

A London special to the Evening Post says:

"An anonymous correspondent of the Times, endeavoring to show that property is no longer safe in these democratic days, says that Charles Crocker of California told him he had trained his sons to earn their living, adding that he would not give twenty years' purchase for any piece of property in the civilized world. The correspondent who quotes this private conversation does not feel at liberty to publish Mr. Crocker's reasons for his opinions."

Mr. Crocker's reasons may, however, be readily imagined. They undoubtedly sprang from a consciousness of the injustice of the methods by which fortunes like his own had been accumulated, and a vague feeling that in an age where everything is tending to foster the idea of the essential equality of men, the gulf between rich and poor would not long go on widening without bringing catastrophe.

When I first saw Charles Crocker he was behind the counter of a little dry goods store measuring out some goods. In a few years he was one of a triumvirate who controlled a railroad empire, and died rich, as it would have appeared to his earlier imaginings, "beyond the dream of avarice." He did not grow rich by virtue of superior energy, in duty and thrift. Many men his equals, if not his superiors, in all these qualities, have died poor, or are yet struggling in their old age for a mere existence.

He grew rich by acts which, on a petty scale, would have been called crimes. His millions, in far greater part at least, were not earned - they were appropriated. This is not to say that Mr. Crocker

was - still less felt himself to be - a bad man. On the contrary, he was a pillar of the Episcopal church; and, according to the code of morals prevailing among the associates in his day and generation, as eminently respectable as he was rich. But looking back on his own career, noting the change that had come in his own time, and seeing the sweep of the accelerating tendencies to the concentration of wealth, it is no wonder that he sometimes thought, "After me, the deluge."

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But there is one thing of which Mr. Crocker probably never thought that may prevent this - the recognition of the true nature and rights of property. When it is recognized that there can be no private property in monopolies - in the power of levying a tribute on others - then will the "sacred rights of property" in the things produced by labor be secured, modern civilization be saved, and the cause of monstrous fortunes and of still more monstrous poverty cease to act. If Charles Crocker's sons have to work for their living in that state of things instead of being able to live on the work of others, as he was in this, they will be far happier, and, in the command of all that conduces to the fullness and freedom of life, far richer than was their father.

Signed: Henry George,

September 8, 1886.