

**THE PROBLEM.  
SHALL  
AVARICE RULE?**

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The Problem. Shall Avarice Rule? by John A. Bliss

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**JOHN A. BLISS**

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THE

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SHALL AVARICE RULE ?

Bliss, John A.

WHY OUR GOVERNMENT WAS MADE A REPUBLIC. HOW IT HAS DRIFTED  
FROM ITS MOORINGS AND FALLEN INTO THE HANDS OF PIRATES. IT  
IS A GOVERNMENT OF MILLIONAIRES BY MILLIONAIRES FOR MILL-  
IONAIRES. IN ITS MANAGEMENT THE PEOPLE HAVE VERY  
LITTLE VOICE.

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NOTE.—In making selections from the writings of others it has been our aim to take only such matter as appeared to be pertinent to the subject under discussion. Every effort has been made to carry with the selections the real opinions of the writers, but it is sometimes quite impossible to drop out portions of a discourse without altering to some extent the sentiments expressed. If this has occurred it is the misfortune and not the intention of the author.

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## PREFACE.

The object of this pamphlet is to turn the thought of the earnest working men of our country to the social problem of the times. For nearly three-quarters of a Century the new Government, on trial in this country proved a pronounced success. It gained the love of our own citizens, and the respect of the outside world. So long as it was honestly administered the people were satisfied and prosperous.

To day, institutions and combinations are growing up among us which are outstripping in power and influence the government itself. These institutions menace the perpetuity of the Government, and threaten the liberties of the people. By the aid of modern inventions and combinations of capital, single individuals are enabled to control vast interests—sometimes rivaling in extent the wealth of whole States.

These combinations control the transportation of the country. They own the mines of iron and coal. The most profitable branches of the manufacturing industries are largely in their hands. By their ponderous weight they break down the competition of men of moderate means. By the combination of combinations they are enabled to exact from the masses enormous profits on fictitious capital; and through their frauds grow rich while honest men are kept in poverty. They ply their "trade" in the halls of legislation. The caucus and convention are governed by their intrigues. The newspaper is brought into requisition to mould public opinion, and the courts of justice are prostituted to their use.

The government which but a few years ago challenged the admiration of the world has become the laughing stock of the nations.

Reclass. 2-21-30 A. V. M.

The doctrine of equality inaugurated by the founders of the republic is but a hollow mockery.

With our "kings of finance" money has become a craze. The "almighty dollar" is their God. In the wild struggle to possess it, the weak go down and the strong trample them beneath their feet. A million dollars is the goal of their ambition—and heartless avarice eagerly gathers it in, regardless of the homes that are wrecked; the hearts that are broken.

Such a social system is a shame to the nation; a curse to the world. The masses are beginning to study the problem for themselves. They are becoming restive under the coercive measures instituted by the government to further the schemes of wealth. Dangers threaten on every hand. The Summer sky is gathering blackness. That ominous vibration that comes to the ear like the muttering of distant thunder, portends disaster! It is the united cry of down-trodden millions! It is the heart sob wrung from the bitter lives of earth's "heavy laden," and it will not be stifled! It is the seething indignation of the victims of avarice! It is "The Irrepressible Conflict." Alas! that it should go up to Heaven from our fair land, once proudly named "the home of the oppressed."

THE AUTHOR.



THE  
IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT.

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PART I.

In the earlier ages of civilization conquest of territory gave to the king the right to apportion the acquired lands to such of his followers as had by their intrepidity and courage earned the right to a distinguished title. Thus by the favor of the king nations were divided into feudal estates. As civilization advanced, these estates were still kept up by the laws of entailment—the estate being transmitted to the eldest son.

The king in conferring title and estate gave with it the control of such peasantry as already inhabited the acquired territory—thus making the newly created noble practically owner of the tenantry. From taxes levied on this tenantry the lord drew his support; and when the king needed help for further foraging, the services of these retainers were freely turned over to him with such rude implements of warfare as they possessed. This noble was the umpire who settled all disputes—not hesitating to take matters of life and death into his own hand—and to whose need or whim they must at any time give up the products of the small patch of earth they rudely cultivated. Protests were without avail and endangered the life of him who uttered them. In all cases the *ipse dixit* of their noble master was the end of the law.

This was the condition of the social system of Europe when the New World was discovered. With a better civilization came greater consideration for the rights of the tenantry—at least there came a tardy admission that the tenantry had rights which the aristocracy were bound to respect. Still the heel of nobility was on their necks, and to be born the son of a peasant was to inherit a life of unchangeable poverty and servitude.

With the settlement of the New World came a new era. The king aimed to build up the Government of the new country after the same pattern and make it a province tributary to Great Britain. But the lords to whom he gave grants and sent out to establish colonies found they had difficult elements to handle. The common people making up their Colonies were possessed of characteristics they were unaccustomed to deal with. The call for volunteers to colonize the New World was answered not by the stolid peasantry whose blood ran thick and turbid from centuries of servitude, but by men possessed of brain and ambition,—who had the courage to carve out their fortunes in the New World with the rifle and the axe.

These colonists were a motly mingling;—the brightest and bravest of the English yeomanry came with the hope of becoming land holders—a thing hopeless in the old country;—desperadoes who found a residence in London no longer safe were permitted to depart without question;—second sons who found their position of dependence unbearable were well represented here;—religious enthusiasts came for freedom to worship God. These people brought with them a deep seated hatred of oppression and titled nobility—they had little respect for the powdered wigs sent over to govern them and but little reverence for the distant king. Side by side they fought the Indian, pestilence, and famine; growing stronger in the face of these grave dangers and steadily working out for themselves and their descendants the problem of freedom and equality.

This people were jealous of their rights and quick to resent any oppressive measures instituted by the king. From such material the army of the Revolution was recruited. They fought not for glory, nor for power; but for the principle that all men are born free and equal. They fought to free themselves from the thralldom of

kings and lords, and to save their posterity from becoming a race of vassals. They fought to cut the arms of that deadly octopus which sucks the life of the common people—landlordism. To give to their children the chance of growth and progression, and the nobility of owning the spot of earth they occupied and called their home. The idea that the rights of the poor, as well as the rights of the rich, should receive consideration, was strongly incorporated in the plan mapped out for the government of the new country.

These people demanded that the country should be freed from the incubus of titled aristocracy. In answer to this demand the founders of our Government embodied in the Constitution what they deemed a sufficient safeguard against the accumulation of vast estates with a numerous tenantry reduced to a state of dependence and servitude. It was believed that if the titles and grants, and life tenures and entailments could be wiped out, and the holders of public offices made to step down and out at stated intervals, all would have an equal chance, and the ever recurring vicissitudes of fortune would so check the power of individual avarice that fortunes of a magnitude so great as to grind and oppress the poor, would be a thing of the past.

How great have been the changes wrought in a hundred years. The power of steam and electricity has been made subservient to the hand of man. The improvements in the mechanical appliances that may be manipulated by the subtle mind of the monopolist in getting money, have so far outstripped the efforts of our fathers for the amelioration of the condition of the poor, that we are again floundering in a sea of trouble,—a trouble as serious, as insufferable as that from which our forefathers escaped through the instrumentality of the new Constitution.

The avarice of man knows no bounds. The rapidity with which capital is falling into the hands of the few, astonishes the world. Not satisfied with the power of individual fortunes, the rich unite their wealth to give it greater power. Under the name of Railway Companies they have shackled the land with bands of iron, and made the whole people tributary to their aggrandizement. These combinations have thrown the chains of extortion around the mines of coal, and the fire goes out on the poor man's hearth. Under the name of insurance they have built up immense fortunes by plunder-