

**THE PLAGUE AND  
PERIL OF  
MONOPOLY**

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The Plague and Peril of Monopoly by Parker Pillsbury

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**PARKER PILLSBURY**

**THE PLAGUE AND  
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THE 29294  
PLAGUE AND PERIL  
OF  
MONOPOLY:

A LECTURE ON LABOR, LABORERS, AND EMPLOYÉS, DELIVERED  
IN LYNN, SALEM, HAVERHILL, AND GEORGETOWN,  
MASS., IN THE AUTUMN OF 1882,

BY  
PARKER PILLSBURY.

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*The Destruction of the Poor is their Poverty.*

Proverbs 10: 15.

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1887.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. This ensures transparency and allows for easy verification of the data.

2. The second section covers the process of reconciling accounts. It explains how to compare the company's internal records with the bank statements to identify any discrepancies. Regular reconciliation helps in detecting errors or fraud early on.

3. The third part of the document addresses the issue of budgeting. It provides guidelines on how to set realistic financial goals and allocate resources accordingly. A well-defined budget is essential for the long-term success of any organization.

4. The final section discusses the role of technology in modern accounting. It highlights the benefits of using accounting software to streamline processes, reduce manual errors, and provide real-time insights into the company's financial health.

## INTRODUCTION.

At the time of the delivery of the following address, there were frequent and earnest calls for its publication. It was given in other places than those named in the title-page, generally to large audiences, and sometimes followed by discussion; though its facts and statements were never questioned, nor did any ever complain of its temper or spirit.

At that period the labor and capital question was in tempestuous agitation. Strikes were frequent,—perhaps at times successful to a degree; labor leagues and unions were numerous, but not then unreasonably violent in many instances; while anarchy, boycotting, and dynamite constituted no part of the warfare. Nor are they, nor can they ever be, of anything but disastrous influence to any righteous cause, as none can know too well. The rights, wrongs, and grievances of labor are strongly stated, as well of women as of men; and full, even-handed justice is demanded for both, under the Confucian as well as the Christian Golden Rule of “doing to others as we would have others do to us,” and that under all conceivable circumstances.

The lessons of the lecture are mainly to what are now termed the *laboring class*—the class from whence nearly every capitalist came. The old Greek prophecy was, “The gods help those most who best help themselves.” Of only *self-help* can any be sure. Legislation is nothing; lectures are less than nothing to those who do not help wisely and well themselves. And in our country self-help, well and wisely directed, is almost sure to win. The slave power of our Southern states forbade all slaves even *the alphabet*. It was

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A. V. M.

high crime to teach even the *free colored people* to read, or to give them a Testament or a primer. Now all the rich and well-to-do are taxed to fit the poorest and the blackest for college, if they so desire. That the rich, having the power, do shamefully and most unrighteously abuse it, to the degradation and destruction of myriads of the poor—men, women, and children—is not to be denied. That multitudes pine in want, and die every year, who commit no sins against society nor against themselves, who drink no intoxicants, touch no tobacco, indulge in no unclean or ungodly lusts, must be known to any who will kindly visit the homes of the laboring poor—as every rich man and woman should delight to do. True, they have books, and can read them; arithmetics, and can study them; the ballot, and can use it (if only not *women*). But they are now as those passengers who have got left: the train has started—is way out of their sight. But something can yet be done; something must be done; and by the help of all the good gods and angels, something shall be done—and wisely done, too. To that end was this address written and delivered four or five years ago. To that end it is now reproduced in another form.

P. P.

Concord, N. H., May-day, 1887.



## LECTURE.

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No sadder sight is ever seen than a working man, or working woman, able, willing, and obliged to work or to starve, and yet starving—and perhaps children with them—for want of work to do. And when we know how often great numbers are in that condition, the spectacle becomes sadder still. And when we remember that our resources are ample to feed and clothe all the peoples of the Western Hemisphere, what can we say of such a spectacle?

Our country seems some sleeping giant, pillowing his head on almost the Arctic snows; his feet nestling amid the ever-blooming flowers of the sunny South, and grasping in his left hand the rising, and in his right the setting, sun; and capable of producing and diffusing plenty, prosperity, and felicity to unnumbered millions of human beings!

Our national domain is not only vast in extent, but boasts a salubrity of climate, and a fertility and variety of soil, to challenge the admiration and tempt the cupidity of mankind: and we might maintain in affluence a population, not of tens but of hundreds of millions. And yet, with only about fifty or sixty millions, we have hundreds of thousands—some say we have millions—ready to perish, and all for want of work to do.

But our world of landed wealth seems under enchantment. The poorest of the poor can scarcely approach it. Traditionary legislation, or sordid speculation, has snatched it from humanity, and now it is held for sale

to highest bidders, and very frequently at such prices as that only the rich, or well-to-do, can buy at all; and most of such buy to hold for higher prices. And such are our immense distances that even our preëmption laws seem but a tantalizing and insulting mockery, superadded to the miseries already endured by multitudes who live all their lives on the very verge of starvation. And yet our lands alone, did we know what to do with them, might enrich and bless the whole family of man; and our harvests, where we do cultivate, are often no more than sixty or thirty fold, when they might and should be a hundred and-a thousand fold.

There is a story of an ancient husbandman with three daughters. When one married he gave her one third of the farm; but the remaining two thirds were made to produce as much as did the whole before. Another daughter married, and received her third of the original farm. But, by better care and improved culture, the one third remaining was made to yield as much as did the whole at first.

It used to be said of the Yankee farmer that he would never be satisfied till he owned all the land adjoining him. It was true in part; and that was why there were so many who were always called "land poor."

Nature seems to have provided that too much of any good thing may be worse than nothing; and too much land ownership will generally sooner or later, like every other monopoly, prove only a curse either to the owners or to their posterity.

Titles to land, beyond proper and profitable use and improvement, are beginning to be loudly questioned in both hemispheres, and will not always be allowed in either hemisphere. A slave owner once pursued a fugitive all the way to Vermont. He brought him, with his witnesses and bill of the purchase and other proofs, before Judge Harrington. It was in the year 1808. The case appeared very clear, and the evidence of ownership was conclusive, till the judge asked the claimant, "Have you brought a bill of sale from his Creator, sir?"

But he had no such bill, and his victim went free. Land titles will one day be required from the same Almighty authority, where actual occupancy, constant use, and wise improvement have established no claim.

In the year 1066 was fought the memorable battle of Hastings, in the south of England, giving that country to an invader from the north of Europe, since known in history as William the Norman or Northman, sometimes as William the Conqueror. Much of the wealth of the country at that time was in its lands, a great part of which were forests. Game was among the richest harvests; and hunting that game was a chief occupation of the land-owners, when not abroad hunting and butchering their fellow-men in war.

The poor, before the Conquest, were no better in the landlord's sight than the beasts with which they toiled and among which they dwelt. Nor did the Conqueror much mend their conditions, beyond a change of masters. They owned nothing before, could acquire nothing afterward. The feudal system of government was introduced, and the invader proceeded to parcel out the lands among the savage chieftains, to whose valor he owed the whole subjugated domain. And that was in great part the origin of the immense landed possessions held there to-day,—so immense that Mr. John Bright lately declared in a public speech, that 935 men own more than 23,000,000 acres in the United Kingdom. But that would average scarcely 25,000 acres to each, though the Duke of Breadalbane, it is said, drives a hundred miles in direct line on his own land, and then is only stopped by the sea. And the Duke of Sutherland owns the county of Sutherland, comprising nearly eighteen hundred square miles, or about one fourth as many miles as the whole state of Massachusetts. And one third of England is owned by less than a thousand persons. But land monopoly is rapidly growing as great a curse in America as in Britain,—in New England as in Old England,—to produce in time, doubtless, more dire results.