ACQUIRED BY THRIFT

How Mankind First Obtained Control of Property.

COMMON PROPERTY AT FIRST

In the Beginning All Things Were In Common and Movable Property of Every Kind Became Sooner Appropriated Than the Permanent Soil.

In the beginning of the world, we are informed by holy writ, the all bountiful Creator gave to man "dominion over all the earth and over the fishes of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moved upon the earth." This is the only true and solid foundation of man's dominion over external things, whatever airy, metaphysical notions may have been started by fanciful writers on this subject. The earth, therefore, and all things therein are the general property of mankind, exclusive of other beings, from the immediate gift of the Creator. And while the earth continued bare of inhabitants it is reasonable to suppose that all was in common among them and that every one took from the public stock to his own use such things as his immediate necessities required.

These general notions of property were then sufficient to answer all purposes of human life and might perhaps still have answered them had it been possible for mankind to have remained in a state of primeval simplicity, in which "all things were common to him." Not that this communion of goods seems ever to have been applicable even in the earliest stages to aught but the substance of the thing, nor could it be extended to the use of it, for by the law of nature and reason he who first began to use it acquired therein a kind of transient property that lasted so long as he was using it and no longer, or, to speak with greater precision, the right of possession continued for the same time, only that the act of possession lasted.

Thus the ground was in common, and no part of it was the property of any man in particular, yet whoever was in the occupation of any determined spot of it for rest, for shade or the like acquired for the time a sort of ownership, from which it would have been unjust and contrary to the law of nature to have driven him by force, but the instant he quitted the use or occupation of it another might seize it without injustice. Thus, also, a vine or a tree might be said to be in common, as all men were equally entitled to its produce, and yet any private individual might gain the sole property of the fruit which he had gathered for his own repast—a doctrine well illustrated by Cicero, who compares the world to a great theater which is common to the public, and yet the place which any man has taken is for the time his own.

But when mankind increased in number, craft and ambition it became necessary to entertain conceptions of a more permanent dominion and to appropriate to individuals not the immediate use only, but the very substance of the thing to be used. Otherwise innumerable tumults must have arisen and the good order of the world been continually broken and disturbed, while a variety of persons were striving who should get the first occupation of the same thing or disputing which of them had actually gained it. As human life grew more and more refined many conveniences were devised to render it more easy, commodious and agreeable, as habitations for shelter and safety and raiment for warmth and decency. But no man would be at the trouble to provide either so long as he had only an usufructuary property in them, which was to cease the instant that he quitted possession; if as soon as he walked out of his tent or pulled off his garment the next stranger who came by would have a right to inhabit the one and to wear the other.

In the case of habitations in particular it was natural to observe that even the brute creation, to whom everything else was in common, maintained a kind of permanent property in their dwellings, especially for the protection of their young; that the birds of the air had nests and the beasts of the fields had caverns, the invasion of which they esteemed a very flagrant injustice and in the preservation of which they would sacrifice their lives; hence a property was soon established in every man's house and homestead, which seems to have been originally temporary huts or movable cabins suited to the design of Providence for more speedily peopling the earth and to the wandering life of their owners before any extensive property in the soil or ground was established.

There can be no doubt but that movables of every kind became sooner appropriated than the permanent, substantial soil, partly because they were more susceptible of a long occupancy, which might be continued for months together, without any sensible interruption, and at length by usage ripen into an established right, but principally because few of them could be fit for use till improved and meliorated by the bodily labor of the occupant, which bodily labor bestowed upon any subject that lay in common to all men is universally allowed to give the fairest and most reasonable title to an exclusive property therein.

The article of food was a more immediate call and therefore a more early consideration. Such as were not contented with the spontaneous products of the earth sought for a more solid refreshment in the flesh of beasts, which they obtained by hunting. But the frequent disappointments incident to that method of provision induced them to gather together such animals as were of a more tame and sequacious nature and to establish a more permanent property in their flocks and herds in order to sustain themselves in a less precarious manner partly by the milk of the dams and partly by the flesh of the young.

The support of these their cattle made the article of water also a very important point. And therefore the book of Genesis, the most venerable monument of antiquity, will furnish us with frequent instances of violent contentions concerning wells, the exclusive property of which appears to have been established in the first digger or occupant even in places where the ground and herbage remained yet in common. Thus we find Abraham, who was but a sojourner, asserting his right to a well in the country of Abimelech and exacting an oath for security "because he had digged that well." And Isaac about ninety years afterward reclaimed this his father's property and after much contention with the Philistines was suffered to enjoy it in peace.

All this while the soil and pasture of the earth remained still in common as before and open to every occupant except perhaps in the neighborhood of towns, where the necessity of a sole and exclusive property in lands (for the sake of agriculture) was earlier felt and therefore more readily complied with. Otherwise when the multitude of men and cattle had consumed every convenience on one spot of ground it was deemed a natural right to seize upon and occupy such other lands as would more easily supply their necessities.

We have a striking example of this in the history of Abraham and his nephew Lot. When their joint substance became so great that pasture and other conveniences grew scarce the natural consequence was that a strife arose between their servants, so that it was no longer practicable to dwell together. This contention Abraham thus endeavored to compose: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." This plainly implies an acknowledged right in either to occupy whatever ground he pleased that was not preoccupied by other tribes. "And Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, ever as the garden of the Lord. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan and journeyed east, and Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan."

As the world grew by degrees more populous it daily became more difficult to find out new spots to inhabit without encroaching upon former occupants, and by constantly occupying the same individual spot the fruits of the earth were consumed and its spontaneous products destroyed without any provision for future supply or succession. It therefore became necessary to pursue some regular method of providing a constant subsistence, and this necessity produced or at least promoted and encouraged the art of agriculture. And the art of agriculture, by a regular connection and consequence, introduced and established the idea of a more permanent property in the soil than had hitherto been received and adopted.

It was clear that the earth would not produce her fruits in sufficient quantities without the assistance of tillage, but who would be at the pains of tilling it if another might watch an opportunity to seize upon and enjoy the product of his industry, art and labor? Had not therefore a separate property in lands as well as movables been vested in some individuals the world must have continued a forest and men have been mere animals of prey, whereas now (so graciously has Providence interwoven our duty and our happiness together) the result of this very necessity has been the ennobling of the human species by giving it opportunities of improving its rational as well as of exerting its natural faculties.

Necessity begat property, and in order to insure that property recourse was had to civil society, which brought along with it a long train of inseparable concomitants—states, government, laws, punishments and the public exercise of religious duties. Thus connected together, it was found that a part only of society was sufficient to provide by their manual labor for the necessary subsistence of all, and leisure was given to others to cultivate the human mind, to invent useful arts and to lay the foundations of science.—From Blackstone.

Currency Is Tough.

That Uncle Sam's notes stand a great deal of rough and careless handling is a fact that impresses itself upon any one who has ever chanced to note the manner in which the average cashier pulls and jerks the bills before he pushes them through the window to the waiting patron.

A single treasury note measures three and one-eighth inches in width by seven and a quarter inches in length. It will sustain without breaking lengthwise a weight of forty-one pounds, crosswise a weight of ninety-one pounds. The notes run four to a sheet, a sheet being eight and a quarter inches wide by thirteen and a half inches long. One of these sheets lengthwise will suspend 108 pounds and crosswise 177 pounds.

It will be observed that a single note is capable of sustaining crosswise a weight of ninety-one pounds, which is twice the amount by nine pounds of the weight the note can sustain lengthwise, while in the case of the sheet the crosswise sheet lacks thirty-nine pounds of double the sustaining power of the lengthwise sheet.—Philadelphia Record.

Ambiguity.

Layman (to curate)—Were you preaching at your church last night? Curate—No; why? Layman—Oh, I didn't know whether you would be preaching or not, so I wouldn't risk going.—Punch.

A MAINE POCAHONTAS.

She Saved Captain John Smith's Life at Gardiner in 1614.

The history of Captain John Smith and his love affair with Pocahontas is generally known by most everybody who has made any study at all of the history of this country, but very few know of Smith's other Pocahontas in Maine.

It was in 1614 that Captain John Smith made a trip to what is now Gardiner, and it was there this other Pocahontas incident occurred. The Cabassas tribe of Indians were presided over by a chief having headquarters at what is now Gardiner, then known as Cabassas, and who had a daughter named Sebools, famed among her tribe for her beauty and grace.

She was, unfortunately, smitten at once with the gallant captain, who was, by the way, the first white man to visit these parts and who was received with great cordiality.

Smith had with him a lieutenant named Hunt, who was of a quarrelsome nature and disposition and prone to mutiny. When the time came for the party of whites to depart Hunt's mutinous spirit showed itself, and with a small party of followers he left Smith, going in an opposite direction. His party took with them as captives several of the tribe of the Cabassas.

The chief, considering the whites one party, by a great mistake followed Captain Smith's loyal band, which camped for the night about four miles from the present location of Gardiner.

Sebools, wishing to warn the captain, hurried on before the party of enraged Indians, but arrived too late, for as she arrived at the camp the first volley of arrows had been delivered.

Thinking to save Smith, she flew to him and threw her arms about his neck and in that position received an arrow in her breast which caused instant death.

The chief was sorely stricken at the accident and ordered hostilities to cease.

This allowed Smith an opportunity to explain that it was the other party that did the kidnaping. After the sorrowful return and the burial of Sebools near what is now the Randolph church, the red men went in search of Hunt, and he was overtaken near Norridgewock and his entire band exterminated.

Captain Smith had the martyred Sebools to thank for his life, for the arrow that reached her heart was meant for him. This is the story as found in some very old papers near Gardiner.—Boston Globe.

Civilized Camp Life.

Mr. Rossiter W. Raymond, at one time commissioner of mining statistics, tells in "Clarence King Memoirs" of an unexpected dinner invitation which he once received from Mr. King, who was at that time camped near the Salt Lake valley.

Knowing of Mr. King as an explorer, hunter and athlete, I could scarcely recognize my own expectation in the polished gentleman who in immaculate linen, silk stockings, low shoes and clothing without a wrinkle received me in his camp at a dinner which was simple enough in its material constituents, but served in a style which I had not found west of the Missouri.

When I attempted to make fun of him for "roughing it" in this way he replied seriously: "It is all very well for you, who lead a civilized life nine or ten months in the year and get into the field for a few weeks at a time only, to let yourself down to the pioneer level But I, who have been for years constantly in the field, would have lost my good habits altogether if I had not taken every possible opportunity to practice them. We don't dine this way every day, but we do whenever we can."

Little Margie (who has company)—We've been playing school, mamma.

Mamma—Indeed! And did you behave nicely?

Little Margie—Oh, I didn't have to behave. I was teacher.—Chicago News.

A little maid who had not yet reached her third birthday was one day recounting to her mother the many accomplishments of her adored cousin, Margery, who looked down on life from the exalted height of eight summers.

"Just think, mamma! Margery can dwess herself and button her own shoes and bwush her own hair and button little Edna's clothes and hold tiny baby and put on her own wubbers and coat and hood, and—and" (casting about for still greater marvels) "maybe she can even spank herself and save her mamma the twouble!"—Lippincott's Magazine.

The Astorian, 75 cents a month.