



**Modern History Sourcebook:
Henry Demarest Lloyd:
"The Lords of Industry," *North American Review* 331 (June 1884)**

<http://americanhistory.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fordham.edu%2Fhalsall%2Fmod%2F1884hdllloyd.html>

Lloyd (1847-1903) was an influential critic of the "Robber Barons". These were the capitalists such as Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Vanderbilt who developed transportation, communication, and energy businesses after 1865, and in the process secured monopolies of those industries.

When President Gowen, of the Reading Railroad, was defending that company in 1875 before a committee of the Pennsylvania legislature for having taken part in the combination of the coal companies to cure the evil of "too much coal" by putting up the price and cutting down the amount for sale, he pleaded that there were fifty trades in which the same thing was done. He had a list of them to show the committee. He said:

"Every pound of rope we buy for our vessels or for our mines is bought at a price fixed by a committee of the rope manufacturers of the United States. Every keg of nails, every paper of tacks, all our screws and wrenches and hinges, the boiler flues for our locomotives, are never bought except at the price fixed by the representatives of the mills that manufacture them. Iron beams for your houses or your bridges can be had only at the prices agreed upon by a combination of those who produce them. Firebrick, gaspipe, terracotta pipe for drainage, every keg of powder we buy to blast coal, are purchased under the same arrangement. Every pane of window glass in this house was bought at a scale of prices established exactly in the same manner. White lead, galvanized sheet iron, hose and belting and files are bought and sold at a rate determined in the same way. When my friend Mr. Lane was called upon to begin his speech the other day and wanted to delay because the stenographer had not arrived, I asked Mr. Collins, the stenographer of your committee, if he would not act. He said no, it was against the rules of the committee of stenographers. I said, 'Well, Mr. Collins, I will pay you anything you ask. I want to get off.' 'Oh,' said he, 'prices are established by our combination, and I cannot change them.' And when we come to the cost of labor, which enters more than anything else in the cost of coal, we are met by a combination there, and are often obliged to pay the price fixed by it."