THE STATE AND RAILROADS.

Shall the Former Own and Control the Latter?

THOUGHTFUL ARTICLE UPON THE SUBJECT.

Over Speculation and Bad Administration the Cause of Many Roads Going Into Bankruptcy During the Past Twenty Years.

Edward Everett Hale, in New York Independent: The maintenance of roads and their use have adjusted themselves, in most of our towns and states, on a basis of pure communism. The town, or county; or state, owns the right of way and maintains the road at public charge; and every person, citizen or not, uses the road or street without thought of paying any toll for the advantage. So far has the system gone, indeed, that, if the road is not well maintained, and the traveler is injured by a failure of the public to maintain it, the traveler may recover damages from the public for the failure.

The people are beginning to observe that a railroad is a road also, and to ask what reasons there are why the plan or principle which has been generally approved in practice regarding other roads should not be applied to them. In cases where the right of way is already in the public, as where rails are put down on roadways already open to travel, this question is pressed with the more urgency.

Under the feudal system, which was wholly different from ours, the maintenance of roads and the profit were, like everything else, in the hands of the strongest. Thus, a baron got possession of the passes of the Rhine, and he taxed the commerce with all the tolls it would bear: or he built a bridge over a river, and took all the toll the travel and traffic would bear. But the feudal system broke down in America about ten minutes after any party of colonists landed and tried the experiments of their new land. Feudalism meant, after all, simply this: "I have better armor than you. I can kill you, when you cannot kill me;" and a series of laws and precedents had grown up, conferring what were called "feudal rights" on the people that had this armor. But the armor was good for nothing after gunpowder came in, and the laws and precedents would not wash in salt water; so that, in about ten minutes after landing, the colonists of any region substituted for the rights of the lord of the manor the rights of everybody, and a set of communisms came in, under which we live now. Thus in place of education of the higher classes, comes education of everybody; in place of land titles in the muniment chest of a castle, comes registration of titles at public charge, for everybody; in place of a few thousand land owners, under whom hold some hundred thousand tenants, there is a state of freeholders, and everybody owns land who wants to. On the whole, the drift of centuries follows out this original plan. Thus, in place of separate hospitals, which this brotherhood or that establishes, for this class or that, the state establishes its blind asylum, or its deaf and dumb asylum for all.

Still with this drift toward communism in certain matters, there is the most determined individualism in other matters. This comes out curiously in Mr. Weedon's wonderful book, the "Economic and Social History of New England." For New England, in this regard, is but a type of what the rest of the country is and has been. Thus, a man finds a deposit of bog ore, and he runs at once to his dear mother, the state, to tell her about it: "Dear state, you have been so generous about the schools. Dear state, you have given us all equal rights in the roads. Dear state, we are so glad that all of us have to serve in the train bands." And the grumpy old mother says Yes; that all these things involved universal necessities, and she had been glad to attend to them.

"And, dear mamma, is not iron a universal necessity?"

"The State (not quite awake)—Umph! mes; I suppose so.

Jubal (encouraged) — Well, dear oamma, I have found ever so much iron Yre

State (indifferently)—Have you? Well, you had better go and smelt it and forge it.

Jubal—But, dear mamma, I thought perhaps you would like to go shares with me, or maybe do it for me.

State (wide awake now)—I do your work for you, you lazy dog? Do it yourself. Go about your business.

And the incident is exhausted. This thing has happened, again and again, all down the history, and no timid people need be afraid that it will not be often repeated.

But where is it that the dividing line comes in? Why is the state so cross to Jubal with his iron when she did take, for instance, the whole business of education? Why does the state make muskets, and make them, one may say, perfectly well, and why does the State refuse to make jack-knives and axes? Why does the state carry the letters at a uniform price, and at the same time refuse to carry the telegrams? Why does the city of New York keep Broadway in condition for all travelers, and the city of Brooklyn keep Fulton avenue in like condition, and then turn round and charge a toll on the bridge across the channel? Broadway, first and last, has cost the city of New York more than the suspension bridge cost. Why is there no toll-gate on Broadway, while there is a toll-gate on the bridge? Such are a few out of a hundred questions; and our special question now is: Why is a macadamized road made by the county or state and open free to each and all, and why must a railroad be made and owned by a private corporation? Why should not the state own the railroad?

Into the history of the distinction I have no space to go. But it is very curious. I have myself little doubt that we are approaching the turn of the tide, and that the next century will see the American railroads generally controlled by the public, as the Belgian railroads, for instance, are controlled by the state today. But it is not a question to be decided by an epigram or an analogy. It is a curious and intricate question, I might say, with more than two sides to it. The experts are not unanimous, and, for the adjustment of details, much wisdom and especially great common sense are needed.

It is, however, before one begins to discuss the question, interesting to observe that, in many important instances, the nation has already done the thing proposed, and is now doing it. What is more, the nation does it well. Overspeculation and bad administration have in the last twenty years reduced only too many railways to bankruptcy. Trade must be kept up. The daily lines must run, or the property becomes worse than worthless. In these cases, the nation, acting by a United States court steps in. The nation appoints "a receiver." Observe that the poor fellow has not a cent of capital to work with, he must take the daily earnings to do his daily work with. Yet in many instances of great importance, as our readers know, such men are now carrying on railroads more successfully than the owners carried them on. They make both ends meet, as the owners could not.

Now one would not say that the supreme and district courts of the United States were the best conceivable bureau of internal commerce. But they have had this thing to do, and they have done it. Nobody can say the thing can not be done; for it has been done, and is done today.

I have studied with a good deal of care the instances given in Mr. Weedon's book of the assumption by the state of what the Stuart Mill kind of people call the duties of the individuals, and of its failure and its success.

Probably a rough statement of the principle may be made thus: If the need be a need which every one feels, almost equally, if not quite equally, the state does well to interfere. If, on the other hand, the need is only indirectly felt by some persons or classes, and much more closely felt by other persons or classes, the classes most in need will do best to take care of themselves.

Thus, all the people need education; therefore, let the state educate: All the people need roads; let the state maintain roads. All the people need water; let the state provide water. All the people of cities need light at night; let the city light the streets. [The blind people say: "We do not need it." But the city replies, and rightly: "You are too few, we cannot stop to count you."] All the people need registration of titles, therefore the state registers. All the people need immunity from smallpox, therefore the state vaccinates. All the people need justice and protection, say from tramps and banditti, therefore the state provides policemen and courts.

Now under this principle try Jubal and his iron. Jubal says: "All the people need iron." But this is not true in the sense in which they all need water; and some people will be veay much more profited by Jubal's iron than others; perhaps he will himself. At bottom this is probably the reason why the state does not undertake his iron-work, or regrets it when she does.

Do all the people need muskets? Yes; if the state is to exist. She must protect herself; therefore she makes muskets.

"But surely all the people need jack-knives," you say in triumph. No; not in the sense of water, or of muskets. And one man wants one kind and another another. The word jack-knife deceives you. I am not satisfied with Robert's knife nor he with mine. The state cannot interfere, therefore, under one principle.

Do not all the people need light at night in the streets? I should say yes, and that where it is made mechanically the state should make it. Do not all people need bread as much as water? There comes in the jack-knife difficulty; one man wants a French loaf, and another brown bread.

Now test this approach to a statement of principles, in our question about railroads. It is a practical question of today. The Massachusetts railroads, for instance, are run under charters, which give to the legislature the right to purchase the roads for the state, by paying therefor the full cost, with such sum as, with the profits which shall have been received, will be equal to 10 per per cent on said cost. The great Boston & Albany road has long since paid 10 cent to its stockholders. It is well understood that its great difficulty in administration is to keep down its profits to that rate.

Now it would be wise for the state of Massachusetts to buy and own these railroads or any of them?

As a matter of principle, I am disposed to think that to answer this question we must decide whether, on the whole, the use of the railroads has become a necessity almost equal to all—of all the people. Is it like the necessity for water; or, is it rather, like the necessity for iron? This question will determine itself practically, and not from statistics. So soon as the very great majority of the people find that they are themselves all the time personally dependent on railway transportation, they will assert their right, which is now latent, and will manage the road through the state organization. It is clear enough that the time is approaching rapidly, if it have not come in Massachusetts.

I do not mean merely that every man in Massachusetts rides on a railway once a year or once a month. I mean much more, that the practical daily life of a very large majority of the people of Massachusetts is directly interwoven with the railroad system—probably personally and physically interwoven. Much more than half of the population of Massachusetts belongs to families some of whose members travel on railroads daily—as they go and come on their daily business.

A railway stoppage for a fortnight would almost mean famine in most Massachusetts towns, so steady is the daily river of food by which God now answers our prayers for daily bread. Now, so soon as the tendency which has wrought out this state of things, comes so far that the railroad service is needed by one man about as much as by another, so soon will the government take the railroads. In my judgment it ought to. But, whatever be the judgment of any individuals, what is certain is, that it will.

"It will make a very bad mess of it," says some grumpy cynic, who has no faith in the people, curses trial by jury, and hates universal suffrage. "A mere put-up job it will be—all along.

I do not see that, and I do not believe it.

On the other hand, certain facts must be noted.

Thus, 1. The administration of the postoffice, by the United States government, is the wonder and despair of the rest of the world. Read any study on "administration" by a French expert, and see what he will say.

2. The experiment of the success and the honesty of the "receivers" who are now doing this very thing, under infinite difficulties speak a great deal as to the power of government to employ the right men.

3. There is not a town in America which has tried water supply by the public where any man would dare to propose the sale of the works to a corporation. In my own home, Boston, the engines used by the city are the finest pieces of machinery. They are among the lions of the town. The water service is so good and cheap that a few years ago the city had to lower the rates and pay us back rates which it had overcharged by accident.

4. There is, on the whole, an immense advantage in publicity. State ownership means the printing, from day to day, of every account and transaction where any light is needed.

5. As for jobs, there are jobs everywhere. I have heard of the nephew of a large stockholder being placed in a position which he ought not to have filled. I have heard of such a man running away with money which did not belong to him. There can be little doubt that the loss of Massachusetts or of the United States by dishonesty is as slight as is that of any large corporation.

6. The uniform civility of officers of the state is a point of great value. Think how civil postoffice officials are always, and how rude the majority of telegraph operators are. This is simply because you are one of the postoffice clerks employers, while the telegraph operator hates you because you make her work when she is tired. She does not look to you for her salary as the postoffice man does.

7. And it is certainly a great advantage that the state at the outside needs earn but 3 per cent to pay interest on its investments, while the corporation has the privilege of earning 10.

"THIS IS JACK'S REVENGE."

Written for The Bee.

It is an odd story from the life of a professional burglar in London, but it is true. My father was the victim of it and I witnessed a part of it myself, and although a mere lad at the time the occurrence made such a deep impression on my mind that I can remember all the details connected with it as vividly as if it had taken place yesterday.

My father kept a jewelry shop some years ago at Nos. 4 and 5 Bridge court, which was located right opposite the houses of parliament, but has since been torn down, and the Westminster station of the underground railway now occupies the site. About this season of the year London is generally enveloped in a heavy fog, and on the occasion of the opening event of this story the fog was exceptionally dense so that it was impossible to see an object a few yards in front of you.

My father, mother and I were all sitting in the shop when a man of most forbidding countenance whose physiognomy clearly indicated that he belonged to the criminal classes, entered and said that he desired to speak to my father alone, but this privilege being denied him he commenced his story.

"I belong," said he, "to an organized gang of burglars, and I've made up my mind to have revenge on the captain, because he has taken my woman away from me. Now, at 5 o'clock tomorrow afternoon while you are upstairs taking your tea and your shop is locked up the captain, who has a key to a certain case of jewelry in your window which you always leave open, will unlock the case and make a way with it. He will have a cab on the corner of the court, and all I want you to do for me in return for this information is to capture him, and when you have done so then just hand him this note."

He added, that according to the rules of the gang, his life would not be worth a penny after what he had divulged, but revenge is sweet. Raising his hat politely to my mother he took his departure, remarking that we should never see his face again.

Feeling some curiosity my father took the liberty of reading the note, which was not enclosed. It was very brief and ran as follows: "This is Jack's revenge."

The criminal investigation department at Scotland Yard was notified of the intended robbery, and about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the next day a couple of policemen in plain clothes visited the shop and secreted themselves so as to be in readiness for the captain when he put in an appearance. But by some strange fatality they both left the shop a few minutes before 5 o'clock. My father was very naturally quite anxious about the outcome of the affair and was keeping a sharp lookout and precisely as Big Ben, the enormous clock of the house of parliament, struck 5, the robber, appeared and took possession of the case of jewelry. As my father discovered that the police were not there he rushed after the scoundrel and caught him, but being a more powerfully built man than my father he threw him on his back and, dropping the jewelry case and his hat, ran away as hard as he could.

My father jumped up and tore down the street after the robber shouting "Stop thief!" but such is the apathy of the average Londoner, and to such an extent has the habit of not interfering in anything that they may not thoroughly understand been carried, that no one even attempted to stop the fleeing robber. After chasing him about a mile a policeman seized him and he was marched off to the Westminster police court.

At the trial my father handed the prisoner the note as requested by the traitorous burglar. The court room was filled to overflowing with a horde of the captain's pals, who watched the progress of the trial with keen interest, and after the judge had passed sentence upon the prisoner, the latter turned toward a group of his followers and said: "You blokes, want to find Jack and square matters for me," which they all very readily promised to do. This is an instance in which the old adage, "There is honor among thieves," would hardly be applicable. J. W.

Excelsior Springs, Mo., is the most charming autumn resort in America.

A Blind Burglar.

An entirely new species of burglar has been run to earth in this city, a blind one. Joseph Sailes, a 16-year-old inmate of the almshouse, is the curiosity in question, says the St. Louis Republic. He has terrible cataracts over both eyes and is compelled to find his way with the aid of a staff, but notwithstanding his affliction has been found guilty of breaking into the Lohonda primary school, a very isolated spot, with a hatchet, which he used to knock in a pannel of the door. Once inside the blind boy burglar took everything of value that he could find and carry off and that was very little. He was detected by means of the hatchet, which he was known to own and which he left behind to take the school hatchet, which was sharper. A search of his room revealed the school hatchet, half a dozen new shirts and other wearing apparel. A big bunch of keys was also among the things captured, and an owner for the new shirts found in a neighboring storekeeper. He had found a key to fit the store, and did not have to break the door in this time with a hatchet. Sailes bears a bad reputation, having been accessory to the burning of San Rafael orphan asylum some years ago, where he was being cared for. A clear case of arson was made out against him in San Rafael, but his tender age saved him.

Dr. Birney cures catarrh, Bee Bldg.

A Fortune Sewedin Her Dress.

An aged woman was run over by an electric car the other evening at the corner of Jackson and Fifth streets, St. Paul. Nobody recognized her, and she was taken to the city hospital in an unconscious condition. Her right leg was broken and she was so badly injured internally that she died. In preparing the body for burial $3,500 in greenbacks was found sewed into her clothing in various places, says a special to the Chicago Tribune. The body was identified as that of Mrs. Anna Klotz. She was over eighty years of age and of German descent. As she has no relatives in this country it is not known what will be done with the little fortune found stitched in her clothing.

Dr. Birney cures catarrh, Bee bldg.

HE FACED THE DEADLY FANGS

The Awful History of a Skull and a Dry Snake's Skin.

TOLD BY SOME BLEACHING BONES.

A Horrible Device Which Killed a Man in an Arizona Canyon—The Rain, the Indians and the Rattler.

There is an old half effaced trail among the rocky canyons of the Arizona mountains between Eagle creek and Rio Prieto. It is a lonely place, with nothing but cactus and the cliff grass for verdure. It is deathly still, says an historian in the San Francisco Examiner. There seems to be no life anywhere among those tumbled crags. But pass along the trail, upset a bowlder, throw a rock into a clump of the cliff grass, you will see something alive. Coiled in the dark places are great diamond-backed rattlesnakes. Disturb one of them and the whole dell will hum with the music of the castanets.

In the bed of the canyon, just above the wash-line, are some bones, polished by the drift of the river, bleached by the fierce sun for years. As you pass from the middle of the heap of ribs comes the warning rattle of one of the deadly denizens of the glen. The remains of a pack-saddle are there and what might once have been the pack. There is a fragment of blanket with U. S. on it Near by is the rusted steel of a Winchester rifle. Examine it and you will find that still sticking fast in the breech is a green and moldy cartridge.

That tells the story.

Some time back when this glen, alive with rattlesnakes, was even lonelier and farther out of the world than it is now, some prospector, deserter or hunter came there driving his pack mule.

Fifty yards away from the whitening bones behind that boulder that juts from the cliff, some empty rifle shells are scattered. There are more of them concealed by that patch of greenwood, and still others among the rocks on the hill side.

Did the traveler with the army blanket know that he was traveling on the hidden trail that only the Apaches knew—that puzzling round about path that started north and turned back south, the road by which the San Carlos Indians found their way unmolested to the Mexican Sierra Madre, though the soldiers were all around?

The story is written in what is left in the glen.

The Indians saw the white man come around the bend of the hill far above. The canyon was a perfect place for ambush. Riding in the stillness is drowsy work. The solitary prospector comes on with his rifle hanging carelessly before him. Down the trail he comes, past the grease wood patch he comes to the water-hole in the gully. His animals are hot and tired. He loosens the girth and leads them to the pool.

Out of the quiet, crashing like a thunder clap, comes the first shot. He springs to his horse and his rifle flies to his shoulder. He knows what has happened, and knows that unless his horse can carry him back through a storm of bullets the way he came he has passed his last day on earth.

But the sudden shot has startled the horse. A jerk has freed the bridle, and in an instant he is galloping up the hill, the saddle turning under him.

Then it is die game or die coward.

The white man jerks the lever of his Winchester. The cartridge catches, a twig has perhaps got in among the the bearings.

They see that he cannot shoot—his pistol went off wfth the saddle, and now he is standing unarmed among the jeering Indians.

There are no white man's bones by the skeleton of the pack mule. Die game or coward! It was no easy, quick death by a bullet that the man who tied that pack had to meet.

Quarter of a mile down the canyon that trail runs up on a knoll. Down there are bones. A skull is there with its face buried in the soil. Those little lumps made the spine of the man who was caught in the ambush.

If you search close you will find the rest of the man's frame stretched out here.

What was once a rope is there. It is knotted back of the skull and the other end is fast in the bush. If you cared to scratch among those bones you would find some small strips of rawhide. He died with his hands fast behind him.

But what is this lace-like line and delicate framework of slender bone that lies close to the skull?

When the Apaches closed in on their victim he fought hard. But how long can one man fight against a score?

Struggle as he will, he is soon overcome, and, with his hands bound so tight that the cords cut into them, they force him ahead of them up the knoll.

If they simply meant to leave him there to starve and die under the hot skies they would have maimed his feet and may be hands. There would be no need of tying him.

A shout from some of the Indians makes him try to look up. Some of them are coming toward him. They have a stick with a little noose at the end, and in the noose is one of the rattlesnakes of the rocks. Now he knows how they are going to kill him, Through the skin and muscles of the snake close to the rattles they put two long, thin buckskin thongs. The serpent squirms with the pain of it, but they hold his head fast in the loop. They tie the loose end of the thongs around the stake and jump back. The snake is free from the noose, but bound fast by the cords through its tail.

Directly before it is the face of the white man. In an instant the snake is in a half coil, his rattles going faster and faster.

The prostrate man closes his eyes. May be he screamed, may be he fainted, may be he simply waited for the feel of the serpent's fangs.

Like a flash the flat head of the snake shoots out. The cord stood its spring. It falls two inches short of the white face.

Two tiny liquid drops come against his face and run down into his beard. It is the venom from the fangs that failed to reach. The Indians roar with laughter.

But they have wasted much time. The troops are after them. They pick their victim, they tease the snake and then leave him.

All the hot afternoon he lies there, the snake's head playing before his eyes, more of the venom being spat into his face.

The sun went down and the clouds covered the heavens.

The snake has learned that it cannot reach that face. It lies coiled at the foot of the stake watching. For a while longer it strikes whenever the man moves his head, but after a while it does not move but lies in its sullen coil.

Oh, the strain of holding his head back, until the cords fairly crack! How long was it before his mind gave way and madness released him from his deadly terror?

Now the rain begins to fall and it is growing dark. The coolness revives the man, but still before him he sees those coils and that flat head and the snake's line-like tongue is darting and he is preparing to try it again.

He strikes, but still he cannot reach. An inch more and his fangs would have reached the bound man.

He rubs his face in the dirt to clear it of the horrible poison that is thickening on it.

Still it rains, it is so dark that he cannot see the snake; only a rattle as he moves tells him that it is still there.

He must have been unconscious, but he wakes up and feels the strain of the rope. He has been pulling back on it with all his force, but now he feels a counter-pull that seems to draw him toward the rattlesnake and death.

Why doesn't he push his face within reach of the snake and end it? He knew he was going to die from the moment his rifle failed to work. He knows that he must die of thirst, even if the snake does not reach him.

But he cannot do it. His mad brain refuses to order the muscles to meet the snake.

The rope pulls harder. He knows now. The rain is wetting it and shrinking it. It will drag him up. Two inches more is death.

He digs his toes into the ground. He pulls back until the rope sinks into his flesh.

The rope is getting shorter.

The rain has wet the buckskin thongs that holds the snake. The buckskin swells and stretches, while the hempen rope shrinks. Thes cords that hold the snake are four inches longer than they were when tied. The rope has shrunk half as much.

The snake tries to crawl away. The strings in its flesh hold it back. The pain enrages it and it strikes.

The coyotes prowl about the spot; the vultures hover over it.

The white skull lies with its face in the dust, and the dry, lace-like snake skin, with the delicate bones below, lie against it.

Dr. Birney cures catarrh, Bee bldg.

Men on the Street.

An observing woman's criticism in the Chicago Tribune: "I am no apologist for the little weaknesses of my sex. But why is it you never hear of the prattle in which men indulge on the street or about the shops? I am downtown a great deal of the day on business. I see men meet one another on the street and at the counters and I hear their talk. It is for the most part as idle and silly as that of some women Here is a talk I remember—I confess it isn't worth remembering:

"'Hello, old man.'

"'Hello, yourself.'

"'How's things?'

"'Kinder so-so. How's't with you?'

"'So-so. Anything new?'

"'Same old story.'

"Then they looked each other in the face for a half minute and one of them asked, 'Where did you get that tie?' The other one said: "Where did you get that hat?'

"Then they actually shook hands and separated. They were men. Did you ever hear any such twaddle as that between two women?"

1409 Douglas.

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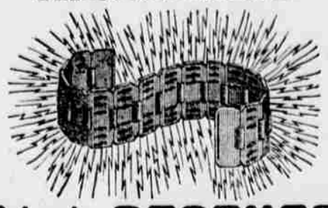
$2  $2

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