

A LESSON IN ANARCHY.

Greek laborers of the Salem Electric Railroad have learned to tear down private fences, and invade and despoil private land, in order to place rails on the land of unwilling owners. They have come all the way from Greece to be taught this lesson in anarchy. It is not wholesome for them, nor for the railroad, nor for the public. Yet the feats of outwitting the landowners are called clever. They probably are clever and the sharp-witted contractors are entitled to whatever credit is due on that account.

But citizens of the United States who disregard the law of private property are destined for a very unhappy place. The Greeks will have to forget their lessons in Marion and Washington Counties, if they are to stay out of that place and become useful citizens. They will also have to avoid imitating the threats against life, which irate landowners made against the invaders.

It is undeniably true that the public will be benefited far more by the occupation of the land by the railroad than by retention of the land by the owner. It is also true that no landowner should be allowed to stop the progress of a needed railroad or hold up a railroad for an exorbitant price. The law provides means for enabling a railroad to condemn land it needs. Those means involve a long procedure, but they are safer for a railroad than the alternatives of force and anarchy. Lawlessness can injure a railroad more than anybody. The security of property is respect for law and order.

Supposing one of the landowners had shot a Greek, as several threatened to do? That would have been an unwholesome lesson for these primer citizens. It would have caused the arrest of the owner and undoubtedly would have pleased the contractor, since then the obstacle would have been removed.

The people do not like this method of aggrandizement. If it should be practiced often restricting laws will be enacted. It will be natural for Greek kindergarten citizens, hereafter to be less fearful of penalties and less regardful of property.
