ONE DOLLAR A YEAR WEEKLY

THE RANCH

THE TRUTH IS ENOUGH

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PROSPECTS.

We do not believe in "trusts," but there is good in every honest combination that regulates marketing so as to avoid ruinous competition. For example, the Portland dealers tried to break the market on strawberries and forced prices down to a point that would hardly pay shipping expenses. The fruit growers' union then got in its work and refused to deliver at less than profitable prices, and prices, too, that the consumers were perfectly willing to pay. The union won, of course, and the growers made a fair profit. The fruit growers of California have been gradually combining by counties and districts. Now there seems to be a combination of various movements that bid fair to result in a general union of the fruit growers of the state. The latest is the California Canneries company, that is inviting all the canneries into a general company or "trust" that will control the output and the market, and put a stop to the wholesale cutting of prices that has prevailed of late years. As the canneries are run by companies of fruit growers, this "trust" is in reality a union of producers. If run properly it need not materially raise prices to consumers, but will save middlemen's profits in large measure, while regulating shipments and marketing generally, and thereby save living prices to the original producers.

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You, Mr. Voter, are to blame if the county commissioners don't do the business to suit you; if the town officers and the school directors fail in their duty to the people. The trouble began when you neglected to go to the primary in your district when the delegates to the various conventions were chosen. The result was that men went to the conventions who did not represent your ideas; and so when election day came you either voted for them "straight" or else you staid at home, disgusted, or indifferent to the result. The professional politician declares that if he can control the primary, the ballot box will take care of itself—and of him as well. In these latter days of an old century, when many people are looking forward wistfully toward a long hoped-for millenial age, too many of them look to the great All Father to do their work for them and bring about the desired reforms at a stroke. The French saying, that "Heaven helps him who helps himself," applies in political reforms as well as elsewhere, and the beginning of self help in government is at the local primary. Try it this year!

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The position of those who have urged the McCann investigation is that machinery is not being used to give the masses of men a better show in the world, but to improve the financial condition of those already wealthy; and that the masses increase and exist upon restricted means. Not that the operatives themelves thus live, but when one man with his machine performs the labor of five or ten men, the other four or nine are thrown out of employment altogether or are forced to seek something to do in other lines, with the probability of finding them overcrowded with men more skilled than themselves. And thus the crowding-out process goes on in every department of labor. The things to be gotten at are first, what are the facts? and second, if adverse to labor, what can be done to remedy the evil? Mr. McCann's proposed investigation is strictly proper and should be thorough. In the opinion of some of the world's greatest thinkers inventive genius at present is chargeable with a very large share of the world's idleness and depression; not through the intent of inventors, but through the greed of those who monopolize their creations. It is not the province of inventors to cheapen articles of consumption at the fearful expense of degrading labor.

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If It were a fact that the introduction of labor-saving machinery was followed by improvement in the condition of labor that theoretically ought to follow, there would be little call for the congressional investigation proposed by Representative McCann. As this is a disputed condition, however, the investigation may be useful as settling the point. If the products of man's ingenuity are being used by capital to "corner" labor and the products of labor, so that in reality the condition of the working man is made worse instead of better, as many allege, then the inquiry may result in good, as leading to suggestions for means to check the evil tendency. It is labor and not capital that is entitled to the chief benefits. Machinery should lessen the hours of labor, not curtail the number of laborers. No one believes that such will not, in the process of time, be the result. But he must be a fool, or be blind to the state of affairs, who sees such a result in the present condition of things.

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The tie-up of all the railroads in the United States that run Pullman cars by strikes of the railroad men, out of sympathy with the workmen at the Pullman shops, who struck because Mr. Pullman refused to recognize the grand principle of arbitration in certain differences with his 14,000 employes, is certain to lead to a more general consideration of the important question of government control of the railroads. Frauds in connection with the Central, Union and Southern Pacific railroads, by which the people were robbed of some hundreds of millions of dollars for the benefit of a few men; the commonweal troubles; the old question of interstate commerce—all of these questions go to pile up the arguments in favor of closer government control of the institutions or agencies for communication or transportation between and among the people of all sections of the common domain. The unqualified and undisputed success of the government management of postal communication will necessarily soon lead to absorption o the telegraph as a part of the same system. Next will logically follow the transportation of persons and commodities, of which carriage of information by mail and telegraph is only the beginning.

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The loss of perishable freight in the present railroad tie-up, especially of fruits, milk and vegetables, must amount to many millions of dollars, and will fall upon the railroads. The indirect loss in early fruits, etc., that demand prompt marketing, will be greater still, and will fall on the growers. Such arguments talk! That undue power might not be given to politicians by government control of transportation, will require an extended and rigid application of civil service rules to certain fitness of employes, and life service to good workmen. In England the government control ex-