicinal properties. Hence the sureness and thoroughness of the relief it gives. There are other good plasters, but this is the best. And the best is what we want. The genuine bears the Red Cross. Look for it.

JOHNSON & JOHNSON, Manufacturing Chemists, New York.

Advertisement for Seelig's Wine, featuring a bottle illustration and text: "Every man's wife who has used SEELIG'S knows a good drink. Try it on your husband."

Advertisement for Ely's Cream Balm, featuring a bottle illustration and text: "Ely's Cream Balm cures colds, catarrh, hay fever, and other ailments."

Advertisement for Fine PHOTOGRAPHS and CRAYONS at McKillip Bros., Bloomsburg. The best are the cheapest.

Large advertisement for Acme Crown Oil, featuring a large logo and text: "ASK FOR THE BOTTLE ON LIGHT AND GIVES THE BEST LIGHT IN THE WORLD AND ABSOLUTELY SAFE."

Advertisement for Scott's Emulsion, featuring a large illustration of a man carrying a large fish on his back. Text: "Scott's Emulsion Will Cure a Stubborn Cough when ordinary specifics fail. It restores strength to the weakened organs and gives the system the force needed to throw off the disease."

Advertisement for Alexander Brothers & Co., Dealers in Cigars, Tobacco, Candies, Fruits and Nuts. Sole agents for Henry Maillard's Fine Candies and F. F. Adams & Co's Fine Cut Chewing Tobacco.

Advertisement for W. H. Moore, Shoemaker. Text: "SHOES! Our Spring Styles of Shoes are nearly all. 25 years experience in shoe buying puts us in the front rank of shoe dealers. Comfort, style and durability are combined in our shoes. W. H. Moore, Corner Iron and Main Sts."

Advertisement for W. W. Watts, Iron Street. Text: "For the finest and best stoves, tinware, roofing, spouting and general job work, go to W. W. Watts, on Iron street. Buildings heated by steam, hot air or hot water in a satisfactory manner. Sanitary Plumbing a specialty. I have the exclusive control of the Thatcher steam, hot water and hot air heaters for this territory, which is acknowledged to be the best heater on the market. All work guaranteed. W. W. Watts, Bloomsburg, Pa."

Advertisement for City Hotel, managed by Peter F. Reidy. Text: "CITY HOTEL, Peter F. Reidy, Manager. No. 121 West Main Street, BLOOMSBURG, PA. Large and convenient sample rooms. Bath rooms, hot and cold water, and all modern conveniences. Bar stocked with best wines and liquors. First-class livery attached."

Large advertisement for Wanamaker & Brown, Philadelphia. Text: "Greatest Clothing Event ever occurred. The oldest established woolen mill and makers of the Best woolen goods in the U S.—Genuine Edward Harris gives up business—stops manufacturing for good. We bought entire stock of cloth—Made it in Clothing—Will sell at fifty cents on the dollar. 50 cents on the \$1.00 Suits \$7.75 to \$20.00 Last opportunity to get this reliable make of cloth. Notwithstanding the prices, we're paying Railroad Fare on purchases of moderate amount, as usual. WANAMAKER & BROWN, Sixth and Market Sts. WM. H. WANAMAKER, Twelfth and Market Sts. PHILADELPHIA. SAME AS EVER."

Advertisement for Bloomsburg Store Co., Ltd. Text: "Feet wet again? You'll die some day. Before long, too, if you don't take care of those feet. Some of the newest, most desirable things in wet weather shoes are here. Bloomsburg Store Co., Ltd."

Table titled 'THE MARKETS. BLOOMSBURG MARKETS. CONNECTED WEEKLY. RETAIL PRICES.' listing various commodities and their prices, such as Butter per lb., Eggs per dozen, Lard per lb., etc.

Advertisement for Hires Rootbeer and New England Conservatory. Text: "Hires Rootbeer contains the best herbs, berries and roots nature makes for rootbeer making. Take no other. Made only by The Charles E. Hires Co., Philadelphia. A 2 1/2 gal. package makes 2 gallons. Sold everywhere. NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC, BOSTON, MASS. Send for Prospectus giving full information. FRANK W. HALL, General Manager. MARKET SQUARE GALLERY, 11-22-17. Over Hartman's Store."