

Henry George

**The Crime of Poverty**

And other speeches and articles  
on the land problem

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# The Crime of Poverty <sup>1</sup>

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

I PROPOSE to talk to you to-night of the Crime of Poverty. I cannot, in a short time, hope to convince you of much; but the thing of things I should like to show you is that poverty is a crime. I do not mean that it is a crime to be poor. Murder is a crime; but it is not a crime to be murdered; and a man who is in poverty, I look upon, not as a criminal in himself, so much as the victim of a crime for which others, as well perhaps as himself, are responsible. That poverty is a curse, the bitterest of curses, we all know. Carlyle was right when he said that the hell of which Englishmen are most afraid is the hell of poverty; and this is true, not of Englishmen alone, but of people all over the civilized world, no matter what their nationality. It is to escape this hell that we strive and strain and struggle; and work on oftentimes in blind habit long after the necessity for work is gone.

The curse born of poverty is not confined to the poor alone; it runs through all classes, even to the very rich. They, too, suffer; they must suffer; for there cannot be suffering in a community from which any class can totally escape. The vice, the crime, the ignorance, the meanness born of poverty, poison, so to speak, the very air which rich and poor alike must breathe.

Poverty is the mother of ignorance, the breeder of crime. I walked down one of your streets this morning, and I saw three men going along with their hands chained together. I knew for certain that those men were not rich men; and, although I do not know the offence for which they were carried in chains through your streets, this I think I can safely say, that, if you trace it up you will find it in some way to spring from poverty. Nine tenths of human misery, I think you will find, if you look, to be due to poverty. If a man chooses to be poor, he commits no crime in being poor, provided his poverty hurts no one but himself. If a man has others dependent upon him; if there are a wife and children whom it is his duty to support, then, if he voluntarily chooses poverty, it is a crime—aye, and I think that, in most cases, the men who have no one to support but themselves are men that are shirking their duty. A woman comes into the world for every man; and for every man who lives a single life, caring only for himself, there is some woman who is deprived of her natural supporter. But while a man who chooses to be poor cannot be charged with crime, it is certainly a crime to force poverty on others. And it seems

to me clear that the great majority of those who suffer from poverty are poor not from their own particular faults, but because of conditions imposed by society at large. Therefore I hold that poverty is a crime—not an individual crime, but a social crime, a crime for which we all, poor as well as rich, are responsible.

Two or three weeks ago I went one Sunday evening to the church of a famous Brooklyn preacher. Mr. Sankey was singing and something like a revival was going on there. The clergyman told some anecdotes connected with the revival, and recounted some of the reasons why men failed to become Christians. One case he mentioned struck me. He said that he had noticed on the outskirts of the congregation, night after night, a man who listened intently and who gradually moved forward. One night, the clergyman said, he went to him, saying: »My brother, are you not ready to become a Christian?« The man said, no, he was not. He said it, not in a defiant tone, but in a sorrowful tone; the clergyman asked him why, whether he did not believe in the truths he had been hearing? Yes, he believed them all. Why, then, wouldn't he become a Christian? »Well,« he said, »I can't join the church without giving up my business; and it is necessary for the support of my wife and children. If I give that up, I don't know how in the world I can get along. I had a hard time before I found my present business, and I cannot afford to give it up. Yet I can't become a Christian without giving it up.« The clergyman asked, »are you a rum-seller?« No, he was not a rum-seller. Well, the clergyman said, he didn't know what in the world the man could be; it seemed to him that a rum-seller was the only man who does a business that would prevent his becoming a Christian; and he finally said: »What is your business?« The man said, »I sell soap.« »Soap!« exclaimed the clergyman, »you sell soap? How in the world does that prevent your becoming a Christian?« »Well,« the man said, »it is this way; the soap I sell is one of these patent soaps that are extensively advertised as enabling you to clean clothes very quickly, as containing no deleterious compound whatever. Every cake of the soap that I sell is wrapped in a paper on which is printed a statement that it contains no injurious chemicals, whereas the truth of the matter is that it does, and that though it will take the dirt out of clothes pretty quickly, it will, in a little while, rot them completely. I have to make my living in this way; and I cannot feel that I can become a Christian if I sell that soap.« The minister went on, describing how he laboured unsuc-

cessfully with that man, and finally wound up by saying: »He stuck to his soap and lost his soul.«

But, if that man lost his soul, was it his fault alone? Whose fault is it that social conditions are such that men have to make that terrible choice between what conscience tells them is right, and the necessity of earning a living? I hold that it is the fault of society; that it is the fault of us all. Pestilence is a curse. The man who would bring cholera to this country, or the man who, having the power to prevent its coming here, would make no effort to do so, would be guilty of a crime. Poverty is worse than cholera; poverty kills more people than pestilence, even in the best of times. Look at the death statistics of our cities; see where the deaths come quickest; see where it is that the little children die like flies—it is in the poorer quarters. And the man who looks with careless eyes upon the ravages of this pestilence, the man who does not set himself to stay and eradicate it, he, I say, is guilty of a crime.

If poverty is appointed by the power which is above us all, then it is no crime; but if poverty is unnecessary, then it is a crime for which society is responsible and for which society must suffer.

I hold, and I think no one who looks at the facts can fail to see, that poverty is utterly unnecessary. It is not by the decree of the Almighty, but it is because of our own injustice, our own selfishness, our own ignorance, that this scourge, worse than any pestilence, ravages our civilization, bringing want and suffering and degradation, destroying souls as well as bodies. Look over the world, in this heyday of nineteenth century civilization. In every civilized country under the sun you will find men and women whose condition is worse than that of the savage: men and women and little children with whom the veriest savage could not afford to exchange. Even in this new city of yours with virgin soil around you, you have had this winter to institute a relief society. Your roads have been filled with tramps, fifteen, I am told, at one time taking shelter in a round-house here. As here, so everywhere; and poverty is deepest where wealth most abounds.

What more unnatural than this? There is nothing in nature like this poverty which to-day curses us. We see rapine in nature; we see one species destroying another; but as a general thing animals do not feed on their own kind; and, wherever we see one kind enjoying plenty, all creatures of that kind share it. No man, I think, ever saw a herd of buffalo, of which a few were fat and the great majority lean.

No man ever saw a flock of birds, of which two or three were swimming in grease and the others all skin and bone. Nor in savage life is there anything like the poverty that festers in our civilization.

In a rude state of society there are seasons of want, seasons when people starve; but they are seasons when the earth has refused to yield her increase, when the rain has not fallen from the heavens, or when the land has been swept by some foe—not when there is plenty. And yet the peculiar characteristic of this modern poverty of ours is that it is deepest where wealth most abounds.

Why, to-day, while over the civilized world there is so much distress, so much want, what is the cry that goes up? What is the current explanation of the hard times? Overproduction! There are so many clothes that men must go ragged, so much coal that in the bitter winters people have to shiver, such over-filled granaries that people actually die by starvation! Want due to over-production! Was a greater absurdity ever uttered? How can there be over-production till all have enough? It is not over-production; it is unjust distribution.

Poverty necessary! Why, think of the enormous powers that are latent in the human brain! Think how invention enables us to do with the power of one man what not long ago could not be done by the power of a thousand. Think that in England alone the steam machinery in operation is said to exert a productive force greater than the physical force of the population of the world, were they all adults. And yet we have only begun to invent and discover. We have not yet utilised all that has already been invented and discovered. And look at the powers of the earth. They have hardly been touched. In every direction as we look new resources seem to open. Man's ability to produce wealth seems almost infinite—we can set no bounds to it. Look at the power that is flowing by your city in the current of the Mississippi that might be set at work for you. So in every direction energy that we might utilise goes to waste; resources that we might draw upon are untouched. Yet men are delving and straining to satisfy mere animal wants; women are working, working, working their lives away, and too frequently turning in despair from that hard struggle to cast away all that makes the charm of woman.

If the animals can reason what must they think of us? Look at one of those great ocean steamers ploughing her way across the Atlantic, against wind, against wave, absolutely setting at defiance the utmost power of the elements. If the gulls that hover over her were thinking beings could they imagine that the animal that could create such a

structure as that could actually want for enough to eat? Yet, so it is. How many even of those of us who find life easiest are there who really live a rational life? Think of it, you who believe that there is only one life for man—what a fool at the very best is a man to pass his life in this struggle to merely live? And you who believe, as I believe, that this is not the last of man, that this is a life that opens but another life, think how nine tenths, aye, I do not know but ninety-nine-hundredths of all our vital powers are spent in a mere effort to get a living; or to heap together that which we cannot by any possibility take away. Take the life of the average workingman. Is that the life for which the human brain was intended and the human heart was made? Look at the factories scattered through our country. They are little better than penitentiaries.

I read in the New York papers a while ago that the girls at the Yonkers factories had struck. The papers said that the girls did not seem to know why they had struck, and intimated that it must be just for the fun of striking. Then came out the girls' side of the story and it appeared that they had struck against the rules in force. They were fined if they spoke to one another, and they were fined still more heavily if they laughed. There was a heavy fine for being a minute late. I visited a lady in Philadelphia who had been a forewoman in various factories, and I asked her, »Is it possible that such rules are enforced?« She said it was so in Philadelphia. There is a fine for speaking to your next neighbour, a fine for laughing; and she told me that the girls in one place where she was employed were fined ten cents a minute for being late, though many of them had to come for miles in winter storms. She told me of one poor girl who really worked hard one week and made \$3.50; but the fines against her were \$5.25. That seems ridiculous; it is ridiculous, but it is pathetic and it is shameful.

But take the cases of those even who are comparatively independent and well off. Here is a man working hour after hour, day after day, week after week, in doing one thing over and over again, and for what? Just to live! He is working ten hours a day in order that he may sleep eight and may have two or three hours for himself when he is tired out and all his faculties are exhausted. That is not a reasonable life; that is not a life for a being possessed of the powers that are in man, and I think every man must have felt it for himself. I know that when I first went to my trade I thought to myself that it was incredible that a man was created to work all day long just to live. I

used to read the »Scientific American,« and as invention after invention was heralded in that paper I used to think to myself that when I became a man it would not be necessary to work so hard. But on the contrary, the struggle for existence has become more and more intense. People who want to prove the contrary get up masses of statistics to show that the condition of the working classes is improving. Improvement that you have to take a statistical microscope to discover does not amount to anything. But there is not improvement.

Improvement! Why, according to the last report of the Michigan Bureau of Labour Statistics, as I read yesterday in a Detroit paper, taking all the trades, including some of the very high priced ones, where the wages are from \$6 to \$7 a day, the average earnings amount to \$1.77, and, taking out waste time, to \$1.40. Now, when you consider how a man can live and bring up a family on \$1.40 a day, even in Michigan, I do not think you will conclude that the condition of the working classes can have very much improved.

Here is a broad general fact that is asserted by all who have investigated the question, by such men as Hallam, the historian, and Professor Thorold Rogers, who has made a study of the history of prices as they were five centuries ago. When all the productive arts were in the most primitive state, when the most prolific of our modern vegetables had not been introduced, when the breeds of cattle were small and poor, when there were hardly any roads and transportation was exceedingly difficult, when all manufacturing was done by hand—in that rude time the condition of the labourers of England was far better than it is to-day. In those rude times no man need fear want save when actual famine came, and owing to the difficulties of transportation the plenty of one district could not relieve the scarcity of another. Save in such times, no man need fear want. Pauperism, such as exists in modern times, was absolutely unknown. Everyone, save the physically disabled, could make a living, and the poorest lived in rude plenty. But perhaps the most astonishing fact brought to light by this investigation is that at that time, under those conditions in those »dark ages,« as we call them, the working day was only eight hours. While with all our modern inventions and improvements, our working classes have been agitating and struggling in vain to get the working day reduced to eight hours.

Do these facts show improvement? Why, in the rudest state of society in the most primitive state of the arts the labour of the natural bread-winner will suffice to provide a living for himself and for those

who are dependent upon him. Amid all our inventions there are large bodies of men who cannot do this. What is the most astonishing thing in our civilisation? Why, the most astonishing thing to those Sioux chiefs who were recently brought from the Far West and taken through our manufacturing cities in the East, was not the marvellous inventions that enabled machinery to act almost as if it had intellect; it was not the growth of our cities; it was not the speed with which the railway car whirled along; it was not the telegraph or the telephone that most astonished them; but the fact that amid this marvellous development of productive power they found little children at work. And astonishing that ought to be to us; a most astounding thing!

Talk about improvement in the condition of the working classes, when the facts are that a larger and larger proportion of women and children are forced to toil. Why, I am told that, even here in your own city, there are children of thirteen and fourteen working in factories. In Detroit, according to the report of the Michigan Bureau of Labour Statistics, one half of the children of school age do not go to school. In New Jersey, the report made to the legislature discloses an amount of misery and ignorance that is appalling. Children are growing up there, compelled to monotonous toil when they ought to be at play, children who do not know how to play; children who have been so long accustomed to work that they have become used to it; children growing up in such ignorance that they do not know what country New Jersey is in, that they never heard of George Washington, that some of them think Europe is in New York. Such facts are appalling; they mean that the very foundations of the Republic are being sapped. The dangerous man is not the man who tries to excite discontent; the dangerous man is the man who says that all is as it ought to be. Such a state of things cannot continue; such tendencies as we see at work here cannot go on without bringing at last an overwhelming crash.

I say that all this poverty and the ignorance that flows from it is unnecessary; I say that there is no natural reason why we should not all be rich, in the sense, not of having more than each other, but in the sense of all having enough to completely satisfy all physical wants; of all having enough to get such an easy living that we could develop the better part of humanity. There is no reason why wealth should not be so abundant, that no one should think of such a thing as little children at work, or a woman compelled to a toil that nature never in-

tended her to perform; wealth so abundant that there would be no cause for that harassing fear that sometimes paralyses even those who are not considered »the poor«, the fear that every man of us has probably felt, that if sickness should smite him, or if he should be taken away, those whom he loves better than his life would become charges upon charity. »Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.« I believe that in a really Christian community, in a society that honoured not with the lips but with the act, the doctrines of Jesus, no one would have occasion to worry about physical needs any more than do the lilies of the field. There is enough and to spare. The trouble is that, in this mad struggle, we trample in the mire what has been provided in sufficiency for us all; trample it in the mire while we tear and rend each other.

There is a cause for this poverty; and, if you trace it down, you will find its root in a primary injustice. Look over the world to-day—poverty everywhere. The cause must be a common one. You cannot attribute it to the tariff, or to the form of government, or to this thing or to that in which nations differ; because, as deep poverty is common to them all the cause that produces it must be a common cause. What is that common cause? There is one sufficient cause that is common to all nations; and that is the appropriation as the property of some of that natural element on which and from which all must live.

Take that fact I have spoken of, that appalling fact that, even now, it is harder to live than it was in the ages dark and rude five centuries ago—how do you explain it? There is no difficulty in finding the cause. Whoever reads the history of England, or the history of any other civilised nation (but I speak of the history of England because that is the history with which we are best acquainted) will see the reason. For century after century a parliament composed of aristocrats and employers passed laws endeavouring to reduce wages, but in vain. Men could not be crowded down to wages that gave a mere living because the bounty of nature was not wholly shut up from them; because some remains of the recognition of the truth that all men have equal rights on the earth still existed; because the land of that country, that which was held in private possession, was only held on a tenure derived from the nation, and for a rent payable back to the nation. The church lands supported the expenses of public worship, of the maintenance of seminaries and the care of the poor; the crown lands defrayed the expenses of the civil list; and from a third portion of the lands, those held under the military tenures, the army was pro-

vided for. There was no national debt in England at that time. They carried on wars for hundreds of years, but at the charge of the land-owners. And more important still, there remained everywhere, and you can see in every old English town their traces to this day, the common lands to which any of the neighbourhood was free. It was as those lands were enclosed; it was as the commons were gradually monopolised, as the church lands were made the prey of greedy courtiers, as the crown lands were given away as absolute property to the favourites of the king, as the military tenants shirked their rents and laid the expenses they had agreed to defray, upon the nation, in taxation that bore upon industry and upon thrift—it was then that poverty began to deepen, and the tramp appeared in England; just as to-day he is appearing in our new States.

Now, think of it—is not land monopolisation a sufficient reason for poverty? What is man? In the first place, he is an animal, a land animal who cannot live without land. All that man produces comes from land; all productive labour, in the final analysis, consists in working up land; or materials drawn from land, into such forms as fit them for the satisfaction of human wants and desires. Why, man's very body is drawn from the land. Children of the soil, we come from the land, and to the land we must return. Take away from man all that belongs to the land, and what have you but a disembodied spirit? Therefore he who holds the land on which and from which another man must live, is that man's master; and the man is his slave. The man who holds the land on which I must live can command me to life or to death just as absolutely as though I were his chattel. Talk about abolishing slavery—we have not abolished slavery; we have only abolished one rude form of it, chattel slavery. There is a deeper and a more insidious form, a more cursed form yet before us to abolish, in this industrial slavery that makes a man a virtual slave, while taunting him and mocking him with the name of freedom. Poverty! want! they will sting as much as the lash. Slavery! God knows there are horrors enough in slavery; but there are deeper horrors in our civilised society to-day. Bad as chattel slavery was, it did not drive slave mothers to kill their children, yet you may read in official reports that the system of child insurance which has taken root so strongly in England, and which is now spreading over our Eastern States, has perceptibly and largely increased the rate of child mortality!—What does that mean?

Robinson Crusoe, as you know, when he rescued Friday from the cannibals, made him his slave. Friday had to serve Crusoe. But, supposing Crusoe had said, »O man and brother, I am very glad to see you, and I welcome you to this island, and you shall be a free and independent citizen, with just as much to say as I have except that this island is mine, and of course, as I can do as I please with my own property, you must not use it save upon my terms.« Friday would have been just as much Crusoe's slave as though he had called him one. Friday was not a fish, he could not swim off through the sea; he was not a bird, and could not fly off through the air; if he lived at all, he had to live on that island. And if that island was Crusoe's, Crusoe was his master through life to death.

A friend of mine, who believes as I do upon this question was talking a while ago with another friend of mine who is a greenbacker, but who had not paid much attention to the land question. Our greenback friend said, »Yes, yes, the land question is an important question; oh, I admit the land question is a very important question; but then there are other important questions. There is this question and that question, and the other question; and there is the money question. The money question is a very important question; it is a more important question than the land question. You give me all the money, and you can take all the land.« My friend said, »Well, suppose you had all the money in the world and I had all the land in the world. What would you do if I were to give you notice to quit?«

Do you know that I do not think that the average man realises what land is? I know a little girl who has been going to school for some time, studying geography, and all that sort of thing; and one day she said to me: »Here is something about the surface of the earth. I wonder what the surface of the earth looks like?« »Well,« I said, »look out into the yard there. That is the surface of the earth.« She said, »That the surface of the earth? Our yard the surface of the earth? Why, I never thought of it!« That is very much the case not only with grown men, but with such wise beings as newspaper editors. They seem to think, when you talk of land, that you always refer to farms; to think that the land question is a question that relates entirely to farmers, as though land had no other use than growing crops. Now, I should like to know how a man could even edit a newspaper without having the use of some land. He might swing himself by straps and go up in a balloon, but he could not even then get along

without land. What supports the balloon in the air? Land; the surface of the earth. Let the earth drop, and what would become of the balloon? The air that supports the balloon is supported in turn by land. So it is with everything else men can do. Whether a man is working away three thousand feet under the surface of the earth or whether he is working up in the top of one of those immense buildings that they have in New York; whether he is ploughing the soil or sailing across the ocean, he is still using land.

Land! Why, in owning a piece of ground, what do you own? The lawyers will tell you that you own from the centre of the earth right up to heaven; and, so far as all human purposes go, you do. In New York they are building houses thirteen and fourteen stories high. What are men, living in those upper stories, paying for? There is a friend of mine who has an office in one of them, and he estimates that he pays by the cubic foot for air. Well, the man who owns the surface of the land has the renting of the air up there, and would have if the buildings were carried up for miles.

This land question is the bottom question. Man is a land animal. Suppose you want to build a house; can you build it without a place to put it? What is it built of? Stone, or mortar, or wood, or iron—they all come from the earth. Think of any article of wealth you choose, any of those things which men struggle for, where do they come from? From the land. It is the bottom question. The land question is simply the labour question; and when some men own that element from which all wealth must be drawn, and upon which all must live, then they have the power of living without work, and, therefore, those who do work get less of the products of work.

Did you ever think of the utter absurdity and strangeness of the fact that, all over the civilised world, the working classes are the poor classes? Go into any city in the world, and get into a cab and ask the man to drive you where the working people live. He won't take you to where the fine houses are. He will take you, on the contrary, into the squalid quarters, the poorer quarters. Did you ever think how curious that is? Think for a moment how it would strike a rational being who had never been on the earth before, if such an intelligence could come down, and you were to explain to him how we live on earth, how houses and food and clothing, and all the many things we need were all produced by work, would he not think that the working people would be the people who lived in the finest houses and had most of everything that work produces? Yet, whether you took him to

London or Paris or New York, or even to Burlington, he would find that those called the working people were the people who live in the poorest houses.

All this is strange—just think of it. We naturally despise poverty; and it is reasonable that we should. I do not say—I distinctly repudiate it—that the people who are poor are poor always from their own fault, or even in most cases; but it ought to be so. If any good man or woman could create a world, it would be a sort of a world in which no one would be poor unless he was lazy or vicious. But that is just precisely the kind of a world this is; that is just precisely the kind of a world the Creator has made. Nature gives to labour, and to labour alone; there must be human work before any article of wealth can be produced; and in the natural state of things the man who toiled honestly and well would be the rich man, and he who did not work would be poor. We have so reversed the order of nature that we are accustomed to think of the workingman as a poor man.

And if you trace it out I believe you will see that the primary cause of this is that we compel those who work to pay others for permission to do so. You may buy a coat, a horse, a house; there you are paying the seller for labour exerted, for something that he has produced, or that he has got from the man who did produce it; but when you pay a man for land, what are you paying him for? You are paying for something that no man has produced; you pay him for something that was here before man was, or for a value that was created, not by him individually, but by the community of which you are a part. What is the reason that the land here, where we stand tonight, is worth more than it was twenty-five years ago? What is the reason that land in the centre of New York, that once could be bought by the mile for a jug of whiskey, is now worth so much that, though you were to cover it with gold, you would not have its value? Is it not because of the increase of population? Take away that population, and where would the value of the land be? Look at it in any way you please.

We talk about over-production. How can there be such a thing as over-production while people want? All these things that are said to be over-produced are desired by many people. Why do they not get them? They do not get them because they have not the means to buy them; not that they do not want them. Why have not they the means to buy them? They earn too little. When the great masses of men

have to work for an average of \$1.40 a day, it is no wonder that great quantities of goods cannot be sold.

Now why is it that men have to work for such low wages? Because if they were to demand higher wages there are plenty of unemployed men ready to step into their places. It is this mass of unemployed men who compel that fierce competition that drives wages down to the point of bare subsistence. Why is it that there are men who cannot get employment? Did you ever think what a strange thing it is that men cannot find employment? Adam had no difficulty in finding employment; neither had Robinson Crusoe; the finding of employment was the last thing that troubled them.

If men cannot find an employer, why cannot they employ themselves? Simply because they are shut out from the element on which human labour can alone be exerted. Men are compelled to compete with each other for the wages of an employer, because they have been robbed of the natural opportunities of employing themselves; because they cannot find a piece of God's world on which to work without paving some other human creature for the privilege.

I do not mean to say that even after you had set right this fundamental injustice, there would not be many things to do; but this I do mean to say, that our treatment of land lies at the bottom of all social questions. This I do mean to say, that, do what you please, reform as you may, you never can get rid of wide-spread poverty so long as the element on which and from which all men must live is made the private property of some men. It is utterly impossible. Reform government—get taxes down to the minimum—build railroads; institute co-operative stores; divide profits, if you choose, between employers and employed—and what will be the result? The result will be that the land will increase in value—that will be the result—that and nothing else. Experience shows this. Do not all improvements simply increase the value of land—the price that some must pay others for the privilege of living?

Consider the matter, I say it with all reverence, and I merely say it because I wish to impress a truth upon your minds—it is utterly impossible, so long as His laws are what they are, that God himself could relieve poverty—utterly impossible. Think of it and you will see. Men pray to the Almighty to relieve poverty. But poverty comes not from God's laws—it is blasphemy of the worst kind to say that; it comes from man's injustice to his fellows. Supposing the Almighty

were to hear the prayer, how could He carry out the request so long as His laws are what they are?

Consider—the Almighty gives us nothing of the things that constitute wealth; He merely gives us the raw material, which must be utilised by man to produce wealth. Does He not give us enough of that now? How could He relieve poverty even if He were to give us more? Supposing in answer to these prayers He were to increase the power of the sun; or the virtue of the soil? Supposing He were to make plants more prolific, or animals to produce after their kind more abundantly? Who would get the benefit of it? Take a country where land is completely monopolised, as it is in most of the civilised countries—who would get the benefit of it? Simply the landowners. And even if God in answer to prayer were to send down out of the heavens those things that men require, who would get the benefit?

In the Old Testament we are told that when the Israelites journeyed through the desert, they were hungered, and that God sent manna down out of the heavens. There was enough for all of them, and they all took it and were relieved. But supposing that desert had been held as private property, as the soil of Great Britain is held, as the soil even of our new States is being held; suppose that one of the Israelites had a square mile, and another one had twenty square miles, and another one had a hundred square miles, and the great majority of the Israelites did not have enough to set the soles of their feet upon, which they could call their own—what would become of the manna? What good would it have done to the majority? Not a whit. Though God had sent down manna enough for all, that manna would have been the property of the landholders; they would have employed some of the others perhaps, to gather it up into heaps for them, and would have sold it to their hungry brethren. Consider it; this purchase and sale of manna might have gone on until the majority of Israelites had given all they had, even to the clothes off their backs. What then? Then they would not have had anything left to buy manna with, and the consequences would have been that while they went hungry the manna would have lain in great heaps, and the landowners would have been complaining of the over-production of manna. There would have been a great harvest of manna and hungry people, just precisely the phenomenon that we see to-day.

I cannot go over all the points I would like to try, but I wish to call your attention to the utter absurdity of private property in land! Why, consider it, the idea of a man's selling the earth—the earth, our

common mother. A man selling that which no man produced—a man passing title from one generation to another. Why, it is the most absurd thing in the world. Why, did you ever think of it? What right has a dead man to land? For whom was this earth created? It was created for the living, certainly, not for the dead. Well, now we treat it as though it was created for the dead. Where do our land titles come from? They come from men who for the most part are past and gone. Here in this new country you get a little nearer the original source; but go to the Eastern States and go back over the Atlantic. There you may clearly see the power that comes from landownership.

As I say, the man that owns the land is the master of those who must live on it. Here is a modern instance: you who are familiar with the history of the Scottish Church know that in the forties there was a disruption in the church. You who have read Hugh Miller's work on »The Cruise of the Betsey« know something about it; how a great body, led by Dr. Chalmers, came out from the Established Church and said they would set up a Free Church. In the Established Church were a great many of the landowners. Some of them, like the Duke of Buccleugh, owning miles and miles of land on which no common Scotsman had a right to put his foot, save by the Duke of Buccleugh's permission. These landowners refused not only to allow these Free Churchmen to have ground upon which to erect a church, but they would not let them stand on their land and worship God. You who have read »The Cruise of the Betsey« know that it is the story of a clergyman who was obliged to make his home in a boat on that wild sea because he was not allowed to have land enough to live on. In many places the people had to take the sacrament with the tide coming to their knees—many a man lost his life worshipping on the roads in rain and snow. They were not permitted to go on Mr. Landlord's land and worship God, and had to take to the roads. The Duke of Buccleugh stood out for seven years compelling people to worship in the roads, until finally relenting a little, he allowed them to worship God in a gravel pit; whereupon they passed a resolution of thanks to His Grace.

But that is not what I wanted to tell you. The thing that struck me was this significant fact: As soon as the disruption occurred, the Free Church, composed of a great many able men, at once sent a delegation to the landlords to ask permission for Scotsmen to worship God in Scotland and in their own way. This delegation set out for Lon-

don—they had to go to London, England, to get permission for Scotsmen to worship God in Scotland, and in their own native home!

But that is not the most absurd thing. In one place where they were refused land upon which to stand and worship God, the late landowner had died and his estate was in the hands of the trustees, and the answer of the trustees was, that so far as they were concerned they would exceedingly like to allow them to have a place to put up a church to worship God, but they could not conscientiously do it because they knew that such a course would be very displeasing to the late Mr. Monaltie! Now this dead man had gone to heaven, let us hope; at any rate he had gone away from this world, but lest it might displease him men yet living could not worship God. Is it possible for absurdity to go any further?

You may say that those Scotch people are very absurd people, but they are not a whit more so than we are. I read only a little while ago of some Long Island fishermen who had been paying as rent for the privilege of fishing there, a certain part of the catch. They paid it because they believed that James II, a dead man centuries ago, a man who never put his foot in America, a king who was kicked off the English throne, had said they had to pay it, and they got up a committee, went to the county town and searched the records. They could not find anything in the records to show that James II had ever ordered that they should give any of their fish to anybody, and so they refused to pay any longer. But if they had found that James II had really said they should they would have gone on paying. Can anything be more absurd?

There is a square in New York—Stuyvesant Square that is locked up at six o'clock every evening, even on the long summer evenings. Why is it locked up? Why are the children not allowed to play there? Why because old Mr. Stuyvesant, dead and gone I don't know how many years ago, so willed it. Now can anything be more absurd?\*

\*)After a popular agitation, the park authorities since decided to have the gates open later than six o'clock.

Yet that is not any more absurd than our land titles. From whom do they come? Dead man after dead man. Suppose you get on the cars here going to Council Bluffs or Chicago. You find a passenger with his baggage strewn over the seats. You say: »Will you give me a seat, if you please, sir?« He replies: »No; I bought this seat.« »Bought this seat? From whom did you buy it?« I bought it from the

man who got out at the last station,« That is the way we manage this earth of ours.

Is it not a self-evident truth, as Thomas Jefferson said, that »the land belongs in usufruct to the living,« and that they who have died have left it, and have no power to say how it shall be disposed of? Title to land! Where can a man get any title which makes the earth his property? There is a sacred right to property—sacred because ordained by the laws of nature, that is to say, by the laws of God, and necessary to social order and civilisation. That is the right of property in things produced by labour; it rests on the right of a man to himself. That which a man produces, that is his against all the world, to give or to keep, to lend, to sell or to bequeath; but how can he get such a right to land when it was here before he came? Individual claims to land rest only on appropriation. I read in a recent number of the »Nineteenth Century,« possibly some of you may have read it, an article by an ex-prime minister of Australia in which there was a little story that attracted my attention. It was of a man named Galahard, who in the early days got up to the top of a high hill in one of the finest parts of western Australia. He got up there, looked all around, and made this proclamation: »All the land that is in my sight from the top of this hill I claim for myself; and all the land that is out of sight I claim for my son John.«

That story is of universal application. Land titles everywhere come from just such appropriations. Now, under certain circumstances, appropriation can give a right. You invite a company of gentlemen to dinner and you say to them: »Be seated, gentlemen,« and I get into this chair. Well, that seat for the time being is mine by the right of appropriation. It would be very ungentlemanly, it would be very wrong for any one of the other guests to come up and say: »Get out of that chair; I want to sit there I« But that right of possession, which is good so far as the chair is concerned, for the time, does not give me a right to appropriate all there is on the table before me. Grant that a man has a right to appropriate such natural elements as he can use, has he any right to appropriate more than he can use? Has a guest in such a case as I have supposed a right to appropriate more than he needs and make other people stand up? That is what is done.

Why, look all over this country—look at this town or any other town. If men only took what they wanted to use we should all have enough; but they take what they do not want to use at all. Here are a lot of Englishmen coming over here and getting titles to our land in

vast tracts; what do they want with our land? They do not want it at all; it is not the land they want; they have no use for American land. What they want is the income that they know they can in a little while get from it. Where does that income come from? It comes from labour, from the labour of American citizens. What we are selling to these people is our children, not land.

Poverty! Can there be any doubt of its cause? Go, into the old countries—go into western Ireland, into the highlands of Scotland—these are purely primitive communities. There you will find people as poor as poor can be—living year after year on oatmeal or on potatoes, and often going hungry. I could tell you many a pathetic story. Speaking to a Scottish physician who was telling me how this diet was inducing among these people a disease similar to that which from the same cause is ravaging Italy (the Pellagra), I said to him: »There is plenty of fish; why don't they catch fish? There is plenty of game; I know the laws are against it, but cannot they take it on the sly?« »That,« he said, »never enters their heads. Why, if a man was even suspected of having a taste for trout or grouse he would have to leave at once.«

There is no difficulty in discovering what makes those people poor. They have no right to anything that nature gives them. All they can make above a living they must pay to the landlord. They not only have to pay for the land that they use, but they have to pay for the seaweed that comes ashore and for the turf they dig from the bogs. They dare not improve, for any improvements they make are made an excuse for putting up the rent. These people who work hard live in hovels, and the landlords, who do not work at all—oh! they live in luxury in London or Paris. If they have hunting boxes there, why they are magnificent castles as compared with the hovels in which the men live who do the work. Is there any question as to the cause of poverty there?

Now go into the cities and what do you see! Why, you see even a lower depth of poverty; aye, if I would point out the worst of the evils of land monopoly I would not take you to Connemara; I would not take you to Skye or Kintire—I would take you to Dublin or Glasgow or London. There is something worse than physical deprivation, something worse than starvation; and that is the degradation of the mind, the death of the soul. That is what you will find in those cities.

Now, what is the cause of that? Why, it is plainly to be seen; the people driven off the land in the country are driven into the slums of

the cities. For every man that is driven off the land the demand for the produce of the workmen of the cities is lessened; and the man himself with his wife and children, is forced among those workmen to compete upon any terms for a bare living and force wages down. Get work he must or starve—get work he must or do that which those people, so long as they maintain their manly feelings, dread more than death, go to the alms-houses. That is the reason, here as in Great Britain, that the cities are overcrowded. Open the land that is locked up, that is held by dogs in the manger, who will not use it themselves and will not allow anybody else to use it, and you would see no more of tramps and hear no more of over-production.

The utter absurdity of this thing of private property in land! I defy any one to show me any good from it, look where you please. Go out in the new lands, where my attention was first called to it, or go to the heart of the capital of the world—London. Everywhere, when your eyes are once opened, you will see its inequality and you will see its absurdity. You do not have to go farther than Burlington. You have here a most beautiful site for a city, but the city itself as compared with what it might be is a miserable, straggling town. A gentleman showed me to-day a big hole alongside one of your streets. The place has been filled up all around it and this hole is left. It is neither pretty nor useful. Why does that hole stay there? Well, it stays there because somebody claims it as his private property. There is a man, this gentleman told me, who wished to grade another lot and wanted somewhere to put the dirt he took off it, and he offered to buy this hole so that he might fill it up. Now it would have been a good thing for Burlington to have it filled up, a good thing for you all—your town would look better, and you yourself would be in no danger of tumbling into it some dark night. Why, my friend pointed out to me another similar hole in which water had collected and told me that two children had been drowned there. And he likewise told me that a drunken man some years ago had fallen into such a hole and had brought suit against the city which cost you taxpayers some \$11,000. Clearly it is to the interest of you all to have that particular hole I am talking of filled up. The man who wanted to fill it up offered the hole owner \$300. But the hole owner refused the offer and declared that he would hold out until he could get \$1000; and in the meanwhile that unsightly and dangerous hole must remain. This is but an illustration of private property in land.

You may see the same thing all over this country. See how injuriously in the agricultural districts this thing of private property in land affects the roads and the distances between the people. A man does not take what land he wants, what he can use, but he takes all he can get, and the consequence is that his next neighbour has to go further along, people are separated from each other further than they ought to be, to the increased difficulty of production, to the loss of neighbourhood and companionship. They have more roads to maintain than they can decently maintain; they must do more work to get the same result, and life is in every way harder and drearier.

When you come to the cities it is just the other way. In the country the people are too much scattered; in the great cities they are too crowded. Go to a city like New York and there they are jammed together like sardines in a box, living family upon family, one above the other. It is an unnatural and unwholesome life. How can you have anything like a home in a tenement room, or two or three rooms? How can children be brought up healthily with no place to play? Two or three weeks ago I read of a New York judge who fined two little boys five dollars for playing hop-scotch on the street—where else could they play? Private property in land had robbed them of all place to play. Even a temperance man, who had investigated the subject, said that in his opinion the gin palaces of London were a positive good in this, that they enabled the people whose abodes were dark and squalid rooms to see a little brightness and thus prevent them from going wholly mad.

What is the reason for this overcrowding of cities? There is no natural reason. Take New York, one half its area is not built upon. Why, then, must people crowd together as they do there? Simply because of private ownership of land. There is plenty of room to build houses and plenty, of people who want to build houses, but before anybody can build a house a blackmail price must be paid to some dog in the manger. It costs in many cases more to get vacant ground upon which to build a house than it does to build the house. And then what happens to the man who pays this blackmail and builds a house? Down comes the tax-gatherer and fines him for building the house.

It is so all over the United States—the men who improve, the men who turn the prairie into farms and the desert into gardens, the men who beautify your cities, are taxed and fined for having done these things. Now, nothing is clearer than that the people of New

York want more houses; and I think that even here in Burlington you could get along with more houses. Why, then, should you fine a man who builds one? Look all over this country—the bulk of the taxation rests upon the improver; the man who puts up a building, or establishes a factory, or cultivates a farm he is taxed for it; and not merely taxed for it, but I think in nine cases out of ten the land which he uses, the bare land, is taxed more than the adjoining lot or the adjoining 160 acres that some speculator is holding as a mere dog in the manger, not using it himself and not allowing anybody else to use it.

I am talking too long; but let me in a few words point out the way of getting rid of land monopoly, securing the right of all to the elements which are necessary for life. We could not divide the land. In a rude state of society, as among the ancient Hebrews, giving each family its lot and making it inalienable we might secure something like equality. But in a complex civilisation that will not suffice. It is not, however, necessary to divide up the land. All that is necessary is to divide up the income that comes from the land. In that way we can secure absolute equality; nor could the adoption of this principle involve any rude shock or violent change. It can be brought about gradually and easily by abolishing taxes that now rest upon capital, labour and improvements, and raising all our public revenues by the taxation of land values; and the longer you think of it the clearer you will see that in every possible way will it be a benefit.

Now, supposing we should abolish all other taxes direct and indirect, substituting for them a tax upon land values, what would be the effect? In the first place it would be to kill speculative values. It would be to remove from the newer parts of the country the bulk of the taxation and put it on the richer parts. It would be to exempt the pioneer from taxation and make the larger cities pay more of it. It would be to relieve energy and enterprise, capital and labour, from all those burdens that now bear upon them. What a start that would give to production! In the second place we could, from the value of the land, not merely pay all the present expenses of the government, but we could do infinitely more. In the city of San Francisco James Lick left a few blocks of ground to be used for public purposes there, and the rent amounts to so much, that out of it will be built the largest telescope in the world, large public baths and other public buildings, and various costly works. If, instead of these few blocks, the whole value of the land upon which the city is built had accrued to San Francisco what could she not do?

So in this little town, where land values are very low as compared with such cities as Chicago and San Francisco, you could do many things for mutual benefit and public improvement did you appropriate to public purposes the land values that now go to individuals. You could have a great free library; you could have an art gallery; you could get yourselves a public park, a magnificent public park, too. You have here one of the finest natural sites for a beautiful town I know of, and I have travelled much. You might make on this site a city that it would be a pleasure to live in. You will not as you go now—oh, no! Why, the very fact that you have a magnificent view here will cause somebody to hold on all the more tightly to the land that commands this view and charge higher prices for it. The State of New York wants to buy a strip of land so as to enable the people to see Niagara, but what a price she must pay for it! Look at all the great cities; in Philadelphia, for instance, in order to build their great city hall they had to block up the only two wide streets they had in the city. Everywhere you go you may see how private property in land prevents public as well as private improvement.

But I have not time to enter into further details. I can only ask you to think upon this thing, and the more you will see its desirability. As an English friend of mine puts it: »No taxes and a pension for everybody;« and why should it not be? To take land values for public purposes is not really to impose a tax, but to take for public purposes a value created by the community. And out of the fund which would thus accrue from the common property, we might, without degradation to anybody, provide enough to actually secure from want all who were deprived of their natural protectors or met with accident, or any man who should grow so old that he could not work. All prating that is heard from some quarters about its hurting the common people to give them what they do not work for is humbug. The truth is, that anything that injures self-respect, degrades, does harm; but if you give it as a right, as something to which every citizen is entitled to, it does not degrade. Charity schools do degrade children that are sent to them, but public schools do not.

But all such benefits as these, while great, would be incidental. The great thing would be that the reform I propose would tend to open opportunities to labour and enable men to provide employment for themselves. That is the great advantage. We should gain the enormous productive power that is going to waste all over the country, the power of idle hands that would gladly be at work. And that

removed, then you would see wages begin to mount. It is not that everyone would turn farmer, or everyone would build himself a house if he had an opportunity for doing so, but so many could and would, as to relieve the pressure on the labour market and provide employment for all others. And as wages mounted to the higher levels, then you would see the productive power increased. The country where wages are high is the country of greatest productive powers. Where wages are highest, there will invention be most active; there will labour be most intelligent; there will be the greatest yield for the expenditure of exertion. The more you think of it the more clearly you will see that what I say is true. I cannot hope to convince you in an hour or two, but I shall be content if I shall put you upon inquiry.

Think for yourselves; ask yourselves whether this wide-spread fact of poverty is not a crime, and a crime for which every one of us, man and woman, who does not do what he or she can do to call attention to it and do away with it, is responsible.

## Justice the Object - Taxation the Means <sup>2</sup>

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As I rise on this stage the past comes back to me. Twelve years ago, when I was halt of speech, when to face an audience, it seemed to me, required as much courage as it would to face a battery, I stood on this platform to speak my first word in the cause for which I stand here now. I stood on this platform to see, instead of the audience that greets me tonight, a beggarly array of empty benches. Many times since, in this country and in the dear old world, I have stood before far greater audiences than this; I have been greeted by thousands who never saw me before, as they would greet a friend long known and well loved; but I don't think it ever gave me such pleasure to stand before an audience as it does here tonight.

For years and years I have been promising myself to come back to San Francisco. I have crossed the Atlantic five times before I could fulfil that desire. I am here now, to go in a few days to the Antipodes; perhaps I may never return—who knows? If I live, I shall try to. But to San Francisco—though I never again can be a citizen of California though my path in life seems away so far that California seems but a ridge on the horizon—my heart has always turned, and always will turn, to the home of my youth, to the city in which I grew up, to the city in which I have found so many warm friends—to the country in which I married, and in which my children were born. Always it will seem to me home; and it is sweet to the man long absent to be welcomed home.

Aye, and you men, old friends tried and true—you men who rallied in the early times to our movement, when we could count each other almost upon one's fingers—I come back to you to say that at last our triumph is but a matter of time; to say that never in the history of thought has a movement come forward so fast and so well. Ten years ago, when I left, I was anything. but hopeful. Ten years ago I would not have dared to say that in any time to which I might live, we should see the beginning of this great struggle. Nor have I cared. My part (and I think I can speak for every man who is enlisted in this movement)—my part has never been to predict results. Our feeling is the feeling of the great stoic emperor, »that is the business of Jupiter; not ours.« Ours to do the work as we may; ours to plant the seed.

But so well forward is this cause, so many strong advocates has it in every land, so far has it won its way, that now it makes no differ-

ence who lives or who dies, who goes forward or who hangs back. The currents of the time are setting in our favour. At last—at last we can say with certainty that it will only be a little while before all over the English-speaking world, and then, not long after, over the rest of the civilised world, the great truth will be acknowledged that no human child comes into this world without coming into his equal right with all.

I am talking tonight to my friends; I am talking tonight to those who are as earnest and well informed in this cause as I am; but I am also probably talking to many who have but vague ideas concerning it. Let me, since I am in San Francisco, speak of *The genesis of my own thought*.

I came out here at an early age, and knew nothing whatever of political economy. I had never thought upon any social problem. The first time I ever recollect talking on such a subject was one day, when I was about eighteen, after I had first come to this country, sitting on the deck of a topsail schooner with a lot of miners on the way to the Frazer River. We got talking about the Chinese, and I ventured to say—ventured to ask what harm the Chinese were doing here, if, as these miners said, they were only working the cheap diggings? One old miner turned to me and said: »No harm now; but it will not be always that wages are as high as they are today in California. As the country grows, as people come in, wages will go down, and some day or other white men will be glad to get these diggings that the Chinamen are now working.« I well remember how it impressed me, the idea that as the country grew in all that we are hoping that it might grow, the condition of those who had to work for their living must grow, not better, but worse.

And I remember, after having come down from the country, sitting on Christmas eve in the gallery of the old American Theatre, among the gods, when a new drop-curtain fell, and we all sprang to our feet, for on that curtain was painted what was then a dream of the far future, the overland train coming into San Francisco; and after we had shouted ourselves hoarse, I began to think what good is it going to be to men like me? those who have nothing but their labour? I saw that thought grow and grow; we were all—all of us, rich and poor—hoping for the development of California, proud of her future greatness, looking forward to the time when San Francisco was to be one of the great capitals of the world; looking forward to the time when this great empire of the West was to count her population by mil-

lions, and underneath it all came to me what that miner said: What about the masses of the people?

When, after growing up here, I went across the continent, before the continental railway was completed, and in the streets of New York for the first time realised the contrasts of wealth and want that are to be found in a great city; saw those sights that, to the man who comes from the West, affright and appall, the problem grew upon me. I said to myself, there must be some reason for this; there must be some remedy for this, and I will not rest until I have found the one and discovered the other. At last it came clear as the stars of a bright midnight. I saw what was the cause; I saw what was the cure. I saw nothing that was new.

When I lectured for the first time in Oxford, a professor of political economy in that great university met and opposed me, and he said: »I have read Mr. George's book from one end to the other. What I have to say is this: there is nothing in it both new and true. What is true is not new, and what is new is not true.« I answered him: »I accept your statement; it is a correct criticism. Social truth never is, never can be, new; and the truth for which we stand is an old truth—a truth seen by men everywhere, recognised by the first perceptions of all men, only overclouded, only obscured in our modern times by force and fraud.«

So it is. I notice that one of our papers gives to me the character of an apostle and speaks of my comrades as my disciples. It is not so. I have done no more to any man than point out God's stars. They were there for him to see. Millions and millions of years have seen them precisely as I saw them; every man may see them who will look.

When I first went to Ireland I got a note from the most venerable of the Irish bishops, Dr. Dougan, Bishop of Waterford, asking me to come and have a private talk with him. I went, and the old man—white haired, ruddy cheeked—the man who under the mitre of the bishop still keeps the fresh true heart of the Irish peasant commenced, with the privilege of age, catechising me. He said: »What is this new doctrine that your name is associated with? You say that all men have equal rights to land; but all men can't use land. How do you propose to divide up?« And then he went on from one question to another, bringing all the arguments, all the objections that spring up in the minds of men, just as they probably sprang up in the minds of many who are here just as they spring up in the mind of any man—all the

objections that are so current; and I answered them all. Finally rising, without saying anything, the old man stretched out his hand. »God bless you, my son; I have asked you to come here and answer my questions, because I wanted to see if you could defend your faith. Go on; go on. What you say to me is nothing new; it is the old truth that through persecution and against force, though trodden down, our people have always held. What you say is not new to me. When a little boy, sitting by the peat fire in the west of Ireland, I have heard the same truths from the lips of men who could not speak a word of English. Go on; the time has come; I, an old man, tell you that there is no earthly power that can stop this movement.« And the years have shown that the venerable bishop was right.

What is the cause of this dark shadow that seems to accompany modern civilisation—of this existence of bitter want in the very centres of life—of the failure of all our modern advance—of all the wonderful discoveries and inventions that have made this wonderful nineteenth century, now drawing to a close, so prominent among all the centuries? What is the reason, that as we add to productive power—that is, invention after invention—multiplying by the hundredfold and the thousandfold the power of human hands to supply human wants; that all over the civilised world, and especially in this great country, pauperism is increasing, and insanity is increasing, and criminality is increasing; that marriages are decreasing; that the struggle for existence seems not less, but more and more intense—what is the reason? There must be but one of two answers. Either it is in accordance with the will of God, either it is the result of natural law, or it is because of our ignorance and selfishness of our faith that we evade the natural law.

We Single Taxers point to *The one sufficient cause*.

Wherever these phenomena are to be seen the natural element on which and from which all men must live, if they are to live at all, is the property, not of the whole people, but of the few. We point to the adequate cure; the restoration to all men of their natural rights in the soil—the assurance to every child, as it comes into the world, of the enjoyment of its natural heritage—the right to live, the right to work, the right to enjoy the fruits of its work; rights necessarily conditioned upon the equal right to that element which is the basis of production; that element which is indispensable to human life; that element which is the standing place, the storehouse, the reservoir of men; that element from which all that is physical in man is drawn. For our bodies,

themselves, they come from the land, and to the land they return again; we, ourselves, are as much children of the soil as are the flowers or the trees.

We call ourselves today Single Tax men. It is only recently, within a few years, that we have adopted that title.

It is not a new title; over a hundred years ago there arose in France a school of philosophers and patriots—Quesnay, Turgot, Condorcet, Dupont—most illustrious men of their time, who advocated, as the cure for all social ills, the *impôt unique*, the Single Tax. We here, on this western continent, as the nineteenth century draws to a close, have revived the same name, and we find enormous advantages in it.

We used to be confronted constantly by the question: »Well, after you have divided the land up, how do you propose to keep it divided?« We don't meet that question now. The Single Tax has, at least, this great merit: it suggests our method; it shows the way we would travel—the simple way of abolishing all taxes, save one tax upon land values. Now, mark: One tax upon land values.

We do not propose a tax upon land, as people who misapprehend us constantly say. We do not propose a tax upon land; we propose a tax upon land values, or what in the terminology of political economy is termed rent; that is to say, the value which attaches to land irrespective of any improvements—in or on it; that value which attaches to land, not by reason of anything that the user or improver of land does—not by reason of any individual exertion of labour, but by reason of the growth and improvement of the community. A tax that will take up what John Stuart Mill called the unearned increment; that is to say, that increment of wealth which comes to the owner of land, not as a user; that comes whether he be a resident or an absentee; whether he be engaged in the active business of life; whether he be an idiot and whether he be a child; that growth of value that we have seen in our own times so astonishingly great in this city; that has made sand lots, lying in the same condition that they were thousands of years ago, worth enormous sums, without anyone putting any exertion of labour or any expenditure of capital upon them.

Now, the distinction between a tax on land and a tax on land values may at first seem an idle one, but it is a most important one. A tax on land that is to say, a tax upon all land—would ultimately become a condition to the use of land; would therefore fall upon labour, would increase prices, and be borne by the general community. But a

tax on land values cannot fall on all land, because all land is not of value; it can only fall on valuable land, and on valuable land in proportion to its value; therefore, it can no more become a tax on labour than can a tax upon the value of special privileges of any kind. It can merely take from the individual, not the earnings of the individual, but that premium which, as society grows and improves, attaches to the use of land of superior quality.

Now see, take it in its lowest aspect—take it as a mere fiscal change, and see how in accord with every dictate of expediency, with every principle of justice, is the Single Tax.

We have invented and invented, improved and improved, yet the great fact is, that today we have not wealth enough. There are in the United States some few men richer than it is wholesome for men to be. But the great masses of our people are not so rich as civilised Americans at the close of the nineteenth century ought to be. The great mass of our people only manage by hard work to live. The great mass of our people don't get the comforts, the refinements, the luxuries that in the present age of the world everyone ought to have. All over this country there is a fierce struggle for existence. Only as I came to the door of this building a beggar stopped me on the street—a young man; he said he could not find work. I don't know, perhaps he lied. I do know that when a man once commences upon that course there is rapid demoralisation. I do know that indiscriminate charity is apt to injure far more than it can help; yet I gave him something, for I did not know but that his story might be true.

This is the shore of the Pacific. This is the Golden Gate. The westward march of our race is terminated by the ocean, which has the ancient East on its farther shore; no farther can we go. And yet here, in this new country, in this golden State, there are men ready to work, anxious to work, and yet who, for longer or shorter periods, cannot get the opportunity to work. The farther east you go, the worse it grows. To the man from San Francisco, who has never realised it before, there are sights in New York that are appalling. Cross the ocean to the greater city—the metropolis of the civilised world—and there poverty is deeper and darker yet. What is the reason? If there is more wealth wanted, why don't they get more?

We cannot cure this evil of poverty by dividing up wealth, monstrous as are some of the fortunes that have arisen—and fortunes are concentrating in this country faster than ever before in the history of the world. But divide them and still there would not be enough.

But if men want more wealth, why don't they get more wealth? If we, as a people, want more wealth (and certainly ninety-nine out of every hundred Americans do want more wealth), why are some suffering from the want of employment? Others are at work without making a living. But ninety-nine out of a hundred have some legitimate desire that they would like to gratify. Well, in the first place, if we want more wealth—if we call that country prosperous which is increasing in wealth—is it not a piece of stupidity that we should tax men for producing wealth? Yet that is what we are doing today.

Bring almost any article of wealth to this country from a foreign country, and you are confronted at once with a tax. Is it not from a common sense standpoint a stupid thing, if we want more wealth—if the prosperous country is the country that increases in wealth, why in Heaven's name should we put up a barrier against the men who want to bring wealth into this country? We want more dry-goods (if you don't know, your wives surely will tell you). We want more clothing; more sugar; more of all sorts of the good things that are called »goods«; and yet by this system of taxation we virtually put up a high fence around the country to keep out these very things. We tax that convenient man who brings goods into the country.

If wealth be a good thing; if the country be a prosperous country—that is, increasing in wealth—well, surely, if we propose to restrict trade at all, the wise thing would be to put the taxes on the men who are taking goods out of the country, not upon those who are bringing goods into the country.

We Single Tax men would sweep away all these barriers. We would try to keep out small-pox and cholera and vermin and plagues. But we would welcome all the goods that anybody wanted to send us, that anybody wanted to bring home. We say it is stupid, if we want more wealth, to prevent people from bringing wealth to the country. We say, also, that it is just as stupid to tax the men who produce wealth within the country.

Here we say we want more manufacturers. The American people submit to enormous taxes for the purpose of building up factories; yet when a man builds a factory, what do we do? Why, we come down and tax him for it.

We certainly want more houses. There are a few people who have bigger houses than any one reasonable family can occupy; but the great mass of the American people are underhoused. There, in the city of New York, the plight to which all American cities are tending,

you will find that 65 % of the population are living two families or more to the single floor. Yet let a man put a house in any part of the United States, and down comes the tax-gatherer to demand a fine for having put up a house.

We say that industry is a good thing, and that thrift is a good thing; and there are some people who say that if a man be industrious, and if a man be thrifty, he can easily accumulate wealth. Whether that be true or not, industry is certainly a good thing, and thrift is certainly a good thing. But what do we do if a man be industrious? If he produces wealth enough, and by thrift accumulates wealth at all, down comes the tax-gatherer to demand a part of it.

We say that that is stupid; that we ought not by our taxes to repress the production of wealth; that when a farmer reclaims a strip of the desert and turns it into an orchard and a vineyard, or on the prairie produces crops and feeds fine cattle, that, so far from being taxed and fined for having done these things, we ought to be glad that he has done it; that we ought to welcome all energy; that no man can Produce wealth for himself without augmenting the general stock, without making the whole country richer.

We impose some taxes for the purpose of getting rid of things, for the purpose of having fewer of the things that we tax. In most of our counties and States when dogs become too numerous, there is imposed a dog tax to get rid of dogs. Well, we impose a dog tax to get rid of dogs, and why should we impose a house tax unless we want to get rid of houses? Why should we impose a farm tax unless we want fewer farms? Why should we tax any man for having exerted industry or energy in the production of wealth?

Tax houses and there will certainly be fewer houses. If you go east to the city of Brooklyn, you may see that demonstrated to the eye. What first surprised me in the city of churches was to see long rows of buildings, of brown-stone houses, two stories in front and three stories behind; or three stories in front and four stories behind; and I thought for a moment what foolish idea ever entered the brains of those men, to have left out half an upper story in that way? I found out by inquiring that it was all on account of tax. In the city of Brooklyn, the assessor is only supposed to look in front, and so by making the house in that way, you can get a three-story building behind with only a two-story front and a two-story tax.

So in England, in the old houses, there you may see the result of the window tax. The window tax is in force in France today, and in

France there are two hundred thousand houses, according to the census, that have no window at all—in order to escape the tax.

So if you tax ships there will be fewer ships. What old San Franciscan cannot remember the day when in this harbour might be seen the graceful forms and lofty spars of so many American ships, the fleetest and best in the world? I well remember the day that no American who crossed to Europe thought of crossing on any other than an American ship. Today, if you wish to cross the Atlantic, you must cross on a British steamer, unless you choose to cross on a German or French steamer. On the high seas of the world the American ship is becoming almost as rare as a Chinese junk. Why? Simply because we have taxed our ships out of existence. There is the proof.

Tax buildings, and you will have fewer or poorer buildings; tax farms, and you will have fewer farms and more wilderness; tax ships, there will be fewer and poorer ships; and tax capital, and there will be less capital; but you may tax land values all you please and there will not be a square inch the less land. Tax land values all you please up to the point of taking the full annual value—up to the point of making mere ownership in land utterly unprofitable, so that no one will want merely to own land—what will be the result? Simply that land will be the easier had by the user. Simply that the land will become valueless to the mere speculator—to the dog in the manger, who wants merely to hold and not to use; to the forestaller, who wants merely to reap where others have sown, to gather to himself the products of labour, without doing labour. Tax land values, and you leave to production its full rewards, and you open to producers natural opportunities.

Take it from any aspect you please, take it on its political side (and surely that is a side that we ought to consider clearly and plainly), while we boast of our democratic republicanism, democratic republicanism is passing away. I need not say that to you men of San Francisco—San Francisco ruled by a boss; to you men of California, where you send to the Senate the citizen who dominates the State as no duke could rule. Look at the corruption that is tearing the heart out of our institutions; where does it come from? Whence this demoralisation? Largely from our system of taxation. What does our present system of taxation do? Why, it is a tax upon conscience; a tax upon truth; a tax upon respect for law. It offers a premium for lying and perjury and evasion. It fosters and stimulates bribery and corruption.

Go over to Europe; travel around for a while among the effete monarchies of the old world, and what you see will make you appreciate democracy. Then come home. At length you take a pilot. There is the low-lying land upon the horizon—the land of the free and the home of the brave—and if you are entering the port of New York, as most Americans do, finally you will see that great statue, presented by a citizen of the French republic—the statue of Liberty holding aloft a light that talks to the world.

Just as you get to see that statue clearly, Liberty enlightening the world, you will be called down by a Customhouse officer to form in line, men and women, and to call on God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, to bear witness that you have nothing dutiable in your trunks or in your carpet sacks, or rolled up in your shawl straps; and you take that oath. The United States of America compels you to. But the United States of America don't leave you there. The very next thing, another official steps up to demand your keys and to open your box or package and to look through it for things dutiable, unless, as may be, his eyes are stopped by a greenback. Well, now, everyone who has made that visit does know that most passengers have things dutiable; and I notice that the protectionists have them fully as often as the free traders. I have never yet seen a consistent protectionist. There may be protectionists who would not smuggle when they get a chance, but I think they must be very, very few.

Go right through the daily stream—from the very institution of law down to the very lobby that gathers at Washington when it is proposed to repeal a tax, bullying, bragging, stealing to keep that particular tax on the American people, so patriotic are they; very much interested in protecting the poor working man.

See the private interests that are enlisted in the merely petty evasions of law that go on by passengers; see the gigantic smuggling, the under-valuation frauds of all kinds; the private interests that are enlisted in class; that enter the primaries; that surround our national legislature with lobbyists that in every presidential election put their millions into the corruption fund. Does not the whole system reek with fraud and corruption? Is it not a discrimination against honesty, against conscience, a premium on evasion and fraud?

Come into our States and look at their taxes, or look, if you please, by the way, on the internal revenue. You remember how, when it was proposed to abolish that stamp tax on matches that was in force during the war, how the match combination fought hard and

fought long against the repeal of that tax. You remember how the whisky ring spent its money to prevent the reduction of the whisky tax; how today it stands ready to spend money to keep up the present tax.

Go then into our States; take our system of direct taxation. What do you find? We pretend to tax all property; many of our taxes are especially framed to get at rich men; what is the result? Why, all over the United States the very rich men simply walk from under those taxes. All over the United States the attempt to tax men upon their wealth is a farce and a fraud. If there were no other reason, this would be a sufficient reason why all such taxes should be abolished. In their very nature they permit evasion, law breaking, perjury, bribery, and corruption.

But the tax on land values, it has at least this advantage: land cannot be hid; it cannot be carried off; it always remains, so to speak, out of doors. If you don't see the land you know that it is there; and of all values the value which attaches to land is the most definite, the most easily ascertained. Why, I may go into San Francisco, into Denver, into New York, into Boston, into any city where I am totally unacquainted, and if one offers to sell me a lot, I can go to any real-estate dealer and say: »Here is a lot of such a frontage and such a depth, and on such a street; what is it worth?« He will tell me closely. How can he tell me the value of the house that is upon it? Not without a close examination; still less, how can anyone tell me, without the examination of experts, what is the value of the things contained in that house, if it be a large and fine house? And, still less, how can anyone tell me the value of the various things that the man who lives in that house may own? But land—there it is. You can put up a simple little sign on every lot, or upon every piece of agricultural land, saying that this tract is of such a frontage and of such a depth, having such an area, and it belongs to such a person, and is assessed at so much, and you have published information checking the assessment; you have the assessment on a value that can be ascertained more definitely, more certainly than any other value.

Substitute the tax on land values for all the many taxes that we now impose. See the gain in morals; see the gain in economy! With what a horde of tax-gathering and tax assessing officials could we dispense; what swearing and examination and nosing around to find out what men have or what they are worth!

Now take the matter of justice. We Single Tax men are not deniers of the rights of property; but, on the contrary, we are the upholders and defenders of the rights of property. We assert the sacred right of property; that there is a right of property, which comes from no human law, which antedates all human enactments. That is a clear genesis. That which a man produces, that which by his exertion he brings from the reservoir of nature and adapts to forms suited to gratify the wants of man—that is his; his as against all the world.

If I, by my labour, catch a fish, that fish is and ought to be mine; if I make a machine, that machine belongs to me; that is the sacred right of property. There is a clear title from the producer, resting upon the right of the individual to himself, to the use of his own powers, to the enjoyment of the results of his exertion; the right that he may give, that he may sell, that he may bequeath.

What do we do when we tax a building? When a man puts up a building by his own exertion, or it comes to him through the transfer of the right that others have to their exertion, down comes the community and says, virtually, you must give us a portion of that building. For where a man honestly earns and accumulates wealth, down come the tax-gatherers and demand every year a portion of those earnings. Now, is it not as much an impairment of the right of property to take a lamb as to take a sheep? To take 5% or 20%, as to take 100%? We should leave the whole of the value produced by individual exertion to the individual. We should respect the rights of property not to any limited extent, but fully. We should leave to him who produces wealth, to him to whom the title of the producer passed, all that wealth. No matter what be its form, it belongs to the individual. We should take for the uses of the community the value of land for the same reason. It belongs to the community because the growth of the community produces it.

What is the reason that land in San Francisco today is worth so much more than it was in 1860 or 1850? Why is it that barren sand, then worth nothing, has now become so enormously valuable? On account of what the owners have done? No. It is because of the growth of the whole people. It is because San Francisco is a larger city; it is because you all are here. Every child that is born; every family that comes and settles; every man that does anything to improve the city, adds to the value of land. It is a value that springs from the growth of the community. Therefore, for the very same reason of justice, the very same respect for the rights of property which

induces us to leave to the individual all that individual effort produces, we should take for the community that value which arises by the growth and improvement of the community.

What would be the direct result? Take this city, this State or the whole country; abolish all taxes on the production of wealth; let every man be free to plough, to sow, to build, in any way add to the common stock without being fined one penny. Say to every man who would improve, who would in any way add to the production of wealth: Go ahead, go ahead; produce, accumulate all you please; add to the common stock in any way you choose; you shall have it all; we shall not fine or tax you one penny. What would be the result of abolishing all these taxes that now depress industry; that now fall on labour; that now lessen the profits of those who are adding to the general wealth? Evidently to stimulate production; to increase wealth; to bring new life into every vocation of industry.

On the other side what would be the effect when abolishing all these taxes that now fall on labour or the products of labour, if we were to resort for public revenue to a tax upon land values; a tax that would fall on the owner of a vacant lot just as heavily as upon the man who has improved a lot by putting up a house; that would fall on the speculator who is holding 160 acres of agricultural land idle, waiting for a tenant or a purchaser, as heavily as it would fall upon the farmer who had made the 160 acres bloom? Why, the result would be everywhere that the dog in the manger would be checked; for the result everywhere would be that the men who are holding natural opportunities, not for use but simply for profit, by demanding a price of those who must use them, would have either to use their land or give way to somebody who would.

Everywhere from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the lakes to the gulf, opportunities would be opened to labour; there would come into the labour market that demand for the products of labour that never can be satisfied—the demands of labour itself. We should cease to hear of the labour question. The notion of a man ready to work, anxious to work, and yet not able to find work, would be forgotten, would be a story of the misty past.

Why, look at it here today, in this new country, where there are as yet only 65 millions of us scattered over a territory that in the present stage of the arts is sufficient to support in comfort a thousand millions; yet we are actually thinking and talking as if there were too many people in the country.

We want more wealth. Why don't we get it? Is any factor of production short? What are the factors of production? Labour, capital, and land; but to put them in the order of their importance: land, labour, capital. We want more wealth; what is the difficulty? Is it in labour; is there not enough labour? No. From all parts of the United States we hear of what seems like a surplus of labour. We have actually got to thinking that the man who gives another employment is giving him a boon. Is there any scarcity of capital? Why, so abundant is capital today that United States bonds, bought at the current rate, will only yield a fraction over 2% per annum. So abundant is capital that there can be no doubt that a government loan could be floated today at 2% and little doubt but that it would soon command a premium. So abundant is capital that all over the country it is pressing for remunerative employment.

If the limitation is not in labour and not in capital, it must be in land. But there is no scarcity of land from the Atlantic to the Pacific, for there you will find unused or only half-used land. Aye, even where population is densest. Have you not land enough in San Francisco? Go to that great city of New York, where people are crowded together so closely, the great majority of them, that physical health and moral health are in many cases alike impossible. Where, in spite of the fact that the rich men of the whole country gravitate there, only four per cent of the families live in separate houses of their own, and sixty-five per cent of the families are crowded two or more to the single floor—crowded together layer on layer, in many places, like sardines in a box. Yet, why are there not more houses there? Not because there is not enough capital to build more houses, and yet not because there is not land enough on which to build more houses.

Today one half of the area of New York City is unbuilt upon—is absolutely unused. When there is such a pressure, why don't people go to these vacant lots and build there? Because though unused, the land is owned; because, speculating upon the future growth of the city, the owners of those vacant lots demand thousands of dollars before they will permit anyone to put a house upon them.

What you see in New York, you may see everywhere. Come into the coalfields of Pennsylvania; there you will frequently find thousands and thousands of miners unable to work, either locked out by their employers, or striking as a last resource against their pitiful wages being cut down a little more.

Why should there be such a struggle? Why don't these men go to work and take coal for themselves? Not because there is not coal land enough in those mining districts. The parts that are worked are small as compared to the whole coal deposits. The land is not all used, but it is all owned, and before the men who would like to go to work can get the opportunity to work the raw material, they must pay to its owner thousands of dollars per acre for land that is only nominally taxed.

Go West, find people filing along, crowding around every Indian reservation that is about to be opened; travelling through unused and half-used land in order to get an opportunity to settle—like men swimming a river in order to get a drink. Come to this State, ride through your great valleys, see those vast expanses, only dotted here and there by a house, without a tree; those great ranches, cultivated as they are cultivated by blanket men, who have a little work in ploughing time, and some more work in reaping time, and who then, after being fed almost like animals, and sheltered worse than valuable animals are sheltered, are forced to tramp through the State. It is the artificial scarcity of natural opportunities.

Is there any wonder that under this treatment of the land all over the civilised world there should be want and destitution? Aye, and suffering—degradation worse in many cases than anything known among savages, among the great masses of the people.

How could it be otherwise in a world like this world, tenanted by land animals, such as men are? How could the Creator, so long as our laws are what they are—how could He, himself, relieve it? Suppose that in answer to the prayers that ascend for the relief of poverty, the Almighty were to rain down wealth from heaven, or cause it to spout tip from the bowels of the earth. Who, under our present system, would own it? The landowner. There would be no benefit to labour. Consider, conceive any kind of a world your imagination will permit. Conceive of heaven itself, which, from the very necessities of our minds, we cannot otherwise think of than as having an expansion of space—what would be the result in heaven itself, if the people who should first get to heaven were to parcel it out in big tracts among themselves?

Oh, the wickedness of it; oh, the blasphemy of it! Worse than atheists are those so-called Christians who by implication, if not by direct statement, attribute to the God they call on us to worship, the

God that they say with their lips is all love and mercy, this bitter suffering which today exists in the very centres of our civilisation.

When I was last in London, the first morning that I spent there, I rose early and walked out, as I always like to walk when I go to London, through streets whose names I do not know; I came to a sign—a great big brass plate, »Office of the Missionary Society for Central Africa.« I walked half a block, and right by the side of the Horse Guards, where you may see the pomp and glare of the colour mounting, there went a man and a woman and two little children that seemed the very embodiment of hard and hopeless despair.

A while ago I was in Edinburgh, the Modern Athens, the glorious capital (for such it is in some parts)—the glorious capital of Scotland; aye, and I went into those tall houses, monstrous they seemed, those relics of the old time, and there, right in the shadow, in the centre of such intellectual activity, such wealth, such patriotism, such public spirit, were sights that would appall the veriest savage.

I saw there the hardest thing a man can look at. They took me to an institution where little children are taken in and cared for, whose mothers are at work, and here I saw the bitterest of all sight little children shrunken and sickly from want of food; and the superintendent told me a story. He pointed out a little girl, and said: »That little thing was brought in here, almost starving, and when they set food before her, before she touched it or tasted it, she folded her hands and raised her eyes, and thanked her Heavenly Father for his bounty.«

Good God! Men and women—think of the blasphemy of it! To say that the bounty of that little child's Heavenly Father was conceded so. No! No! No! He has given enough and to spare for all His providence brings into this world. It is the injustice that disinherits God's children; it is the wrong that takes from those children their heritage, not the Almighty.

Aye, years ago, I said on this platform that the seed had been set. Now the grand truth is beginning to appear. From one end of Great Britain to the other, all through this country, into the Antipodes to which I am going wherever the English tongue is spoken—aye, and beyond, on the continent of Europe—the truths for which we stand are making their way. The giant Want is doomed. But I tell you, and I call upon my comrades to bear me witness, that there is a reward in this belief, in this work, which is utterly independent of results.

In London, on one of my visits, a clergyman of the Established Church asked a private interview with me. He said: »I want to talk

with you frankly. Something I have seen of your sayings has made me think that you could give me an answer. Let me tell you my story. I was educated for the Church; graduated at one of the universities; took orders; was sent to a foreign country as a missionary. After a while I became a chaplain in the navy; finally, a few years since, I took a curacy in London, and settled here. I have been, up till recently, a believing Christian.

I have believed the Bible to be the word of God, and I have rested implicitly on its promises; the one promise I have often thought of: 'Once I was young, and now I am old, yet never have I seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.' I believed that till I came to my own country.

I believed that until I undertook the ministerial work in London. I believed it was true. Now I know it is not true; I have seen the righteous forsaken and his seed begging their bread. My faith is gone; and I am holding on here, but I feel like a hypocrite. I want to ask you how it seems to you.« And I told him in my poor way, as I have been trying to tell you tonight, how it is, simply because of our violation of natural justice; how it is, simply because we will not take the appointed way.

Aye, in our own hearts we all know. To the man who appreciates this truth, to the man who enters this work, it makes little difference—this thing of results. This at least he knows, that it is not because of the Power that created this world and brought men upon it that these dark shades exist in our civilisation today; that it is not because of the niggardliness of the Creator

And there arises in me a feeling of what the world might be.

The prayer that the Master taught His disciples: »Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,« was no mere form of words. It is given to men to struggle for the kingdom of justice and righteousness. It is given to men to work and to hope for and to bring on that day of which the prophets have told and the seers have dreamed; that day in which involuntary poverty shall be utterly abolished; that day in which there shall be work for all, leisure for all, abundance for all; that day in which even the humblest shall have his share, not merely of the necessities and comforts, but of the reasonable luxuries of life; that day in which every child born among us may hope to develop all that is highest and noblest in its nature; that day in which in the midst of abundance the fear of want shall be gone.

This greed for wealth that leads men to turn their backs upon everything that is just and true, and to trample upon their fellows lest they be trampled upon; to search and to strive, and to strain every faculty of their natures to accumulate what they cannot take away, will be gone, and in that day the higher qualities of man shall have their opportunity and claim their reward.

We cannot change human nature; we are not so foolish as to dream that human nature can be changed. What we mean to do is to give the good in human nature its opportunity to develop.

Try our remedy by any test—the test of justice; the test of expediency. Try it by any dictum of political economy; by any maxim of good morals; by any maxim of good government. It will stand every test. What I ask you to do is not to take what I or any other man may say, but to think for yourselves!

## The Study of Political Economy <sup>3</sup>

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Take it that these lectures are intended to be more suggestive than didactic, and in what I shall have to say to you my object will be merely to induce you to think for yourselves. I shall not attempt to outline the laws of political economy, nor even, where my own views are strong and definite, to touch upon unsettled questions. But I want to show you, if I can, the simplicity and certainty of a science too generally regarded as complex and indeterminate, to point out the ease with which it may be studied, and to suggest reasons which make that study worthy of your attention.

Of the importance of the questions with which political economy deals it is hardly necessary to speak. The science which investigates the laws of the production and distribution of wealth concerns itself with matters which among us occupy more than nine tenths of human effort, and perhaps nine tenths of human thought. In its province are included all that relates to the wages of labour and the earnings of capital; all regulations of trade; all questions of currency and finance; all taxes and public disbursements—in short, everything that can in any way affect the amount of wealth which a community can secure or the proportion in which that wealth will be distributed between individuals. Though not the science of government, it is essential to the science of government. Though it takes direct cognisance only of what are termed the selfish instincts, yet in doing so it includes the basis of all higher qualities. The laws which it aims to discover are the laws by virtue of which states wax rich and populous, or grow weak and decay; the laws upon which depend the comfort, happiness, and opportunities of our individual lives. And as the development of the nobler part of human nature is powerfully modified by material conditions, if it does not absolutely depend upon them, the laws sought for by political economy are the laws which at last control the mental and moral as well as the physical states of humanity.

Clearly, this is the science which of all sciences is of the first importance to us. Useful and sublime as are the sciences which open to us the vistas of Nature—which read for us the story of the deep past, or search out the laws of our physical or mental organisation—what is their practical importance as compared with the science which deals with the conditions that alone make the cultivation of the others possible? Compare on this ground of practical utility the science of political economy with all others, and its pre-eminence almost sug-

gests the reply of the Greek: »No, I cannot play the fiddle; but I can tell you how to make of a little village a great and glorious city!«

How is it, then, it will naturally be asked, that a science so important is so little regarded? Our laws persistently violate its first and plainest principles, and that the ignorance thus exemplified is not confined to what are called the uneducated classes is shown by the debates in our legislative bodies, the decisions of our courts, the speeches of our party leaders, and the editorials of our newspapers. A century has elapsed since Adam Smith published his »Wealth of Nations,« and sixty years since Ricardo enunciated his theory of rent. Yet not only has political economy received no substantial improvement since Ricardo, but, while thousands of new discoveries in other branches of human knowledge have been eagerly seized and generally utilised, and the most revolutionary conclusions of other sciences become part of the accepted data of thought, the truths taught by political economy seem to have made little real impression, and it is even now a matter of debate whether there is, or can be, such a science at all.

This cannot be on account of the paucity of politicoeconomic literature. Enough books have been written on the subject within the last hundred years to fill a large library, while all of our great institutions of learning have some sort of a chair of political economy, and matters of intense public interest in which the principles of the science are directly involved are constantly being discussed.

It seems to me that the reasons why political economy is so little regarded are referable partly to the nature of the science itself and partly to the manner in which it has been cultivated.

In the first place, the very importance of the subjects with which political economy deals raises obstacles in its way. The discoveries of other sciences may challenge pernicious ideas, but the conclusions of political economy involve pecuniary interests, and thus thrill directly the sensitive pocket-nerve. For, as no social adjustment can exist without interesting a larger or smaller class in its maintenance, political economy at every point is apt to come in contact with some interest or other which regards it as the silversmiths of Ephesus did those who taught the uselessness of presenting shrines to Diana. Macaulay has well said that, if any large pecuniary interest were concerned in denying the attraction of gravitation, that most obvious of physical facts would not lack disputers. This is just the difficulty that has beset and still besets the progress of political economy. The man

who is, or who imagines that he is, interested in the maintenance of a protective tariff, may accept all your professors choose to tell him about the composition of the sun or the evolution of species, but, no matter how clearly you demonstrate the wasteful inutility of hampering commerce, he will not be convinced. And so, to the man who expects to make money out of a railroad-subsidy, you will in vain try to prove that such devices to change the natural direction of labour and capital must cause more loss than gain. What, then, must be the opposition which inevitably meets a science that deals with tariffs and subsidies, with banking interests and bonded debts, with trades-unions and combinations of capital, with taxes and licenses and land tenures! It is not ignorance alone that offers opposition, but ignorance backed by interest, and made fierce by passions.

Now, while the interests thus aroused furnish the incentive, the complexity of the phenomena with which political economy deals makes it comparatively easy to palm off on the unreasoning all sorts of absurdities as political economy. And, when all kinds of diverse opinions are thus promulgated under that name, it is but natural that the great number of people who depend on others to save themselves the trouble of thinking should look upon political economy as a field wherein any one may find what he pleases. But what is far worse than any amount of pretentious quackery is that the science even as taught by the masters is in large measure disjointed and indeterminate. As laid down in the best text-books, political economy is like a shapely statue but half hewn from the rock-like a landscape, part of which stands out clear and distinct, but over the rest of which the mists still roll. This is a subject into which, in a lecture like this, I cannot enter; but, that it is so, you may see for yourselves in the failure of political economy to give any clear and consistent answer to most important practical questions such as the industrial depressions which are so marked a feature of modern times, and in confusions of thought which will be obvious to you if you carefully examine even the best treatises. Strength and subtilty have been wasted in intellectual hair-splitting and super-refinements, in verbal discussions and disputes, while the great highroads have remained unexplored. And thus has been given to a simple and attractive science an air of repellent abstruseness and uncertainty.

And springing, as it seems to me, from the same fundamental cause, there has arisen an idea of political economy which has arrayed against it the feelings and prejudices of those who have most to

gain by its cultivation. The name of political economy has been constantly invoked against every effort of the working classes to increase their wages or decrease their hours of labour. The impious doctrine always preached by oppressors to oppressed—the blasphemous dogma that the Creator has condemned one portion of his creatures to lives of toil and want, while he has intended another portion to enjoy »all the fruits of the earth and the fullness thereof«—has been preached to the working classes in the name of political economy, just as the »cursed-be-Ham« clergymen used to preach the divine sanction of slavery in the name of Christianity. In so far as the real turning questions of the day are concerned, political economy seems to be considered by most of its professors as a scientific justification of all that is, and by the convenient formula of supply and demand they seem to mean some method which Providence has of fixing the rate of wages so that it can never by any action of the employed be increased. Nor is it merely ignorant pretenders who thus degrade the name and terms of political economy. This character has been so firmly stamped upon the science itself as currently held and taught that not even men like John Stuart Mill have been able to emancipate themselves. Even the intellectually courageous have shrunk from laying stress upon principles which might threaten great vested interests; while others, less scrupulous, have exercised their ingenuity in eliminating from the science everything which could offend those interests. Take the best and most extensively circulated text-books. While they insist upon freedom for capital, while they justify on the ground of utility the selfish greed that seeks to pile fortune on fortune, and the niggard spirit that steels the heart to the wail of distress, what sign of substantial promise do they hold out to the workingman save that he should refrain from rearing children?

What can we expect when hands that should offer bread thus hold out a stone? Is it in human nature that the masses of men, vaguely but keenly conscious of the injustice of existing social conditions, feeling that they are somehow cramped and hurt, without knowing what cramps and hurts them, should welcome truth in this partial form; that they should take to a science which, as it is presented to them, seems but to justify injustice, to canonise selfishness by throwing around it the halo of utility, and to present Herod rather than Vincent de Paul as the typical benefactor of humanity? Is it to be wondered at that they should turn in their ignorance to the absurdities of protec-

tion and the crazy theories generally designated by the name of socialism?

I have lingered to inquire why political economy has in popular apprehension acquired the character of indefiniteness, abstruseness, and selfishness, merely that I may be the better able to convince you that none of these qualities properly belong to it. I want to draw you to its study by showing you how clear and simple and beneficent a science it is, or rather should be.

Although political economy deals with various and complicated phenomena, yet they are phenomena which may be resolved into simple elements, and which are but the manifestations of familiar principles. The premises from which it makes its deductions are truths of which we are all conscious and upon which in every-day life we constantly base our reasoning and our actions. Its processes, which consist chiefly in analysis, have a like certainty, although, as with all the causes of which it takes cognisance are at all times acting other causes, it can never predict exact results but only tendencies.

And, although in the study of political economy we cannot use that potent method of experiment by artificially produced conditions which is so valuable in the physical sciences, yet, not only may we find, in the diversity of human society, experiments already worked out for us, but there is at our command a method analogous to that of the chemist, in what may be called mental experiment. You may separate, combine, or eliminate conditions in your own imagination, and test in this way the working of known principles. This, it seems to me, is the great tool of political economy. It is a method with which you must be familiar and doubtless use every day, though you may never have analysed the process. Let me illustrate what I mean by something which has no reference to political economy.

When I was a boy I went down to the wharf with another boy to see the first iron steamship which had ever crossed the ocean to our port. Now, hearing of an iron steamship seemed to us then a good deal like hearing of a leaden kite or a wooden cooking-stove. But, we had not been long aboard of her, before my comrade said in a tone of contemptuous disgust: »Pooh! I see how it is. She's all lined with wood; that's the reason she floats.« I could not controvert him for the moment, but I was not satisfied, and, sitting down on the wharf when he left me, I set to work trying mental experiments. If it was the wood inside of her that made her float, then the more wood the

higher she would float; and, mentally, I loaded her up with wood. But, as I was familiar with the process of making boats out of blocks of wood, I at once saw that, instead of floating higher, she would sink deeper. Then, I mentally took all the wood out of her, as we dug out our wooden boats, and saw that thus lightened she would float higher still. Then, in imagination, I jammed a hole in her, and saw that the water would run in and she would sink, as did our wooden boats when ballasted with leaden keels. And, thus I saw, as clearly as though I could have actually made these experiments with the steamer, that it was not the wooden lining, that made her float, but her hollowness, or, as I would now phrase it, her displacement of water.

Now, just such mental operations as these you doubtless perform every day, and in doing so you employ the method of imaginative experiment, which is so useful in the investigations of political economy. You can, in this way, turn around in your mind a proposition or phenomenon and look on all sides of it, can isolate, analyse, recombine, or subject it to the action of a mental magnifying glass which will reveal incongruities as a reduction ad absurdum. Let me again illustrate:

Before I had ever read a line of political economy, I happened once to hear a long and well-put argument in favour of a protective tariff. Up to that time I had supposed that »protection to domestic industry« was a good thing; not that I had ever thought out the matter, but that I had accepted this conclusion because I had heard many men whom I believed wiser than I say so. But this particular speaker had, so far as one of his audience was concerned, overshot his mark. His arguments set me thinking, just as when a boy my companion's solution of the iron-ship mystery had set me thinking. I said to myself: The effect of a tariff is to increase the cost of bringing goods from abroad. Now, if this benefits a country, then all difficulties, dangers, and impediments which increase the cost of bringing goods from abroad are likewise beneficial. If this theory be correct, then the city which is the hardest to get at has the most advantageous situation: pirates and shipwrecks contribute to national prosperity by raising the price of freight and the cost of insurance; and improvements in navigation, in railroads and steamships, are injurious. Manifestly this is absurd.

And then I looked further. The speaker had dwelt on the folly of a great country like the United States exporting raw material and im-

porting manufactured goods which might as well be made at home, and I asked myself, What is the motive which causes a people to export raw material and import manufactured goods? I found that it could be attributed to nothing else than the fact that they could in this way get the goods cheaper, that is, with less labour. I looked to transactions between individuals for parallels to this trade between nations, and found them in plenty—the farmer selling his wheat and buying flour; the grazier sending his wool to a market and bringing back cloth and blankets; the tanner buying back leather in shoes, instead of making them himself. I saw, when I came to analyse them, that these exchanges between nations were precisely the same thing as exchanges between individuals; that they were, in fact, nothing but exchanges between individuals of different nations; that they were all prompted by the desire and led to the result of getting the greatest return for the least expenditure of labour; that the social condition in which such exchanges did not take place was the naked barbarism of the Terra del Fuegians; that just in proportion to the division of labour and the increase of trade were the increase of wealth and the progress of civilisation. And so, following up, turning, analysing, and testing all the protectionist arguments, I came to conclusions which I have ever since retained.

Now, just such mental operations as this are all that is required in the study of political economy. Nothing more is needed (but this is needed) than the habit of careful thought—the making sure of every step without jumping to conclusions. This habit of jumping to conclusions of considering essentially different things as the same because of some superficial resemblance—is the source of the manifold and mischievous errors which political economy has to combat.

But I can probably, by a few examples, show you what I mean more easily than in any other way. Were I to put to you the child's question, »Which is heavier, a pound of lead or a pound of feathers?« you would doubtless be offended; and were I seriously to ask you, Which is the most valuable, a dollar's worth of gold or a dollar's worth of anything else? you might also feel that I had insulted your intelligence. Yet the belief that a dollar's worth of gold is more valuable than a dollar's worth of anything else is widespread and persistent. It has molded the policy of great nations, dictated treaties, marched armies, launched fleets, fought battles, constructed and enforced elaborate and vexatious systems of taxation, and sent men by thousands to jail and to the gallows. Certainly a large portion, proba-

bly a large majority, of the people of the United States—including many college graduates, members of what are styled the learned professions, senators, representatives, authors, and editors—seem to-day utterly unable to get it fully through their heads that a dollar's worth of anything else is as valuable as a dollar's worth of the precious metals, and are constantly reasoning, arguing, and legislating on the assumption that the community which exchanges gold for goods is suffering a loss, and that it is the part of wisdom, by preventing such exchange, to »keep money in the country.« On this absurd assumption the revenue system of the United States is based today, and, if you will notice, you will find it cropping out of current discussions in all sorts of forms. Even here, where the precious metals form one of our staples, and for a long time constituted our only staple, you may see the power of the same notion. The anti-cooly clubs complain of the »drain of money to China,« but never think of complaining of the drain of flour, wheat, quicksilver, or shrimps. And the leading journals of San Francisco, who hold themselves on an immeasurably higher intellectual level than the anti-cooly clubs, never, I think, let a week pass without congratulating their readers that we have ceased to import this or that article, and are thereby keeping so much money that we used to send abroad, or lamenting that we still send money away to pay for this or that which might be made here. Yet that we send away wine or wool, fruit or honey, is never thought of as a matter of lament, but quite the contrary. What is all this but the assumption that a dollar's worth of gold is worth more than a dollar's worth of anything else?

This fallacy is transparently absurd when we come to reduce it to a general proposition. But, nevertheless, the habit of jumping at conclusions, of which I have spoken, makes it seem very natural to people who do not stop to think. Money is our standard, or measure of values, in which we express all other values. When we speak of gaining wealth, we speak of »making money«; when we speak of losing wealth, we speak of »losing money«; when we speak of a rich man, we speak of him as possessed of much money, though as a matter of fact he may, and probably has, very little actual money. Then, again, as money is the common medium of exchange, in the process of getting things we want for things we are willing to dispose of, we generally first exchange the latter for money and then exchange the money for the things we want. And, as the number of people who want things of all sorts must manifestly be greater than the number of peo-

ple who want the particular thing, whatever it may be that we have to exchange, any difficulty there may be in making our exchange will generally attend the first part of it; for, in exchanging anything for money, I must find some one who wants my particular thing, while in exchanging money for a commodity, any one who wants any commodity or service will be willing to take my money. Now, this habit of estimating wealth in money, and of speaking of gain or loss of wealth as gain or loss of money, and this habit of associating difficulties of exchange in individual cases with the difficulty of obtaining money, constantly lead people who do not think clearly to jump at the conclusion that money is more valuable than anything else. Yet the slightest consideration would show them that wealth never consists, but in very small part, of money; that the difficulty in individual exchanges has no reference to the relative value of money, and is eliminated when the exchanges of large numbers of individuals are concentrated or considered, and, in short, a dollar in money is worth no more than a dollar's worth of wheat or cloth; and that, instead of the exchange of money for other commodities being proof of a disadvantageous bargain, it is proof of an advantageous bargain, for, if we did not want the goods more than the money, we would not make the exchange.

Or, to take another example: In connection with the discussion of Chinese immigration, you have, doubtless, over and over again heard it contended that cheap labour, which would reduce the cost of production, is precisely equivalent to labour-saving machinery, and, as machinery operates to increase wealth, so would cheap labour. This conclusion is jumped at from the fact that cheap labour and labour-saving machinery similarly reduce the cost of production to the manufacturer. But, if, instead of jumping at this conclusion, we analyse the manner in which the reduction of cost is produced in each case, we shall see the fallacy. Labour-saving machinery reduces cost by increasing the productive power of labour; a reduction of wages reduces cost by reducing the share of the product which falls to the labourer. To the employer the effect may be the same; but, to the community, which includes both employers and employed, the effect is very different. In the one case there is increase in the general wealth; in the other there is merely a change in distribution whatever one class gains another class necessarily losing. Hence the effect of cheap labour is necessarily very different from that of improved machinery.

And precisely similar to this fallacy is that which seems so natural to men of another class—that because the introduction of cheaper labour in any community does, in the present organisation of society, tend to reduce the general level of wages, so does the importation of cheap goods. This, also—but I must leave you to analyse it for yourselves—springs from a confusion of thought which does not distinguish between the whole and the parts, between the distribution of wealth and the production of wealth.

Did time permit, I might go on, showing you by instance after instance how transparently fallacious are many current opinions—some, even, more widely held than any of which I have spoken—when tried by the simple tests which it is the province of political economy to apply. But my object is not to lead you to conclusions. All I wish to impress upon you is the real simplicity of what is generally deemed an abstruse science, and the exceeding ease with which it may be pursued. For the study of political economy you need no special knowledge, no extensive library, no costly laboratory. You do not even need text-books nor teachers, if you will but think for yourselves. All that you need is care in reducing complex phenomena to their elements, in distinguishing the essential from the accidental, and in applying the simple laws of human action with which you are familiar. Take nobody's opinion for granted; »try all things: hold fast that which is good.« In this way, the opinions of others will help you by their suggestions, elucidations, and corrections; otherwise they will be to you but as words to a parrot.

If there were nothing more to be urged in favour of the study of political economy than the mental exercise it will give, it would still be worth your profoundest attention. The study which will teach men to think for themselves is the study of all studies most needed. Education is not the learning of facts; it is the development and training of mental powers. All this array of professors, all this paraphernalia of learning, cannot educate a man. They can but help him to educate himself. Here you may obtain the tools; but they will be useful only to him who can use them. A monkey with a microscope, a mule packing a library, are fit emblems of the men—and, unfortunately, they are plenty—who pass through the whole educational machinery, and come out but learned fools, crammed with knowledge which they cannot use—all the more pitiable, all the more contemptible, all the more in the way of real progress, because they pass, with themselves and others, as educated men.

But, while it seems to me that nothing can be more conducive to vigorous mental habits and intellectual self-reliance than the study which trains us to apply the analysis of thought to the every-day affairs of life, and to see in constantly changing phenomena the evidence of unchanging law; which leads us to distinguish the real from the apparent, and to mark, beneath the seething eddies of interest, passion, and prejudice, the great currents of our times—it is not on such incentives that I wish to dwell. There are motives as much higher than the thirst for knowledge, as that noble passion is higher than the lust for power or the greed of gold.

In its calculations the science of wealth takes little note of, nay, it often carefully excludes, the potent force of sympathy, and of those passions which lead men to toil, to struggle, even to die for the good of others. And yet it is these higher passions, these nobler impulses, that urge most strenuously to its study. The promise of political economy is not so much what it may do for you, as what it may enable you to do for others.

I trust you have felt the promptings of that highest of ambitions—the desire to be useful in your day and generation; the hope that in something, even though little, those who come after may be wiser, better, and happier than you have lived. Or, if you have never felt this, I trust the feeling is only latent, ready to spring forth when you see the need.

Gentlemen, if you but look, you will see the need! You are of the favoured few, for the fact that you are here, students in a university of this character, bespeaks for you the happy accidents that fall only to the lot of the few, and you cannot yet realise, as you may by-and-by realise, how the hard struggle which is the lot of so many may cramp and bind and distort—how it may dull the noblest faculties and chill the warmest impulses, and grind out of men the joy and poetry of life; how it may turn into the lepers of society those who should be its adornment, and transmute into vermin to prey upon it and into wild beasts to fly at its throat, the brain and muscle that should go to its enrichment! These things may never yet have forced themselves on your attention; but still, if you will think of it, you cannot fail to see enough want and wretchedness, even in our own country to-day, to move you to sadness and pity, to nerve you to high resolve; to arouse in you the sympathy that dares, and the indignation that burns to overthrow a wrong.

And seeing these things, would you fain do something to relieve distress, to eradicate ignorance, to extirpate vice? You must turn to political economy to know their causes, that you may lay the axe to the root of the evil tree. Else all your efforts will be in vain. Philanthropy, unguided by an intelligent apprehension of causes, may palliate or it may intensify, but it cannot cure. If charity could eradicate want, if preaching could make men moral, if printing books and building schools could destroy ignorance, none of these things would be known to-day.

And there is the greater need that you make yourselves acquainted with the principles of political economy from the fact that, in the immediate future, questions which come within its province must assume a greater and greater importance. To act intelligently in the struggle in which you must take part—for positively or negatively each of you must carry his weight—you must know something of this science. And this, I think, is clear to whoever considers the forces that are mustering—that the struggle to come will be fiercer and more momentous than the struggles that are past.

There is a comfortable belief prevalent among us that we have at last struck the trade-winds of time, and that by virtue of what we call progress all these evils will cure themselves. Do not accept this doctrine without examination. The history of the past does not countenance it, the signs of the present do not warrant it. Gentlemen, look at the tendencies of our time, and see if the earnest work of intelligent men be not needed.

Look even here. Can the thoughtful man view the development of our State with unmixed satisfaction? Do we not know that, under present conditions, just as that city over the bay grows in wealth and population, so will poverty deepen and vice increase; that just as the liveried carriages become more plentiful, so do the beggars; that just as the pleasant villas of wealth dot these slopes, so will rise up the noisome tenement house in the city slums. I have watched the growth of San Francisco with joy and pride, and my imagination still dwells with delight upon the image of the great city of the future, the queen of all the vast Pacific—perhaps the greatest city of the world. Yet what is the gain? San Francisco of to-day, with her three hundred thousand people, is, for the classes who depend upon their labour, not so good a place as the San Francisco of sixty thousand; and when her three hundred thousand rises to a million, San Francisco, if present

tendencies are unchanged, must present the same sickening sights which in the streets of New York shock the man from the open West.

This is the dark side of our boasted progress, the Nemesis that seems to follow with untiring tread. Where wealth most abounds, there poverty is deepest; where luxury is most profuse, the gauntest want jostles it. In cities which are the storehouses of nations, starvation annually claims its victims. Where the costliest churches rear the tallest spires towards heaven, there is needed a standing army of policemen; as we build new schools, we build new prisons; where the heaviest contributions are raised to send missionaries to the ends of the earth to preach the glad tidings of peace and goodwill, there may be seen squalor and vice that would affright a heathen. In mills where the giant power of steam drives machinery that multiplies by hundreds and thousands the productive forces of man, there are working little children who ought to be at play or at school; where the mechanism of exchange has been perfected to the utmost, there thousands of men are vainly trying to exchange their labour for the necessities of life!

Whence this dark shadow that thus attends that which we are used to call »material progress«, that which our current philosophy teaches us to hope for and to work for? Here is the question of all questions for us. We must answer it or be destroyed, as preceding civilisations have been destroyed. For no chain is stronger than its weakest link, and our glorious statue with its head of gold and its shoulders of brass has as yet but feet of clay!

Political economy alone can give the answer. And, if you trace out, in the way I have tried to outline, the laws of the production and exchange of wealth, you will see the causes of social weakness and disease in enactments which selfishness has imposed on ignorance, and in maladjustments entirely within our own control.

And you will see the remedies. Not in wild dreams of red destruction nor weak projects for putting men in leading-strings to a brainless abstraction called the state, but in simple measures sanctioned by justice. You will see in light the great remedy, in freedom the great solvent. You will see that the true law of social life is the law of love, the law of liberty, the law of each for all and all for each; that the golden rule of morals is also the golden rule of the science of wealth; that the highest expressions of religious truth include the widest generalisations of political economy.

There will grow on you, as no moralising could teach, a deepening realisation of the brotherhood of man,—there will come to you a firmer and firmer conviction of the fatherhood of God. If you have ever thoughtlessly accepted that worse than atheistic theory that want and wretchedness and brutalising toil are ordered by the Creator, or, revolting from this idea, if you have ever felt that the only thing apparent in the ordering of the world was a blind and merciless fate careless of man's aspirations and heedless of his sufferings, these thoughts will pass from you as you see how much of all that is bad and all that is perplexing in our social conditions grows simply from our ignorance of law—as you come to realise how much better and happier men might make the life of man.

## Thy Kingdom Come<sup>4</sup>

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We have just joined in the most solemn, the most sacred, the most catholic of all prayers: "Our Father which art in Heaven!" To all of us who have learned it in our infancy, it oft calls up the sweetest and most tender emotions. Sometimes with feeling, sometimes as a matter of course, how often have we repeated it? For centuries, daily, hourly, has that prayer gone up.

"Thy kingdom come!" Has it come? Let this Christian city of Glasgow answer—Glasgow, that was to "Flourish by the preaching of the word".

"Thy kingdom come!" Day after day, Sunday after Sunday, week after week, century after century, has that prayer gone up; and today, in this so-called Christian city of Glasgow, 125,000 human beings—so your medical officer says—125,000 children of God are living whole families in a single room.

"Thy kingdom come!" We have been praying for it and praying for it, yet it has not come. So long has it tarried that many think it will never come. Here is the vital point in which what we are accustomed to call the Christianity of the present day differs so much from that Christianity which overran the ancient world—that Christianity which, beneath a rotten old civilisation, planted the seeds of a newer and a higher.

We have become accustomed to think that God's kingdom, is not intended for this world; that, virtually, this is the devil's world, and that God's kingdom is in some other sphere, to which He is to take good people when they die—as good Americans are said when they die to go to Paris. If that be so, what is the use of praying for the coming of the kingdom? Is God the loving Father of whom Christ told—is He a God of that kind; a God who looks on this world, sees its sufferings and its miseries, sees high faculties aborted, lives stunted, innocence turned to vice and crime, and heartstrings strained and broken, yet, having it in His power, will not bring that kingdom of peace, and love, and plenty and happiness? Is God indeed a self-willed despot, whom we must coax to do the good He might?

Think of it. The Almighty—and I say it with reverence—the Almighty could not bring that kingdom of Himself. For, what is the kingdom of God; the kingdom that Christ taught us to pray for? Is it not in the doing of God's will, not by automata, not by animals who

are compelled, but by intelligent beings clothed with free will, intelligent beings knowing good from evil?

Swedenborg never said a deeper nor a truer thing, nor a thing more compatible with the philosophy of Christianity, than when he said God had never put anyone into hell; that the devils went to hell because they would rather go to hell than go to heaven. The spirits of evil would be unhappy in a place where the spirit of good reigned; wedded to injustice, and loving injustice, they would be miserable where justice was the law. And, correlatively, God could not put intelligent beings having free will into conditions where they *must* do right without destroying that free will. Nay! Nay!

“Thy kingdom come!” When Christ taught that prayer He did not mean that humans should idly phrase these words, but that for the coming of that kingdom humanity must work as well as pray!

Prayer! Consider what prayer is. How true is the old fable! The waggoner whose waggon was stuck in the rut knelt down and prayed to Jove to get it out. He might have prayed till the crack of doom, and the wagon would have stood there. This world—God’s world—is not a world in which the repeating of words will get wagons out of mire or poverty out of slums. We who would pray with effect must work!

Divine and human intelligence

“Our Father which art in Heaven.” Not a despot, ruling by His arbitrary fiats, but a Father, a loving Father, Our Father; a Father for us all—that was Christ’s message. He is Our Father, and we are His children.

But there are people, who, looking around on the suffering and injustice with which, even in so-called Christian countries, human life is full, say there is no Father in Heaven, there can be no God, or He would not permit this. How superficial is that thought!

What would we as fathers do for our children? Is there any man who, having a knowledge of the world and the laws of human life, would so surround his boy with safeguards that he could do no evil and could suffer no pain? What would he make by that course of education? A pampered animal, not a self-reliant man!

We are, indeed, His children. Yet, let one of us fall into the water, and if we have not learned to swim we will drown. And if we are a good distance from land and near no boat or anything on which we may get, we will drown anyhow, whether we can swim or not.

God the Creator *might* have made us so that we could swim like the fishes, but how could He have made us so that we could swim

like the fishes and yet have adapted this wonderful frame of ours to all the purposes for which the intelligence that is lodged within it requires it to be used? God can make a fish; He can make a bird; but does He, His laws being what they are, make an animal that might at once swim as well as a fish and fly as well as a bird?

That the intelligence which we must recognise behind nature is almighty does not mean that it can contradict itself and stultify its own laws. No; we are the children of God. But what God is, who shall say? But everyone is conscious of this, that behind what one sees there must have been a power to bring that forth; that behind what one knows there is an intelligence far greater than that which is lodged in the human mind, but which human intelligence does in some infinitely less degree resemble.

Yes; we are His children. We in some sort have that power of adapting things which we know must have been exerted to bring this universe into being. Consider those great ships for which this port of Glasgow is famous all over the world. Consider one of those great ocean steamers, such as the *Umbria*, or the *Etruria*, or the *City of New York*, or the *City of Paris*. There, in the ocean which such ships cleave, are the porpoises, there are the whales, there are the dolphins, there are all manner of fish. They are today just as they were when Caesar crossed to this island, just as they were before the first ancient Briton launched his leather-covered boat.

Humanity today can swim no better than humanity could swim then, but consider how, by our intelligence, we have advanced higher and higher, how our power of making things has developed, until now we cross the great ocean quicker than any fish. Consider one of these great steamers forcing her way across the Atlantic Ocean, 400 miles a day, against a living gale. Is she not in some sort a product of a God-like power—a machine of some sort like the very fishes that swim underneath.

Here is the distinguishing thing between humankind and the animals; here is the broad and impassable gulf. We among all the animals are the only maker; we among all the animals are the only ones that possess that God-like power of adapting means to ends. And is it possible that we who possess the power of so adapting means to ends that we can cross the Atlantic in six days do not possess the power of abolishing the conditions that crowd thousands of families into houses of one room?

When we consider the achievements of humanity and then look upon the misery that exists today in the very centres of wealth; upon the ignorance, the weakness, the injustice, that characterise our highest civilisation, we may know of a surety that it is not the fault of God; it is the fault of humanity. May we not know that in that very power that God has given to His children here, in that power of rising higher, there is involved—and necessarily involved—the power of falling lower.

“Our Father!” “*Our Father!*” *Whose?* Not *my* Father—that is not the prayer. “Our Father”—not the father of any sect, or any class, but the Father of all humanity. The All-Father, the equal Father, the loving Father. He it is we ask to bring the kingdom. Aye, we ask it with our lips! We call Him “Our Father”, the All, the Universal Father, when we kneel down to pray to Him.

But that He is the All-Father—that He is all people’s Father—we deny by our institutions. The All-Father who made the world, the All-Father who created us in His image, and put us upon the earth to draw subsistence from its bosom; to find in the earth all the materials that satisfy our wants, waiting only to be worked up by our labour! If He is the All-Father, then are not all human beings, all children of the Creator, equally entitled to the use of His bounty? And, yet, our laws say that this God’s earth is not here for the use of all His children, but only for the use of a privileged few!

There was a little dialogue published in the United States, in the west, some time ago. Possibly you may have seen it. It is between a boy and his father when visiting a brickyard. The boy looks at the men making bricks, and he asks who those dirty men are, why they are making up the clay, and what they are doing it for. He learns, and then he asks about the owner of the brickyard. “He does not make any bricks; he gets his income from letting the other men make bricks.”

Then the boy wants to know how the man who owns the brickyard gets his title to the brickyard—whether he made it. “No, he did not make it,” the father replies: “God made it.” The boy asks, “Did God make it for him?” Whereat his father tells him that he must not ask questions such as that, but that anyhow it is all right, and it is all in accordance with God’s law. The boy, who of course was a Sunday school boy, and had been to church, goes off mumbling to himself “that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to

die for all men"; but that He so loved the owner of this brickyard that He gave him the brickyard too.

This has a blasphemous sound. But I do not refer to it lightly. I do not like to speak lightly of sacred subjects. Yet it is well sometimes that we should be fairly shocked into thinking.

Think of what Christianity teaches us; think of the life and death of Him who came to die for us! Think of His teachings, that we are all the equal children of an Almighty Father, who is no respecter of persons, and then think of this legalised injustice—this denial of the most important, most fundamental rights of the children of God, which so many of the very men who teach Christianity uphold; nay, which they blasphemously assert is the design and the intent of the Creator Himself.

Better to me, higher to me, is the atheist, who says there is no God, than the professed Christian who, prating of the goodness and the Fatherhood of God, tells us in words as some do, or tells us indirectly as others do, that millions and millions of human creatures—[at this point a child was heard crying]—don't take the little thing out—that millions and millions of human beings, like that little baby, are being brought into the world daily by the creative fiat, and no place in this world provided for them.

Aye! Tells us that, by the laws of God, the poor are created in order that the rich may have the unctuous satisfaction of dealing out charity to them, and attributes to the laws of God the state of things which exists in this city of Glasgow, as in other great cities on both sides of the Atlantic, where little children are dying every day, dying by hundreds of thousands, because having come into this world—those children of God, with His fiat, by His decree—they find that there is not space on the earth sufficient for them to live; and are driven out of God's world because they cannot get room enough, cannot get air enough, cannot get sustenance enough.

I believe in no such god. III did, though I might bend before him in fear, I would hate him in my heart. Not room for the little children here! Look around any country in the civilised world; is there not room enough and to spare? Not food enough? Look at the unemployed labour, look at the idle acres, look through every country and see natural opportunities going to waste. Aye! That Christianity puts on the Creator the evil, the injustice, the degradation that are due to humanity's injustice is worse, far worse, than atheism. That is *the*

blasphemy, and if there be a sin against the Holy Ghost, *that* is the unpardonable sin!

Why, consider: "Give us this day our daily bread." I stopped in a hotel last week—a hydropathic establishment. A hundred or more guests sat down to table together. Before they ate anything, a man stood up, and, thanking God, asked Him to make us all grateful for His bounty. And it is so at every mealtime—such an acknowledgement is made over well-filled boards. What do we mean by it?

If Adam, when he got out of Eden, had sat down and commenced to pray, he might have prayed till this time without getting anything to eat unless he went to work for it. Yet food is God's bounty. He does not bring meat and vegetables all prepared. What He gives are the opportunities of producing these things—of bringing them forth by labour. His mandate is—it is written in the Holy Word, it is graven on every fact in nature—that by labour we shall bring forth these things. Nature gives to labour and to nothing else.

What God gives are the natural elements that are indispensable to labour. He gives them, not to one, not to some, not to one generation, but to *all*. They are His gifts, His bounty to the whole human race. And yet in all our civilised countries what do we see? That a few people have appropriated these bounties, claiming them as theirs alone, while the great majority have no legal right to apply their labour to the reservoirs of Nature and draw from the Creator's bounty.

Thus it happens that all over the civilised world that class that is called peculiarly 'the labouring class' is the poor class, and that people who do no labour, who pride themselves on never having done honest labour, and on being descended from fathers and grandfathers who never did a stroke of honest labour in their lives, revel in a superabundance of the things that labour brings forth.

Mr Abner Thomas, of New York, a strict orthodox Presbyterian—and the son of Rev Dr Thomas, author of a commentary on the bible—wrote a little while ago an allegory. Dozing off in his chair, he dreamt that he was ferried over the River of Death, and, taking the straight and narrow way, came at last within sight of the Golden City. A fine-looking old gentleman angel opened the wicket, inquired his name, and let him in; warning him, at the same time, that it would be better if he chose his company in heaven, and did not associate with disreputable angels.

"What!" said the newcomer, in astonishment: "Is not this heaven?"

“Yes,” said the warden: “But there are a lot of tramp angels here now.”

“How can that be?” asked Mr Thomas. “I thought everybody had plenty in heaven.”

“It used to be that way some time ago,” said the warden: “And if you wanted to get your harp polished or your wings combed, you had to do it yourself. But matters have changed since we adopted the same kind of property regulations in heaven as you have in civilised countries on earth, and we find it a great improvement, at least for the better class.”

Then the warden told the newcomer that he had better decide where he was going to board.

“I don’t want to board anywhere,” said Thomas: “I would much rather go over to that beautiful green knoll and lie down.”

“I would not advise you to do so,” said the warden: “The angel who owns that knoll does not like to encourage trespassing. Some centuries ago, as I told you, we introduced the system of private property into the soil of heaven. So we divided the land up. It is all private property now.”

“I hope I was considered in that division?” said Thomas.

“No,” said the warden: “You were not; but if you go to work, and are saving, you can easily earn enough in a couple of centuries to buy yourself a nice piece. You get a pair of wings free as you come in, and you will have no difficulty in hypothecating them for a few days board until you find work. But I should advise you to be quick about it, as our population is constantly increasing, and there is a great surplus of labour. Tramp angels are, in fact, becoming quite a nuisance.”

“What shall I go to work at?” asked Thomas.

“Our principal industries are the making of harps and crowns and the growing of flowers,” responded the warden: “But there are many opportunities for employment in personal service.”

“I love flowers,” said Thomas. “I will go to work growing them. There is a beautiful piece of land over there that nobody seems to be using. I will go to work on that.”

“You can’t do that,” said the warden. “That property belongs to one of our most far-sighted angels who has got very rich by the advance of land values, and who is holding that piece for a rise. You will have to buy it or rent it before you can work on it, and you can’t do that yet.”

The story goes on to describe how the roads of heaven, the streets of the New Jerusalem, were filled with disconsolate tramp angels, who had pawned their wings, and were outcasts in Heaven itself.

You laugh, and it is ridiculous. But there is a moral in it that is worth serious thought. Is it not ridiculous to imagine the application to God's heaven of the same rules of division that we apply to God's earth, even while we pray that His will may be done on earth as it is done in Heaven?

Really, if we could imagine it, it is impossible to think of heaven treated as we treat this earth, without seeing that, no matter how salubrious were its air, no matter how bright the light that filled it, no matter how magnificent its vegetable growth, there would be poverty, and suffering, and a division of classes in heaven itself, if heaven were parcelled out as we have parceled out the earth. And, conversely, if people were to act towards each other as we must suppose the inhabitants of heaven to do, would not this earth be a very heaven?

"Thy kingdom come." No one can think of the kingdom for which the prayer asks without feeling that it must be a kingdom of justice and equality—not necessarily of equality in condition, but of equality in opportunity. And no one can think of it without seeing that a very kingdom of God might be brought on this earth if people would but seek to do justice—if people would but acknowledge the essential principle of Christianity, that of doing to others as we would have others do to us, and of recognising that we are all here equally the children of the one Father, equally entitled to share His bounty, equally entitled to live our lives and develop our faculties, and to apply our labour to the raw material that He has provided.

Aye! When a person sees that, then there arises that hope of the coming of the kingdom that carried the gospel through the streets of Rome, that carried it into pagan lands, that made it, against the most ferocious persecution, the dominant religion of the world.

Early Christianity did not mean, in its prayer for the coming of Christ's kingdom, a kingdom in heaven, but a kingdom on earth. If Christ had simply preached of the other world, the high priests and the Pharisees would not have persecuted Him, the Roman soldiery would not have nailed His hands to the cross. Why was Christianity persecuted? Why were its first professors thrown to wild beasts, burned to light a tyrant's gardens, hounded, tortured, put to death by all the cruel devices that a devilish ingenuity could suggest? Not that

it was a new religion, referring only to the future. Rome was tolerant of all religions. It was the boast of Rome that all gods were sheltered in her Pantheon; it was the boast of Rome that she made no interference with the religions of peoples she conquered.

What was persecuted was a great movement for social reform—the gospel of justice—heard by common fishermen with gladness, carried by labourers and slaves into the imperial city of Rome. The Christian revelation was the doctrine of human equality, of the fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity. It struck at the very basis of that monstrous tyranny that then oppressed the civilised world; it struck at the fetters of the captive, and at the bonds of the slave, at that monstrous injustice which allowed a class to revel on the proceeds of labour, while those who did the labour fared scantily.

That is the reason why early Christianity was persecuted. And when they could no longer hold it down, then the privileged classes adopted and perverted the new faith, and it became, in its very triumph, not the pure Christianity of the early days, but a Christianity that, to a very great extent, was the servitor of the privileged classes.

And, instead of preaching the essential Fatherhood of God, the essential brotherhood and sisterhood of humankind, its high priests grafted onto the pure truths of the gospel the blasphemous doctrine that the All-Father is a respecter of persons, and that by His will and on His mandate is founded that monstrous injustice which condemns the great mass of humanity to unrequited hard toil. There has been no failure of Christianity. The failure has been in the sort of Christianity that has been preached.

Nothing is clearer than that if we are all children of the universal Father, we are all entitled to the use of His bounty. No one dare deny that proposition. But the people who set their faces against its carrying out say, virtually: “Oh, yes! that is true; but it is impracticable to carry it into effect!” Just think of what this means. This is God’s world, and yet such people say that it is a world in which God’s justice, God’s will, cannot be carried into effect. What a monstrous absurdity, what a monstrous blasphemy!

If the loving God does reign, if His laws are the laws not merely of the physical, but of the moral universe, there must be a way of carrying His will into effect, there must be a way of doing equal justice to all of His creatures.

There is. The people who deny that there is any practical way of carrying into effect the perception that all human beings are equally children of the Creator shut their eyes to the plain and obvious way. It is, of course, impossible in a civilisation like this of ours to divide land up into equal pieces. Such a system might have done in a primitive state of society. We have progressed in civilisation beyond such rude devices, but we have not, nor can we, progress beyond God's providence.

There is a way of securing the equal rights of all, not by dividing land up into equal pieces, but by taking for the use of all that value which attaches to land, not as the result of individual labour upon it, but as the result of the increase in population, and the improvement of society. In that way everyone would be equally interested in the land of one's native country. Here is the simple way. It is a way that impresses the person who really sees its beauty with a more vivid idea of the beneficence of the providence of the All-Father than, it seems to me, does anything else.

One cannot look, it seems to me, through nature—whether one looks at the stars through a telescope, or have the microscope reveal to one those worlds that we find in drops of water. Whether one considers the human frame, the adjustments of the animal kingdom, or any department of physical nature, one must see that there has been a contriver and adjuster, that there has been an intent. So strong is that feeling, so natural is it to our minds, that even people who deny the Creative Intelligence are forced, in spite of themselves, to talk of intent; the claws on one animal were *intended*, we say, to climb with, the fins of another to propel it through the water.

Yet, while in looking through the laws of physical nature, we find intelligence we do not so clearly find beneficence. But in the great social fact that as population increases, and improvements are made, and men progress in civilisation, the one thing that rises everywhere in value is land, and in this we may see a proof of the beneficence of the Creator.

Why, consider what it means! It means that the social laws are adapted to progressive humanity! In a rude state of society where there is no need for common expenditure, there is no value attaching to land. The only value which attaches there is to things produced by labour. But as civilisation goes on, as a division of labour takes place, as people come into centres, so do the common wants increase, and so does the necessity for public revenue arise. And so in that value

which attaches to land, not by reason of anything the individual does, but by reason of the growth of the community, is a provision intended—we may safely say *intended*—to meet that social want.

Just as society grows, so do the common needs grow, and so grows this value attaching to land—the provided fund from which they can be supplied. Here is a value that may be taken, without impairing the right of property, without taking anything from the producer, without lessening the natural rewards of industry and thrift. Nay, here is a value that must be taken if we would prevent the most monstrous of all monopolies. What does all this mean? It means that in the creative plan, the natural advance in civilisation is an advance to a greater and greater equality instead of to a more and more monstrous inequality.

“Thy kingdom come!” It may be that we shall never see it. But to those people who realise that it may come, to those who realise that it is given to them to work for the coming of God’s kingdom on earth, there is for them, though they never see that kingdom here, an exceedingly great reward—the reward of feeling that they, little and insignificant though they may be, are doing something to help the coming of that kingdom, doing something on the side of that Good Power that shows all through the universe, doing something to tear this world from the devil’s grasp and make it the kingdom of righteousness.

Aye, and though it should never come, yet those who struggle for it know in the depths of their hearts that it must exist somewhere—they know that, somewhere, sometime, those who strive their best for the coming of the kingdom will be welcomed into the kingdom, and that to them, even to them, sometime, somewhere, the King shall say: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

## Thou shalt not steal <sup>5</sup>

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Dr McGlynn, in Chickering Hall last Sunday night, said it was a historic occasion. He was right. That a priest of Christ, standing on Sunday night on a public platform and addressing a great audience—an audience embracing men and women of all creeds and beliefs—should proclaim a crusade for the abolition of poverty, and call on men and women to join together and work together, to bring the kingdom of God on earth, did mark a most important event.

Great social transformations, said Mazzini, never have been and never will be other than the application of great religious movements. The day on which democracy shall elevate itself to the position of a religious party, that day will its victory begin. And the deep significance of the meeting last Sunday night, the meaning of this Anti-Poverty Society that we have joined together to inaugurate, is the bringing into the struggle of democracy the religious sentiment – the sentiment alone of all sentiments powerful enough to regenerate the world.

The comments made on that meeting and on the institution of this Society are suggestive. We are told, in the first place, by the newspapers, that you cannot abolish poverty because there is not wealth enough to go around. We are told that if all the wealth of the United States were divided up there would only be some eight hundred dollars apiece. Well, if that is the case, all the more monstrous is the injustice which today gives some people millions and tens of millions, and even hundreds of millions. If there really is so little, then the more injustice in these great fortunes.

But we do not propose to abolish poverty by dividing up wealth. We propose to abolish poverty by setting at work that vast army of men—estimated last year to amount in this country alone to one million—that vast army of men only anxious to create wealth, but who are now, by a system which permits dogs-in-the-manger to monopolise God's bounty, deprived of the opportunity to toil.

Then, again, they tell us you cannot abolish poverty, because poverty always has existed. Well, if poverty always has existed, all the more need for our moving for its abolition. It has existed long enough. We ought to be tired of it; let us get rid of it. But I deny that poverty, such poverty as we see on earth today, always has existed.

Never before in the history of the world was there such an abundance of wealth, such power of producing wealth. So marked is this

that the very people who tell us that we cannot abolish poverty attribute it in almost the next breath to overproduction. They virtually tell us it is because humankind produces so much wealth that so many are poor; that it is because there is so much of the things that satisfy human desires already produced, that men cannot find work, and that women must stint and strain.

Poverty attributed to overproduction; poverty in the midst of wealth; poverty in the midst of enlightenment; poverty, when steam and electricity and a thousand labour-saving inventions that never existed in the world before have been called to the aid of humanity. There is manifestly no good reason for its existence, and it is time that we should do something to abolish it.

There are not charitable institutions enough to supply the demand for charity; that demand seems incapable of being supplied. But there are enough, at least, to show every thinking woman and every thinking man that it is utterly impossible to eradicate poverty by charity; to show everyone who will trace to its root the cause of the disease that what is needed is not charity, but justice—the conforming of human institutions to the eternal laws of right.

But when we propose this, when we say that poverty exists because of the violation of God's laws, we are taunted with pretending to know more than humans ought to know about the designs of Omnipotence. They have set up for themselves a god who rather likes poverty, since it affords the rich a chance to show their goodness and benevolence; and they point to the existence of poverty as a proof that God wills it. Our reply is that poverty exists not because of God's will, but because of humanity's disobedience. We say that we do know that it is God's will that there should be no poverty on earth, and that we know it as we may know any other natural fact.

The laws of this universe are the laws of God, the social laws as well as the physical laws, and He, the Creator of all, has given us room for all, work for all, plenty for all. If today people are in places so crowded that it seems as though there were too many people in the world; if today thousands of men who would gladly be at work do not find the opportunity to go to work; if today the competition for employment crowds wages down to starvation rates; if today, amidst abounding wealth, there are in the centres of our civilisation human beings who are worse off than savages in any normal times, it is not because the Creator has been niggardly; it is simply because of our own injustice—simply because we have not carried the idea of doing

to others as we would have them do unto us into the making of our statutes.

The Anti-Poverty Society has no patent remedy for poverty. We propose no new thing. What we propose is simply to do justice. The principle that we propose to carry into our laws is neither more nor less than the golden rule. We propose to abolish poverty by the sovereign remedy of doing to others as we would have others do to us, by giving to all their just rights. And we propose to begin by assuring to every child of God who, in our country, comes into this world, its full and equal share of the common heritage.

Crowded! Is it any wonder that people are crowded together as they are in this city, when we see other people taking up far more land than they can by any possibility use, and holding it for enormous prices? Why, what would have happened if, when these doors were opened, the first people who came in had claimed all the seats around them, and demanded a price of others who afterwards came in by the same equal right? Yet that is precisely the way we are treating this continent.

That is the reason why people are huddled together in tenement houses; that is the reason why work is difficult to get; the reason that there seems, even in good times, a surplus of labour, and that in those times that we call bad, the times of industrial depression, there are all over the country thousands and hundreds of thousands of men tramping from place to place, unable to find employment.

Not work enough! Why, what is work? Productive work is simply the application of human labour to land, it is simply the transforming, into shapes adapted to gratify human desires, of the raw material that the Creator has placed here. Is there not opportunity enough for work in this country? Supposing that, when thousands of men are unemployed and there are hard times everywhere, we could send a committee up to the high court of heaven to represent the misery and the poverty of the people here, consequent on their not being able to find employment.

What answer would we get? "Are your lands all in use? Are your mines all worked out? Are there no natural opportunities for the employment of labour?" What could we ask the Creator to furnish us with that is not already here in abundance? He has given us the globe amply stocked with raw materials for our needs. He has given us the power of working up this raw material.

If there seems scarcity, if there is want, if there are people starving in the midst of plenty, is it not simply because what the Creator intended for all has been made the property of the few? And in moving against this giant wrong, which denies to labour access to the natural opportunities for the employment of labour, we move against the cause of poverty.

We propose to abolish poverty, to tear it up by the roots, to open free and abundant employment for every person. We propose to disturb no just right of property. We are defenders and upholders of the sacred right of property—that right of property which justly attaches to everything that is produced by labour; that right which gives to all people a just right of property in what they have produced—that makes it theirs to give, to sell, to bequeath, to do whatever they please with, as long as in using it they do not injure any one else. That right of property we insist upon; that, we would uphold against all the world.

To a house, a coat, a book—anything produced by labour—there is a clear individual title, which goes back to the person who made it. That is the foundation of the just, the sacred right of property. It rests on the right of people to the use of their own powers, on their right to profit by the exertion of their own labour; but who can carry the right of property in land that far?

Who can claim a title of absolute ownership in land? Until one who claims the exclusive ownership of a piece of this planet can show a title originating with the Maker of this planet; until that one can produce a decree from the Creator declaring that this city lot, or that great tract of agricultural or coal land, or that gas well, was made for that one person alone—until then we have a right to hold that the land was intended for all of us.

Natural religion and revealed religion alike tell us that God is no respecter of persons; that He did not make this planet for a few individuals; that He did not give it to one generation in preference to other generations, but that He made it for the use during their lives of all the people that His providence brings into the world. If this be true, the child that is born tonight in the humblest tenement in the most squalid quarter of New York, comes into life seized with as good a title to the land of this city as any Astor or Rhinelander.

How do we know that the Almighty is against poverty? That it is not in accordance with His decree that poverty exists? We know it because we know this, that the Almighty has declared: “Thou shalt

not steal.” And we know for a truth that the poverty that exists today in the midst of abounding wealth is the result of a system that legalises theft.

The women who by the thousands are bending over their needles or sewing machines, thirteen, fourteen, sixteen hours a day; these widows straining and striving to bring up the little ones deprived of their natural breadwinner; the children that are growing up in squalor and ‘wretchedness, underclothed, underfed, undereducated, even in this city, without any place to play—growing up under conditions in which only a miracle can keep them pure—under conditions which condemn them in advance to the penitentiary or the brothel—they suffer, they die, because we permit them to be robbed, robbed of their birthright, robbed by a system which disinherits the vast majority of the children that come into the world.

There is enough and to spare for them. Had they the equal rights in the estate which their Creator has given them, there would be no young girls forced to unwomanly toil to eke out a mere existence; no widows finding it such a bitter, bitter struggle to put bread into the mouths of their little children; no such misery and squalor as we may see here in the greatest of American cities; misery and squalor that are deepest in the largest and richest centres of our civilisation today.

These things are the results of legalised theft, the fruit of a denial of that commandment that says: “Thou shalt not steal.” How is this great commandment interpreted today, even by men who preach the Gospel? “Thou shalt not steal.” Well, according to some of them, it means: “Thou shalt not get into the penitentiary.” Not much more than that with some. You may steal, provided you steal enough, and you do not get caught. Do not steal a few dollars—that may be dangerous, but if you steal millions and get away with it, you become one of our first citizens.

“Thou shalt not steal”; that is the law of God. What does it mean? Well, it does not merely mean that you shall not pick pockets! It does not merely mean that you shall not commit burglary or highway robbery! There are other forms of stealing which it prohibits as well. It certainly means (if it has any meaning) that we shall not take that to which we are not entitled, to the detriment of others.

Now, here is a desert. Here is a caravan going along over the desert. Here is a gang of robbers. They say: “Look! There is a rich caravan; let us go and rob it, kill the men if necessary, take their goods

goods from them, their camels and horses, and walk off.” But one of the robbers says:

“Oh, no; that is dangerous; besides, that would be stealing! Let us, instead of doing that, go ahead to where there is a spring, the only spring at which this caravan can get water in this desert. Let us put a wall around it and call it ours, and when they come up we won’t let them have any water until they have given us all the goods they have.” That would be more gentlemanly, more polite, and more respectable; but would it not be theft all the same? And is it not theft of the same kind when people go ahead in advance of population and get land they have no use whatever for, and then, as people come into the world and population increases, will not let this increasing population use the land until they pay an exorbitant price?

That is the sort of theft on which our first families are founded. Do that under the false code of morality which exists here today and people will praise your forethought and your enterprise, and will say you have made money because you are a very superior person, and that all can make money if they will only work and be industrious! But is it not as clearly a violation of the command: “Thou shalt not steal,” as taking the money out of a person’s pocket?

“Thou shalt not steal.” That means, of course, that we ourselves must not steal. But does it not also mean that we must not suffer anybody else to steal if we can help it?

“Thou shalt not steal.” Does it not also mean: “Thou shalt not suffer thyself or anybody else to be stolen from?” If it does, then we, all of us, rich and poor alike, are responsible for this social crime that produces poverty. Not merely the people who monopolise the land—they are not to blame above anyone else, but we who permit them to monopolise land are also parties to the theft.

The Christianity that ignores this social responsibility has really forgotten the teachings of Christ. Where He in the Gospels speaks of the judgment, the question which is put to the people is never, “Did you praise me?” “Did you pray to me?” “Did you believe this or did you believe that?” It is only this: “What did you do to relieve distress; to abolish poverty?” To those who are condemned, the Judge is represented as saying: “I was ahungered and ye gave me no meat, I was athirst and ye gave me no drink, I was sick and in prison and ye visited me not.” Then they say, “Lord, Lord, when did we fail to do these things to thee?” The answer is: “Inasmuch as ye failed to do it

to the least of these, so also did ye fail to do it unto me; depart into the place prepared for the devil and his angels.”

On the other hand, what is said to the blessed is: “I was ahungered and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was naked and ye clothed me, I was sick and in prison and ye visited me.” And when they say: “Lord, Lord, when did we do these things to thee?” The answer is: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Here is the essential spirit of Christianity. The essence of its teaching is not “Provide for your own body and save your own soul!” but “Do what you can to make this world a better world for all!” It was a protest against the doctrine of “each for himself and the devil takes the hindermost!” It was the proclamation of a common fatherhood of God and a common brotherhood and sisterhood of men and women. This was why the rich and powerful, the high priests and the rulers persecuted Christianity with fire and sword. It was not religion (what in so many of our churches today is called religion) that pagan Rome sought to tear out—it was the doctrine of the equality of human rights!

Now imagine, when we men and women of today go before that awful bar, that there we should behold the spirits of those who in our time under this accursed social system were driven into crime; of those who were starved in body and mind; of those little children who, in this city of New York, are being sent out of the world by thousands when they have scarcely entered it—because they do not get food enough, nor air enough; because they are crowded together in these tenement districts under conditions in which all diseases rage and destroy.

Supposing we are confronted with those souls, what will it avail us to say that we individually were not responsible for their earthly conditions? What, in the spirit of the parable of Matthew, would be the reply from the Judgment seat? Would it not be: “I provided for them all. The earth that I made was broad enough to give them room. The materials that are placed in it were abundant enough for all their needs. Did you or did you not lift up your voice against the wrong that robbed them of their fair share in the provision made for all?”

“Thou shalt not steal!” It is theft, it is robbery that is producing poverty and disease and vice and crime among us. It is by virtue of laws that we uphold; and those who do not raise their voices against that crime, they are accessories. The standard has now been raised,

the cross of the new crusade at last is lifted. Some of us, aye, many of us, have sworn in our hearts that we will never rest as long as we have life and strength until we expose and abolish that wrong. We have declared war upon it. Those who are not with us, let us count them against us. For us there will be no faltering, no compromise, no turning back until the end.

There is no need for poverty in this world, and in our civilisation. There is a provision made by the laws of the Creator which would secure to the helpless all that they require, which would give enough and more than enough for all social purposes. These little children that are dying in our crowded districts for want of room and fresh air, they are the disinherited heirs of a great estate.

Did you ever consider the full meaning of the significant fact that as progress goes on, as population increases and civilisation develops, the one thing that ever increases in value is land? Speculators all over the country appreciate that fact. Wherever there is a chance for population coming; wherever railroads meet or a great city seems destined to grow; wherever some new evidence of the bounty of the Creator is discovered,

in a rich coal or iron mine, or an oil well, or a gas deposit, there the speculator jumps in, land rises in value, and a great boom takes place, and people find themselves enormously rich without ever having done a single thing to produce wealth.

Now, it is by virtue of a natural law that land steadily increases in value; that population adds to it; that invention adds to it; that the discovery of every fresh evidence of the Creator's goodness in the stores that He has implanted in the earth for our use adds to the value of land, not to the value of anything else. This natural fact is by virtue of a natural law, a law that is as much a law of the Creator as is the law of gravitation.

What is the intent of this natural law of increasing land values? Is there not in it a provision for social needs? That land values grow greater and greater as the community grows and common needs increase: is there not built into this law a manifest provision for social needs—a fund belonging to society as a whole, with which we may take care of those who fall by the wayside—with which we may meet public expenses, and do all the things that an advancing civilisation makes more and more necessary for society to do on behalf of its members?

Today the value of land in New York city is over a hundred million annually. Who has created that value? Is it because a few land-owners are here that that land is worth a hundred million a year? Is it not because the whole population of New York is here? Is it not because this great city is the centre of exchanges for a large portion of the continent? Does not every child that is born, every one that comes to settle in New York, does it not add to the value of this land? Ought it not, therefore, get some portion of the benefit? And is it not wronged when, instead of being used for that purpose, certain favoured individuals are allowed to appropriate the fund of land values?

We might take this vast fund for common needs; we might with it make a city here such as the world has never seen before—a city spacious, clean, wholesome, beautiful—a city that should be full of parks; a city without tenement houses; and we could do this, not merely without imposing any tax upon production, without interfering with the just rights of property, but while at the same time securing far better than they are now the rights of property, and abolishing the taxes that now weigh on production.

We have but to throw off our taxes upon things of human production; to cease to fine a person who puts up a house or makes anything that adds to the wealth of the community; to cease collecting taxes from people who bring goods from abroad or make goods at home; and—in substitution for all these taxes—to collect that enormous revenue due to the growth of the community for the benefit of the community that produced it.

Dr Nulty<sup>1</sup>, Bishop of Meath, has said in a letter addressed to the clergy and laity of his diocese that it is this provision of the Creator, the provision by which the value of land increases as the community grows, that seems to him the most beautiful of all the social adjustments; and it is to me that which most clearly shows the beneficence as well as the intelligence of the Creative Mind; for here is a provision by which the advance of civilisation would, under the law of equal justice, be an advance towards equality, instead of being, as it now is, an advance toward a more and more monstrous inequality.

The same good Catholic Bishop in that same letter says: “Now, therefore, the land of every country is the common property of the people of that country, because its real owner, the Creator, who made

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<sup>1</sup> Read the letter on [www.grundskyld.dk](http://www.grundskyld.dk)

it, hath given it as a voluntary gift unto them. 'The earth has He given to the children of men and women.' And as every human being is a creature and a child of God, and as all His creatures are equal in His sight, any settlement of the land of this or any other country that would exclude the humblest from an equal share in the common heritage is not only an injury and a wrong done to that person, but an impious violation of the benevolent intention of the Creator."

And then Bishop Nulty goes on to show that the way to secure equal rights to land is not by cutting land up into equal pieces, but by taking for public use the values attaching to land. That is the method this Society proposes. I wish we could get that through the heads of the editors of this city. We do not propose to divide up land. What we propose to do is to divide up the rent that comes from land; and that is a very easy thing.

We need not disturb anybody in possession, we need not interfere with anybody's building or anybody's improvement. We only need to remit taxes on all improvements, on all forms of wealth, and put the tax on the value of the land, exclusive of the improvements, so that the dog-in-the-manger who is holding a piece of vacant land will have to pay the same amount of tax for it as land of similar value with a building or other improvements upon it. In that way we would treat the whole land of such a community as being the common estate of the whole people of the community.

The people of New York could manage their estate just as well as any corporation, or any private family, for that matter. But for the people of New York to resume their estate and to treat it as their own, it is not necessary for them to go to any bother of management. It is not necessary for them to say to any landowner, this particular piece of land is ours, and no longer yours.

We can leave land titles just as they are. We can leave the owners of the land to call themselves its owners; all we want is the annual value of the land. Not, mark you, that value which the owner has created, that value which has been given to it by improvements; but simply that value which is given to the bare land by the fact that we are all here—that has attached to the land because of the growth of this great community. And, when we take that, then all inducement to monopolise the land will be gone—then these very worthy gentlemen who are holding one-half of the area of this city idle and vacant will find the taxes they have to pay so high that they will have to go to work and build houses or otherwise use the land, or give it away to

somebody who will build upon it, or put it to other productive use. And so it will happen all over the country.

Go into Pennsylvania, and there you will see great stretches of land, containing enormous deposits of the finest coal, held by corporations and individuals who are working but little part of it. On these great estates the common American citizens who mine the coal are not allowed even to rent a piece of land, let alone buy it. They can only live in company houses; and they are permitted to stay in them only on condition (and they have to sign a paper to that effect) that they can be evicted at any time on five days' notice. The companies combine and make coal artificially dear here, and make employment artificially scarce in Pennsylvania.

Now, why should not those miners, who work on it half the time, why shouldn't they dig down in the earth and get up coal for themselves? Who made that coal? There is only one answer—God made that coal. Whom did He make it for? Surely you would say that God made it for the people that would be one day called into being on this earth. But the laws of Pennsylvania, like the laws of New York, say God made it for this corporation and that individual; and thus a few people are permitted to deprive miners of work and make coal artificially dear.

A few weeks ago when I was travelling in Illinois a young fellow got into the car at one of the mining towns. Entering into conversation with him, he said he was going to another place to try to get work. He told me of the condition of the miners, that they could scarcely make a living, getting very small wages, and only working about half the time. I said to him: "There is plenty of coal in the ground; why don't you employ yourselves in digging coal?" He replied: "We did get up a cooperative company, and we went to see the owner of the land to ask what he would take to let us sink a shaft and get out some coal. He wanted \$7,500 a year. We could not raise that much." Tax land up to its full value, and how long can such dogs-in-the-manger afford to hold that coal land away from these men? And when people who want work can go and employ themselves, then there will be no million or no thousand unemployed people in all the United States.

The relation of employer and employed is a relation of convenience. It is not one imposed by the natural order. People are brought into the world with the power to employ themselves, and they can

employ themselves wherever the natural opportunities for employment are not shut up from them.

People do not have a natural right to demand employment of another, but they have a natural right, an inalienable right, a right given by their Creator, to demand opportunity to employ themselves. And whenever that right is acknowledged, whenever the people who want to go to work can find natural opportunities to work upon, then there will be as much competition among employers who are anxious to get people to work for them, as there will be among people who are anxious to get work.

Wages will rise in every vocation to the true rate of wages—the full, honest earnings of labour. That done, with this ever increasing social fund to draw upon, poverty will be abolished, and in a little while will come to be looked upon—as we are now beginning to look upon slavery—as the relic of a darker and more ignorant age.

I remember—this man here remembers (turning to Mr Redpath, who was on the platform) even better than I, for he was one of the men who brought the atrocities of human slavery home to the heart and conscience of the north—I well remember, as he well knows, and all the older men and women in this audience will remember, how property in human flesh and blood was defended just as private property in land is now defended; how the same charges were hurled upon the men and women who protested against human slavery as are now made against the men and women who are intending to abolish industrial slavery.

We remember how some dignitaries and rich members of the churches branded as a disturber, almost as a reviler of religion, any priest or any minister who dared to get up and assert God's truth—that there never was and there never could be rightful property in human flesh and blood.

So, it is now said that people who protest against this system, which is simply another form of slavery, are people who propose robbery. Thus the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," they have made "Thou shalt not object to stealing." When we propose to resume our own again, when we propose to secure its natural right to every child that comes into being, such people talk of us as advocating confiscation—charge us with being deniers of the rights of property. The real truth is that we wish to assert the just rights of property, that we wish to prevent theft.

Chattel slavery was incarnate theft of the worst kind. That system which made property of human beings, which allowed one person to sell another, which allowed one person to take away the proceeds of another's toil, which permitted the tearing of the child from the mother, and which permitted the so-called owner to hunt with bloodhounds the person who escaped from the owner's tyranny—that form of slavery is abolished. To that extent, the command, "Thou shalt not steal," has been vindicated; but there is another form of slavery.

We are selling land now in large quantities to certain English lords, who are coming over here and buying greater estates than the greatest in Great Britain or Ireland. We are selling them land; they are buying land. Did it ever occur to you that they do not want that land? They have no use whatever for American land; they do not propose to come over here and live on it. They cannot carry it over there to where they do live.

It is not the land that they want. What they want is the income from it. They are buying it not because they themselves want to use it, but because by and by, as population increases, numbers of American citizens will want to use it, and then they can say to these American citizens: "You can use this land provided you pay us one-half of all you make upon it." What we are selling those foreign lords is not really land; we are selling them the labour of American citizens; we are selling them the privilege of taking, without any return for it, the proceeds of the toil of our children.

So, here in New York, you will read in the papers every day that the price of land is going up. John Jones or Robert Brown has made a hundred thousand dollars within a year in the increase in the value of land in New York. What does that mean? It means he has the power of getting many more coats, many more cigars, dry goods, horses and carriages, houses or much more food and wine. He has gained the power of taking for his own a great number of these products of human labour.

But what has he done? He has not done anything. He may have been off in Europe or out west, or he may have been sitting at home taking it easy. If he has done nothing to get this increased income, where does it come from? The things I speak of are all products of human labour—someone has to work for them. When a man who does no work can get them, necessarily the people who do work to produce them must have less of the products of human labour than they ought to have.

This is the system that the Anti-Poverty Society has banded together to war against, and it invites you to come and swell its ranks. It is the noblest cause in which any human being can possibly engage. What, after all, is there in life as compared with a struggle like this? One thing, and only one thing, is absolutely certain for every man and woman in this hail, as it is to all else of humankind—that is death.

What will it profit us in a few years how much we have left? Is not the noblest and the best use we can make of life to do something to make better and happier the condition of those who come after us—by warring against injustice, by the enlightenment of public opinion, by the doing of all that we possibly can do to break up the accursed system that degrades and embitters the lot of so many?

We have a long fight and a hard fight before us. Possibly, probably, for many of us, we may never see it come to success. But what of that? It is a privilege to be engaged in such a struggle. This we may know, that it is but a part of that great worldwide, long-continued struggle in which the just and the good of every age have been engaged; and that we, in taking part in it, are doing something in our humble way to help bring about on earth the kingdom of God, to make the conditions of life for those who come afterward alike to those which prevail in heaven.

# MOSES <sup>6</sup>

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There is in modern thought a tendency to look upon the prominent characters of history as resultants rather than as initiatory forces. As in an earlier stage the irresistible disposition is to personification, so now it is to reverse this process, and to resolve into myths mighty figures long enshrined by tradition.

Yet, if we try to trace to the sources of these movements, whose perpetuated impulses eddy and play in the currents of our times, we at last reach the individual. It is true that "institutions make men", but it is also true that "in the beginnings men make institutions".

In a well-known passage Macaulay has described the impression made upon the imagination by the antiquity of that Church, which, surviving dynasties and empires, carries the mind back to a time when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon and camelopard and tiger bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. But there still exist among us observances – transmitted in unbroken succession from father to son – that go back to a yet more remote past.

Each recurring year brings a day on which, in every land, there are men who, gathering about them their families, and attired as if for a journey, eat with solemnity a hurried meal. Before the walls of Rome were traced, before Homer sung, this feast was kept, and the event to which it points was even then centuries old.

That event signals the entrance upon the historic stage of a people on many accounts remarkable – a people: who, though they never founded a great empire nor built a great metropolis, have exercised upon a large portion of humankind an influence, widespread, potent, and continuous; who have for nearly two thousand years been without country or organised nationality, yet have preserved their identity and faith through all vicissitudes of time and fortune; who have been overthrown, crushed, scattered; who have been ground, as it were, to very dust, and flung to the four winds of heaven; yet who, though thrones have fallen, and empires have perished, and creeds have changed, and living tongues have become dead, still exist with a vitality seemingly unimpaired. They are a people who unite the strangest contradictions; and whose annals now blaze with glory, now sound the depths of shame and woe.

The advent of such a people marks an epoch in the history of the world. But it is not of that advent as much as of the central and colossal figure around which its traditions cluster that I propose to speak.

Three great religions place the leader of the Exodus upon the highest plane they allot to humankind. To Christendom and to Islam, as well as to Judaism, Moses is the mouthpiece and lawgiver of the Most High; the medium, clothed with supernatural powers, through which the divine will has spoken. Yet this very exaltation, by raising him above comparison, may prevent the real grandeur of the man from being seen. It is amid his brethren that Saul stands taller and fairer.

On the other hand, the latest school of Biblical criticism asserts that the books and legislation attributed to Moses are really the products of an age subsequent to that of the prophets. Yet, to this Moses, looming vague and dim, of whom they can tell us almost nothing, they, too, attribute the beginning of that growth which flowered after centuries in the humanities of Jewish law, and in the sublime conception of one God, universal and eternal, the Almighty Father.

But whether we want to look on Moses in this way or in that, it may be sometimes worth our while to take the point of view in which all shades of belief or disbelief may find common ground, and accepting the main features of Hebrew record and tradition, consider them in the light of history as we know it, and of human nature as it shows itself today.

Here is a case in which sacred history may be treated as we would treat profane history without any shock to religious feeling. Nor can the keenest criticism resolve Moses into a myth. The fact of the Exodus presupposes such a leader.

To lead into freedom a people long crushed by tyranny; to discipline and order such a mighty host; to harden them into fighting men, before whom warlike tribes quailed and walled cities went down; to repress discontent and jealousy and mutiny; to combat reactions and reversions; to turn the quick, fierce flame of enthusiasm to the service of a steady purpose, required some towering character – a character blending in highest expression the qualities of politician, patriot, philosopher, and statesman.

Such a character in rough but strong outline the tradition shows us – the union of the wisdom of the Egyptians with the unselfish devotion of the meekest of men. From first to last, in every glimpse we get, this character is consistent with itself, and with the mighty work

which is its monument. It is the character of a great mind, hemmed in by conditions and limitations, and working with such forces and materials as were at hand – accomplishing, yet failing. Behind grand deed, a grander thought. Behind high performance the still nobler ideal.

Egypt was the mould of the Hebrew nation – the matrix, so to speak, in which a single family, or, at most, a small tribe grew to a people as numerous as the American people at the time of the Declaration of Independence. For four centuries, according to the Hebrew tradition – that is to say, for a period longer than America has been known to Europe – this growing people, becoming a patriarchal family from a roving, pastoral life, had been under the dominance of a highly developed and ancient civilisation, whose fixity is symbolised by monuments that rival in endurance the everlasting hills – a civilisation so ancient that the pyramids, as we now know, were hoary with centuries ere Abraham looked upon them.

No matter how clearly the descendants of the kinsfolk, who came into Egypt, at the invitation of the boy-slave become prime minister, maintained the distinction of race and the traditions of a freer life, they must have been powerfully affected by such a civilisation; and just as the Hebrews of today are Polish in Poland, German in Germany, and American in the United States, so, but far more clearly and strongly, the Hebrews of the Exodus must have been essentially Egyptian.

It is not remarkable, therefore, that the ancient Hebrew institutions show in so many points the influence of Egyptian ideas and customs. What is remarkable is the dissimilarity. To the unreflecting nothing may seem more natural than that a people, in turning their backs upon a land where they had been long oppressed, should discard its ideas and institutions. But the student of history, the observer of politics, knows that nothing is more unnatural.

Habits of thought are even more tyrannous than habits of the body. They make for the masses of people a mental atmosphere out of which they can no more rise than out of the physical atmosphere. A people long used to despotism may rebel against a tyrant; they may break his statutes and repeal his laws, cover with odium that which he loved, and honour that which he hated; but they will hasten to set up another tyrant in his place. A people used to superstition may embrace a purer faith, but it will be only to degrade it to their old ideas.

A people used to persecution may flee from it, but only to persecute in their turn when they get power.

For "institutions make men". And when amid a people used to institutions of one kind, we see suddenly arise institutions of an opposite kind, we know that behind them must be that active, that initiative force – the "men who in the beginnings make institutions".

This is what occurs in the Exodus. The striking differences between Egyptian and Hebrew polity are not of form, but of essence. The tendency of the one is to subordination and oppression; of the other to individual freedom. Strangest of recorded births! From out of the strongest and most splendid despotism of antiquity comes the freest republic. From between the paws of the rock-hewn Sphinx rises the genius of human liberty, and the trumpets of the Exodus throb with the defiant proclamation of the rights of humanity.

Consider what Egypt was. See the grandeur of her monuments; those very monuments – that after the lapse, not of centuries but of millenniums, seem to say to us, as the Egyptian priests said to the boastful Greeks: "Ye are children!" – testify to the enslavement of the people, and are the enduring witnesses of a social organisation that rested on the masses an immovable weight. That narrow Nile valley, the cradle of the arts and sciences, the scene, perhaps, of the greatest triumphs of the human mind, is also the scene of its most abject enslavement. In the long centuries of its splendour, its lord, secure in the possession of irresistible temporal power, and securer still in the awful sanctions of a mystical religion, was as a god on earth, to cover whose poor carcass with a tomb befitting his state hundreds of thousands toiled away their lives.

For the classes who came next to him were those who enjoyed all the sensuous delights of a most luxurious civilisation, and high intellectual pleasures which the mysteries of the temple hid from vulgar profanation. But for the millions who constituted the base of the social pyramid there was but the lash to stimulate their toil, and the worship of beasts to satisfy the yearnings of the soul. From time immemorial to the present day the lot of the Egyptian peasants has been to work and to starve so that those above them might live daintily. They have never rebelled. That spirit was long ago crushed out of them by institutions which make them what they are. They know but to suffer and to die.

Imagine what opportune circumstances we may, yet, to organise and carry on a movement resulting in the release of a great people

from such a soul-subduing tyranny, backed by an army of half a million highly trained soldiers, required a leadership of most commanding and consummate genius, But this task, surprising great though it be, is not the measure of the greatness of the leader of the Exodus.

It is not in the deliverance from Egypt, it is in the constructive statesmanship that laid the foundations of the Hebrew commonwealth that the superlative grandeur of the leadership looms up. As we cannot imagine the Exodus without the great leader, neither can we account for the Hebrew polity without the great statesman. Not merely intellectually great, but morally great – a statesman aglow with the unselfish patriotism that refuses to grasp a sceptre or found a dynasty.

The lessons of modern history, the manifestations of human nature that we behold around us, would teach us to see in the essential divergence of the Hebrew polity from that of Egypt the impress of a master mind, even if Hebrew tradition had not testified both to the influence of such a mind, and to the constant disposition of accustomed ideas to reassert themselves in the minds of the people.

Over and over again the murmurings break out; no sooner is the back of Moses turned than the cry, "These be thy gods, O Israel!", announces the setting up of the Egyptian calf; while the strength of the monarchical principle shows itself in the inauguration of a king as quickly as the far-reaching influence of the great leader is somewhat spent.

It matters not when or by whom were compiled the books popularly attributed to Moses; it matters not how much of the code there given may be the survivals of more ancient usage or the amplifications of a later age; its great features bear the stamp of a mind far in advance of people and time, of a mind that beneath effects sought for causes, of a mind that drifted not with the tide of events, but aimed at a definite purpose.

The outlines that the record gives us of the character of Moses – the brief relations that wherever the Hebrew scriptures are read have hung the chambers of the imagination with vivid pictures – are in every way consistent with this idea. What we know of the life illustrates what we know of the work. What we know of the work illumines the life.

It was not an empire such as had reached full development in Egypt, or existed in rudimentary patriarchal form in the tribes around, that Moses aimed to found. Nor was it a republic where the freedom

of the citizen rested on the servitude of the helot, and the individual was sacrificed to the state.

It was a commonwealth based upon the individual – a commonwealth whose ideal it was that every man should sit under his own vine and fig tree, with none to vex him or make him afraid. It was a commonwealth: in which none should be condemned to ceaseless toil; in which, for even the bond slave, there should be hope; and in which, for even the beast of burden, there should be rest. A commonwealth in which, in the absence of deep poverty, the many virtues that spring from personal independence should harden into a national character – a commonwealth in which the family affections might knit their tendrils around each member, binding with links stronger than steel the various parts into the living whole.

It is not the protection of property, but the protection of humanity, that is the aim of the Mosaic code. Its sanctions are not directed to securing the strong in heaping up wealth as much as to preventing the weak from being crowded to the wall. At every point it interposes its barriers to the selfish greed that, if left unchecked, will surely differentiate men into landlord and serf, capitalist and working person, millionaire and tramp, ruler and ruled. Its Sabbath day and Sabbath year secure, even to the lowliest, rest and leisure. With the blast of the Jubilee trumpets the slave goes free, the debt that cannot be paid is cancelled, and a re-division of the land secures again to the poorest their fair share in the bounty of the common Creator. The reaper must leave something for the gleaner; even the ox cannot be muzzled as he treadeth out the corn. Everywhere, in everything, the dominant idea is that of our homely phrase: "Live and let live!"

And the religion with which this civil policy is so closely intertwined exhibits kindred features – from the idea of the "brotherhood of man" springs the idea of the fatherhood of God. Though the forms may resemble those of Egypt, the spirit is that which Egypt had lost. Though a hereditary priesthood is retained, the law in its fullness is announced to all the people. Though the Egyptian rite of circumcision is preserved, and Egyptian symbols reappear in all the externals of worship, the tendency to take the type for the reality is sternly repressed. It is only when we think of the bulls and the hawks, of the deified cats, and sacred ichneumons of Egypt, that we realise the full meaning of the command: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image!"

And if we seek beneath form and symbol and command, the thought of which they are but the expression, we find that the great distinctive feature of the Hebrew religion, that which separates it by such a wide gulf from the religions amid which it grew up, is its utilitarianism, its recognition of divine law in human life. It asserts, not a God whose domain is confined to the far off beginning or the vague future, who is over and above and beyond humanity, but a God who in His inexorable laws is here and now; a God of the living as well as of the dead; a God of the market place as well as of the temple; a God whose judgments wait not another world for execution, but whose immutable decrees will, in this life, give happiness to the people that heed them and bring misery upon the people that forget them.

Amid the forms of splendid degradation in which a once noble religion had in Egypt sunk to petrification, amid a social order in which the divine justice seemed to sleep – I AM was the truth that dawned upon Moses. And in his desert contemplation of nature's flux and reflux, the death that bounds her life, the life she brings from death, always consuming yet never consumed – I AM was the message that fell upon his inner ear.

The absence in the Mosaic books of any reference to a future life is only intelligible by the prominence into which this truth is brought. Nothing could have been more familiar to the Hebrews of the Exodus than the doctrine of immortality. The continued existence of the soul, the judgment after death, the rewards and punishments of the future state, were the constant subjects of Egyptian thought and art. But a truth may be hidden or thrown into the background by the intensity with which another truth is grasped.

And the doctrine of immortality, springing as it does from the very depths of human nature, ministering to aspirations which become stronger and stronger as intellectual life rises to higher planes and the life of the affections becomes more intense, may yet become so incrustated with degrading superstitions, may be turned by craft and selfishness into such a potent instrument for enslavement, and so used to justify crimes at which every natural instinct revolts, that to the earnest spirit of the social reformer it may seem like an agency of oppression to enchain the intellect and prevent true progress; a lying device with which the cunning fetter the credulous.

The belief in the immortality of the soul must have existed in strong forms among the masses of the Hebrew people. But the truth that Moses brought so prominently forward, the truth his gaze was

concentrated upon, is a truth that has often been thrust aside by the doctrine of immortality, and that may perhaps, at times, react on it in the same way. This is the truth that the actions of men and women bear fruit in this world, that though on the petty scale of individual life wickedness may seem to go unpunished and wrong to be rewarded, there is yet a nemesis that with tireless feet and pitiless arm follows every national crime and smites the children for the father's transgression; the truth that each individual must act upon and be acted upon by the society of which he or she is a part, that all must in some degree suffer for the sin of each, and the life of each be dominated by the conditions imposed by all.

It is the intense appreciation of this truth that gives the Mosaic institutions so practical and utilitarian a character. Their genius, if I may so speak, leaves the abstract speculations, where thought so easily loses and wastes itself, or finds expression only in symbols that become finally but the basis of superstition, in order that it may concentrate attention upon the laws which determine the happiness or misery of humanity upon this earth.

Its lessons have never tended to the essential selfishness of asceticism, which is so prominent a feature in Brahmanism and Buddhism, and from which Christianity and Islamism have not been exempt. Its injunction has never been "Leave the world to itself that you may save your own soul" but rather: "Do your duty in the world that you may be happier and the world be better." It has disdained no sanitary regulation that might secure the health of the body. Its promise has been of peace and plenty and length of days, of stalwart sons and comely daughters.

It maybe that the feeling of Moses in regard to a future life was that expressed in the language of the Stoic: "It is the business of Jupiter, not mine"; or it may be that it partook of the same revulsion that shows itself in modern times, when a spirit essentially religious has been turned against the forms and expressions of religion, because these forms and expressions have been made the props and bulwarks of tyranny, and even the name and teachings of the carpenter's son perverted into supports of social injustice – used to guard the pomp of Caesar and justify the greed of Dives.

Yet, however such feelings influenced Moses, I cannot think that such a soul as his, living such a life as his – feeling the exaltation of great thoughts, feeling the burden of great cares, feeling the bitterness of great disappointments – did not stretch forward to the hope be-

yond; did not rest and strengthen and ground itself in the confident belief that the death of the body is but the emancipation of the mind; did not feel the assurance that there is a power in the universe upon which it might confidently rely through wreck of matter and crash of worlds!

Yet the great concern of Moses was with the duty that lay plainly before him; the effort to lay the foundations of a social state in which deep poverty and degrading want should be unknown – where people released from the meaner struggles that waste human energy should have opportunity for intellectual and moral development.

Here stands out the greatness of the man. What was the wisdom and stretch of the forethought that in the desert sought to guard in advance against the dangers of a settled state, let the present speak!

In the full blaze of the nineteenth century, when every child in our schools may know as common truths things of which the Egyptian sages never dreamed; when the earth has been mapped and the stars have been weighed; when steam and electricity have been pressed into our service, and science is wresting from nature secret after secret – it is but natural to look back upon the wisdom of three thousand years ago as an adult looks back upon the learning of a child.

And yet, for all this wonderful increase of knowledge, for all this enormous gain of productive power, where is the country in the civilised world in which today there is not want and suffering – where the masses are not condemned to toil that gives no leisure, and all classes are not pursued by a greed of gain that makes life an ignoble struggle to get and to keep? Three thousands years of advances, and still the moan goes up: "They have made our lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service!" Three thousand years of advances! and the piteous voices of little children are in the moan.

Standing as I stand, where modern ideas have had fullest, freest development; in the newest great city of the newest great nation; by the side of that ultimate sea, where ends the westward march of the race that has circled the globe, and farthest west meets east, the cool shades and sweet waters whose promise has so long lured us on seem dissolving into mocking mirage.

Over ocean wastes far wider than the Syrian desert we have sought our promised land – no narrow strip between the mountains and the sea, but a wide and virgin continent. Here, in greater free-

dom, with vaster knowledge and fuller experience, we are building up a nation that leads the van of modern progress. And yet while we prate of the rights of humanity there are already many among us thousands who find it difficult to assert the first of natural rights – the right to earn an honest living; thousands who from time to time must accept of degrading charity or starve.

We boast of equality before the law; yet notoriously justice is deaf to the call of those who have no gold and blind to the sin of those who have.

We pride ourselves upon our common schools; yet after our boys and girls are educated we vainly ask: "What shall we do with them?" And about our colleges children are growing up in vice and crime, because from their homes poverty has driven all refining influences. We pin our faith to universal suffrage; yet with all power in the hands of the people, the control of public affairs is passing into the hands of a class of professional politicians, and our governments are, in many cases, becoming but a means for robbery of the people.

We have prohibited hereditary distinctions, we have forbidden titles of nobility; yet there is growing up an aristocracy of wealth as powerful and merciless as any that ever held sway.

We progress and we progress; we girdle continents with iron roads and knit cities together with the mesh of telegraph wires; each day brings some new invention, each year marks a fresh advance – the power of production increased, and the avenues of exchange cleared and broadened. Yet the complaint of "hard times" is louder and louder; everywhere are people harassed by care, and haunted by the fear of want. With swift, steady strides and prodigious leaps, the power of human hands to satisfy human wants advances and advances, is multiplied and multiplied. Yet the struggle for mere existence is more and more intense, and human labour is becoming the cheapest of commodities. Beside glutted warehouses human beings grow faint with hunger and shiver with cold; under the shadow of churches festers the vice that is born of want.

Trace to its roots the cause that is producing want in the midst of plenty, ignorance in the midst of intelligence, aristocracy in democracy, weakness in strength – that is giving to our civilisation a one-sided and unstable development – and you will find it something which this Hebrew statesman three thousand years ago perceived and guarded against.

Moses saw that the real cause of the enslavement of the masses of Egypt was – what has everywhere produced enslavement – the possession by a class of land upon which and from which the whole people must live. He saw that to permit in land the same unqualified private ownership that by natural right attaches to the things produced by labour, would be inevitably to separate the people into the very rich and the very poor, inevitably to enslave labour – to make the few the masters of the many, no matter what the political forms, to bring vice and degradation no matter what the religion.

And with the foresight of the philosophic statesman who legislates not for the need of a day, but for all the future, he sought, in ways suited to his times and conditions, to guard against this error.

Everywhere in the Mosaic institutions is the land treated as the gift of the Creator to His common creatures, which no one has the right to monopolise. Everywhere it is, not your estate, or your property, not the land which you bought, or the land which you conquered, but "the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" – "the land which the Lord lendeth thee". And by practical legislation, by regulations to which he gave the highest sanctions, he tried to guard against the wrong that converted ancient civilisations into despotisms – the wrong that in after centuries ate out the heart of Rome, that produced the imbruting serfdom of Poland and the gaunt misery of Ireland, the wrong that is today filling American cities with idle men, and our virgin states with tramps.

He not only provided for a redistribution of the land for every fifty people, and for making it fallow and common every seventh year, but by the institution of the Jubilee he provided for a redistribution of the land every fifty years, and made monopoly impossible.

I do not say that these institutions were, for their ultimate purpose, the best that might even then have been devised; but Moses had to work, as all great constructive statesmen have to work, with the tools that came to his hand, and upon materials as he found them. Still less do I mean to say that forms suitable for that time and people are suitable for every time and people. I ask, not veneration of the form, but recognition of the spirit.

Yet how common it is to venerate the form and to deny the spirit. There are many who believe that the Mosaic institutions were literally dictated by the Almighty, yet who would denounce as irreligious any application of their spirit to the present day. And yet today how much we owe to these institutions! This very day the only thing that

stands between our working classes and ceaseless toil is one of these Mosaic institutions.

Let the mistakes of those who think that "man was made for the Sabbath", rather than "the Sabbath was made for man", be what they may; that there is one day in the week that the working people may call their own, one day in the week on which hammer is silent and loom stands idle, is due, through Christianity, to Judaism – to the code promulgated in the Sinaitic wilderness.

It is in these characteristics of the Mosaic institutions that, as in the fragments of a Colossus, we may read the greatness of the mind whose impress they bear – of a mind in advance of its surroundings, in advance of its age; of one of those star souls that dwindle not with distance, but, glowing with the radiance of essential truth, hold their light while institutions and languages and creeds change and pass.

That the thought was greater than the permanent expression it found, who can doubt? Yet from that day to this that expression has been in the world a living power.

From the free spirit of the Mosaic law sprang that intensity of family life that amid all dispersions and persecutions has preserved the individuality of the Hebrew race; that love of independence that under the most adverse circumstances has characterised the Jew; the burning patriotism that flamed in the Maccabees and bared the breasts of Jewish peasants to the serried steel of Grecian phalanx and the resistless onset of Roman legion; that stubborn courage that in exile and in torture held the Jew to his faith. It kindled that fire that has made the strains of Hebrew seers and poets phrase for us the highest exaltations of thought; that intellectual vigour that has over and over again made the dry staff bud and blossom. And passing onward from one narrow race it has exerted its power wherever the influence of the Hebrew scriptures has been felt, It has toppled thrones and cast down hierarchies. It strengthened the Scottish covenanter in the hour of trial, and the Puritan amid the snows of a strange land. It charged with the Ironsides at Naseby; it stood behind the low redoubt on Bunker Hill.

But it is in example as in deed that such lives are helpful. It is thus that they dignify human nature and glorify human effort, and, to those who struggle, bring hope and trust. The life of Moses, like the institutions of Moses, is a protest against that blasphemous doctrine current now as it was three thousand years ago, preached oft times even from Christian pulpits – that the want and suffering of the

masses of humankind flow from a mysterious dispensation of providence, which we may lament, but can neither quarrel with nor alter. Let those who hug that doctrine themselves, those to whom it seems that the squalor and brutishness with which the very centres of our civilisation abound are not their affair, turn to the example of that life. For to them who will look, yet burns the bush; and to them who will hear, again comes the voice: "The people suffer: who will lead them forth?"

Adopted into the immediate family of the supreme monarch and earthly god; standing almost at the apex of the social pyramid which had for its base those toiling millions; priest and prince in a land where prince and priest might revel in all delights – everything that life could offer to gratify the senses or engage the intellect was open to him.

What to him the wail of those who beneath the fierce sun toiled under the whips of relentless masters? Heard from granite colonnade or beneath cool linen awning, it was mellowed by distance to monotonous music. Why should he question the Sphinx of Fate, or quarrel with destinies the high gods had decreed? So had it always been, for ages and ages; so must it ever be. The beetle rends the smaller insect, and the hawk preys on the beetle; order on order, life rises from death and carnage, and higher pleasures from lower agonies. Shall the human be better than nature? Soothing and restful flows the Nile, though underneath its placid surface finny tribes wage cruel war, and the stronger eats the weaker. Shall the gazer who would read the secrets of the stars turn because under his feet a worm may writhe?

Theirs to make bricks without straw; his a high place in the glorious procession that with gorgeous banners and glittering emblems, with clash of music and solemn chant, winds its shining way to dedicate the immortal edifice their toil has reared. Theirs the leek and garlic; his to sit at the sumptuous feast. Why should he dwell on the irksomeness of bondage, he for whom the chariots waited, who might at will best ride the swift courses of the Delta, or be borne on the bosom of the river with oars that beat time to song?

Did he long for the excitement of action? There was the desert hunt, with steeds fleeter than the antelope and lions trained like dogs. Did he crave rest and ease? There was for him the soft swell of languorous music and the wreathed movements of dancing girls. Did he feel the stir of intellectual life? – in the arcana of the temples he was

free to the lore of ages; an initiate in the select society where were discussed the most engrossing problems; a sharer in that intellectual pride that centuries after compared Greek philosophy to the babbling of children.

It was no sudden ebullition of passion that caused Moses to turn his back on all this, and to bring the strength and knowledge acquired in a dominant caste to the lifelong service of the oppressed. The forgetfulness of self manifested in the smiting of the Egyptian shines through the whole life. In institutions that moulded the character of a people, in institutions that to this day make easier the lot of toiling millions, we may read the stately purpose.

Through all that tradition has given us of that life runs the same grand passion – the unselfish desire to make humanity better, happier, nobler. And the death is worthy of the life. Subordinating to the good of his people the natural disposition to found a dynasty, which in his case would have been so easy, Moses discards the claims of blood and calls to his place of leader the fittest man!

Coming from a land where the rites of sepulture were regarded as all-important, and the preservation of the body after death was the passion of life; among a people who were even then carrying the remains of their great ancestor, Joseph, to rest with his fathers, Moses yet conquered the last natural yearning and withdrew from the sight and sympathy of his people to die alone and unattended, lest the idolatrous feeling, always ready to break forth, should in death accord him the superstitious reverence he had refused in life.

"No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." But, while the despoiled tombs of the Pharaohs mock the vanity that reared them, the name of the Hebrew who, revolting from their tyranny, strove for the elevation of his fellow men and women, remains a beacon light to the world.

Leader and servant of men and women! Lawgiver and benefactor! Toiler toward the Promised Land seen only by the eye of faith! Type of the high souls who in every age has given to earth its heroes and its martyrs, whose deeds are the precious possession of the race, whose memories are its sacred heritage! With whom among the founders of empire shall we compare him?

To dispute about the inspiration of such a man would be to dispute about words. From the depths of the unseen such characters must draw their strength; from fountains that flow only from the pure in heart must come their wisdom. Of something more real than mat-

ter; of something higher than the stars; of a light that will endure when suns are dead and dark; of a purpose of which the physical universe is but a passing phase, such lives tell!

## The Land for the People <sup>7</sup>

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The Land Question is not merely a question between farmers and the owners of agricultural land. It is a question that affects every man, every woman, and every child. The Land Question is simply another name for the great labour question, and the people who think of the Land Question as having importance simply for farmers forget what land is.

If you would realise what land is, think of what men would be without land. If there were no land, where would be the people? Land is not merely a place to graze cows or sheep upon, to raise corn or raise cabbage. It is the indispensable element necessary to the life of every human being. We are all land animals; our very bodies come from the land, and to the land they return again.

Whether a man dwells in the city or in the country, whether he be a farmer, a labourer, a mechanic, a manufacturer, or a soldier, land is absolutely necessary to his life. No matter what his occupation may be, if he is engaged in productive labour, that productive labour, if you analyse it, is simply the application of human exertion to land, the changing in place or in form of the matter of the universe.

We speak of productive work. What is productive work? We make things. How do we make them? Man does not create them. Man cannot create something out of nothing. All the things that we call making are producing, bringing forth, not creating.

Men produce coal by going down under the ground, hewing out the coal, and bringing it to the surface of the earth; they produce fish by going to the lough, or river, or ocean and pulling the fish out; they produce houses by bringing together timber and stones and iron into the shape and form of a house; they produce cloth by taking the wool of a sheep or the fibers of a plant and bringing them together in a certain connection; they produce crops by opening the ground and putting in seed and leaving it there for the germinating influences of nature—always a bringing forth, never a creation, so that human exertion—that is to say labour upon land, is the only way that man has of bringing forth those things which his needs require and which are necessary to enable him to sustain life. Land and labour—these are the two necessary and indispensable factors to the production of wealth.

Now, as to the rights of ownership—as to that principle which enables a man to say of any certain things »This is mine; it is my

property« where does that come from? If you look you will see that it comes from the right of the producer to the thing which he produces. What a man makes he can justly claim to be his. Whatever any individual, by the exercise of his powers, takes from the reservoirs of nature, molds into shapes fitted to satisfy human needs, that is his; to that a just and sacred right of property attaches. That is a right based on the right of the individual to improvement, the right to the enjoyment of his own powers, to the possession of the fruits of his exertions. That is a sacred right, to violate which is to violate the sacred command, »Thou shalt not steal.« There is the right of ownership. Now that right, which gives by natural and Divine laws, the thing produced to him whose exertion has produced it, which gives to the man who builds a house the right to that house, to the man who raises a crop the right to that crop, to the man who raises a domestic animal a right to that domestic animal—how can that right attach to the reservoirs of nature? How can that right attach to the earth itself?

We start out with these two principles, which I think are clear and self-evident: that which a man makes belongs to him, and can by him be given or sold to anyone that he pleases. But that which existed before man came upon the earth, that which was not produced by man, but which was created by God—that belongs equally to all men. As no man made the land, so no man can claim a right of ownership in the land. As God made the land, and as we know both from natural perception and from revealed religion, that God the Creator is no respecter of persons, that in His eyes all men are equal, so also do we know that He made this earth equally for all the human creatures that He has called to dwell upon it. We start out with this clear principle that as all men are here by the equal permission of the Creator, as they are all here under His laws equally requiring the use of land, as they are all here with equal right to live, so they are all here with equal right to the enjoyment of His bounty.

We claim that the land of Ireland, like the land of every country, cannot justly belong to any class, whether that class be large or small; but that the land of Ireland, like the land of every other country, justly belongs in usufruct to the whole people of that country equally, and that no man and no class of men can have any just right in the land that is not equally shared by all others.

We say that all the social difficulties we see here, all the social difficulties that exist in England or Scotland, all the social difficulties that are growing up in the United States—the lowness of wages the

scarcity of employment, the fact that though labour is the producer of wealth, yet everywhere the labouring class is the poor class—are all due to one great primary wrong, that wrong which makes the natural element necessary to all, the natural element that was made by the Creator for the use of all, the property of some of the people, that great wrong that in every civilised country disinherited the mass of men of the bounty of their Creator. What we aim at is not the increase in the number of a privileged class, not making some thousands of earth owners into some more thousands. No, no; what we aim at is to secure the natural and God-given right to the humblest in the community—to secure to every child born in Ireland, or in any other country, his natural right to the equal use of his native land.

How can we secure that? We cannot secure it by dividing the land up equally, by giving each man or each family an equal piece. That is a device that might suit a rude community, provided that, as under the Mosaic code, those equal pieces he made inalienable, so that they could never be sold away from the family. But under our modern civilisation where industry is complex, where land in some places is very valuable and in other places of but little value, where it is constantly changing in relative value, the equal division of the land could not secure equality.

The way to secure equality is plain. It is not by dividing the land; it is by calling upon those who are allowed possession of pieces of land giving special advantage to pay to the whole community, the rest of the people, aye, and including themselves—to the whole people, a fair rent or premium for that privilege, and using the fund so obtained for the benefit of the whole people. What we would do would be to make the whole people the general landlord, to have whatever rent is paid for the use of land to go, not into the pockets of individual landlords, but into the treasury of the general community, where it could be used for the common benefit.

Now, rent is a natural and just thing. For instance, if we in this room were to go together to a new country and we were to agree that we should settle in that new country on equal terms how could we divide the land up in such a way as to ensure and to continue equality? If it were proposed that we should divide it up into equal pieces, there would be in the first place this objection, that in our division we would not fully know the character of the land; one man would get a more valuable piece than the other. Then as time passed the value of different pieces of land would change, and further than that if we

were once to make a division and then allow full and absolute ownership of the land, inequality would come up in the succeeding generation. One man would be thriftless, another man, on the contrary, would be extremely keen in saving and pushing; one man would be unfortunate and another man more fortunate; and so on. In a little while many of these people would have parted with their land to others, so that their children coming after them into the world would have no land. The only fair way would be this that any man among us should be at liberty to take up any piece of land, and use it, that no one else wanted to use; that where more than one man wanted to use the same piece of land, the man who did use it should pay a premium which, going into a common fund and being used for the benefit of all, would put everybody upon a plane of equality. That would be the ideal way of dividing up the land of a new country.

The problem is how to apply that to an old country. True, we are confronted with this fact all over the civilised world, that a certain class have got possession of the land, and want to hold it. Now one of your distinguished leaders, Mr. Parnell in his Drogheda speech some years ago, said there were only two ways of getting the land for the people. One way was to buy it, the other was to fight for it. I do not think that is true. I think that Mr. Parnell overlooked at that time a most important third way, and that is the way we advocate.

That is what we propose by what we call the single tax. We propose to abolish all taxes for revenue. In place of all the taxes that are now levied, to impose one single tax, and that a tax upon the value of land. Mark me, upon the value of land alone—not upon the value of improvements, not upon the value of what the exercise of labour has done to make land valuable, that belongs to the individual; but upon the value of the land itself, irrespective of the improvements, so that an acre of land that has not been improved will pay as much tax as an acre of like land that has been improved. So that in a town a house site on which there is no building shall be called upon to pay just as much tax as a house site on which there is a house.

I said that rent is a natural thing. So it is. Where one man, all rights being equal, has a piece of land of better quality than another man, it is only fair to all that he should pay the difference. Where one man has a piece of land and others have none, it gives him a special advantage; it is only fair that he should pay into the common fund the value of that special privilege granted him by the community. That is what is called economic rent.

But over and above the economic rent there is the power that comes by monopoly, there is the power to extract a rent, which may be called monopoly rent. On this island that I have supposed we go and settle on, under the plan we have proposed each man should pay annually to the special fund in accordance with the special privilege the peculiar value of the piece of land he held, and those who had land of no peculiar value should pay nothing. That rent that would be payable by the individual to the community would only amount to the value of the special privilege that he enjoyed from the community. But if one man owned the island, and if we went there and you people were fools enough to allow me to lay claim to the ownership of the island and say it belonged to me, then I could charge a monopoly rent; I could make you pay me every penny that you earned, save just enough for you to live; and the reason I could not make you pay more is simply this, that if you would pay more you would die.

The power to exact that monopoly rent comes from the power to hold land idle—comes from the power to keep labour off the land. Tax up land to its full value and that power would be gone; the richest landowners could not afford to hold valuable land idle. Everywhere that simple plan would compel the landowner either to use his land or to sell out to some one who would; and the rent of land would then fall to its true economic rate—the value of the special privilege it gave would go not to individuals, but to the general community, to be used for the benefit of the whole community.

I cannot pass on without mentioning the name of one of the distinguished Irishmen who have declared for the principle long before they heard of me. I refer to only one name. Many of you know, and doubtless all of you have heard, of Dr. Nulty, the Bishop of Meath.

In 1881, before I had ever been in Ireland or Dr. Nulty had ever heard of me, he wrote a letter<sup>2</sup> on the Land Question to the clergy and laity of the diocese of Meath. Dr. Nulty lays down precisely the principle that I have endeavoured to lay down here before you briefly, that there is a right of ownership that comes from work, from production; that it is the law of nature, the law of God, that all men should work; that what a man produces by his labour belongs to him; that the reservoir from which everything must come—the land itself can belong to no man, and that its proper treatment is just as I have proposed to let there be security of possession, and to let those who have

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<sup>2</sup> Read the letter on [www.grundskyld.dk](http://www.grundskyld.dk)

special privileges pay into the common fund for those privileges, and to use that fund for the benefit of all. Dr. Nulty goes on to say what every man who has studied this subject will cordially endorse, that the natural law of rent—that law by which population increases the value of land in certain places and makes it grow higher and higher—that principle by which, as the city grows, land becomes more valuable—that that is to his mind the clearest and best proof, not merely of the intelligence but of the beneficence of the Creator. For he shows clearly that that is the natural provision by virtue of which, if men would only obey God's law of justice, if men would only obey the fundamental maxim of Christianity to do to others as they would be done to them: that by virtue of that provision, as the advance of civilisation went on, it would be towards a greater and greater equality among men—not as now to a more and more monstrous inequality.

These are the plain, simple principles for which we contend, and our practical measure for restoring to all men of any country their equal rights in the land of that country is simply to abolish other taxes, to put a tax upon the value of land, irrespective of the improvements, to carry that tax up as fast as we can, until we absorb the full value of the land, and we say that that would utterly destroy the monopoly of land and create a fund for the benefit of the entire community. How easy a way that is to go from an unjust situation like the present to an ideally just situation may be seen among other things in this. Where you propose to take land for the benefit of the whole people you are at once met by the demands of the landlords for compensation. Now if you tax them, no one ever heard of such an idea as to compensate a people for imposing tax.

In that easy way the land can again be made the property in usufruct of the whole people, by a gentle and gradual process.

What I ask you here tonight is as far as you can to join in this general movement and push on the cause. It is not a local matter, it is a world-wide matter. It is not a matter that interests merely the people of Ireland, the people of England and Scotland or of any other country in particular, but it is a matter that interests the whole world. What we are battling for is the freedom of mankind; what we are struggling for is for the abolition of that industrial slavery which as much enslaves men as did chattel slavery. It will not take the sword to win it. There is a power far stronger than the sword and that is the power of public opinion. When the masses of men know what hurts

them and how it can be cured when they know what to demand, and to make their demand heard and felt, they will have it and no power on earth can prevent them. What enslaves men everywhere is ignorance and prejudice.

If we were to go to that island that we imagined, and if you were fools enough to admit that the land belonged to me, I would be your master, and you would be my slaves just as thoroughly, just as completely, as if I owned your bodies, for all I would have to do to send you out of existence would be to say to you »get off my property.« That is the cause of the industrial slavery that exists all over the world, that is the cause of the low wages, that is the cause of the unemployed labour.

How can you remedy it? Only by going to first principles, only by asserting the natural rights of man. You cannot do it by any such scheme as is proposed here of buying out the landlords and selling again to the tenant farmers. What good is that going to do to the labourers? What benefit is it to be to the artisans of the city? And what benefit is it going to be to the farming class in the long run? For just as certain as you do that, just as certain will you see going on here what we have seen going on in the United States, and by the vicissitudes of life, by the changes of fortune, by the differences among men—some men selling and mortgaging, some men acquiring wealth and others becoming poorer—in a little while you will have the reestablishment of the old system. But it is not just in any consideration. What better right has an agricultural tenant to receive any special advantage from the community than any other man? If farms are to be bought for the agricultural tenant, why should not boots for the artisans, shops for the clerks, boats for the fishermen—why should not the Government step in to furnish everyone with capital? And consider this with regard to the buying out of the landlords. Why, in Heaven's name, should they be bought out? Bought out of what? Bought out of the privilege of imposing a tax upon their fellow citizens? Bought out of the privilege of appropriating what belongs to all? That is not justice. If, when the people regain their rights, compensation is due to anybody, it is due to those who have suffered injustice, not to those who have caused it and profited by it.



## Causes of Business Depression <sup>8</sup>

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I am asked by *Once a Week* to state what, in my opinion, are the causes of the existing business depression [1894]. It should be possible to do more. For the method that has fixed with certainty the causes of natural phenomena once left to varying opinion or wild fancy ought to enable us to bring into the region of ascertained fact the causes of social phenomena so clearly marked and so entirely within observation.

To ascertain the cause of failure or abnormal action in that complex machine, the human body, the first effort of the surgeon is to locate the difficulty. So the first step toward determining the causes of business depression is to see what business depression really is.

By business depression we mean a lessening in rapidity and volume of the exchanges by which, in our highly specialised industrial system, commodities pass into the hands of consumers. This lessening of exchanges, which from the side of the merchant or manufacturer we call business depression, is evidently not due to any scarcity of the things that merchants or manufacturers have to exchange. From that point of view there seems, indeed, a plethora of such things. Nor is it due to any lessening in the desire of consumers for them. On the contrary, seasons of business depression are seasons of bitter want on the part of large numbers of want so intense and general that charity is called on to prevent actual starvation from need of things that manufacturers and merchants have to sell.

It may seem, on first view, as if this lessening of exchanges came from some impediment in the machinery of exchange. Since tariffs have for their object the checking of certain exchanges, there is a superficial plausibility in looking to them for the cause. While, as money is the common measure of value and a common medium of exchange, in terms of which most exchanges are made, it is, perhaps, even more plausible to look to monetary regulations. But however important any tariff question or any money question may be, neither has sufficient importance to account for the phenomena. Protection carried to its furthest could only shut us off from the advantage of exchanging what we produce for what other countries produce. Free trade carried to its furthest could only give us with the rest of the world that freedom of exchange that we already enjoy between our several States; while money, important as may be its office as a measure and flux of exchanges, is still but a mere counter. Seasons of

business depression come and go without change in tariffs and monetary regulations, and exist in different countries under widely varying tariffs and monetary systems. The real cause must lie deeper.

That it does lie deeper is directly evident. The lessening of the exchanges by which commodities pass into the hands of consumers is clearly due not so much to increased difficulty in transferring these commodities as to decreased ability to pay for them. Every business man sees that business depression comes from lack of purchasing power on the part of would-be consumers, or, as our colloquial phrase is, from their lack of money. But money is only an intermediary performing in exchanges the same office that poker chips do in a game. In the last analysis it is a labour certificate. The great mass of consumers obtain money by exchanging their labour or the proceeds of their labour for money, and with it purchasing commodities. Thus what they really pay for commodities with is labour. It is not merely true in the sense he meant it, that, as Adam Smith says, »Labour was the first price, the original purchase money that was paid for all things.« It is the final price that is paid for all things.

The lessening of »effective demand,« which is the proximate cause of business depression, means, therefore, a lessening of the ability to convert labour into exchangeable forms means what we call scarcity of employment. These two phrases are, in fact, but different names for different aspects of one thing. What from the side of the business man is »business depression,« is, from the side of the workman, »scarcity of employment.« The one always comes with the other and passes away with the other. They act on each other and again react, as when the merchant or manufacturer discharges his employees on account of business depression, and thus adds to scarcity of employment. But in the primary causal relation scarcity of employment comes first. That is to say, scarcity of employment do not come from business depression, as is sometimes assumed but business depression comes from the scarcity of employment. For it is the effective demand for consumption that determines the extent and direction in which labour will be expended in producing commodities not the supply of commodities that determines the demand.

What is employment? It is the expenditure of exertion in the production of commodities or satisfactions. It is what, in a phrase having clearer connotations, we term work. For the term employment is, for economic use, somewhat confused by our habitual distraction between employers and employees. This distinction only arises from

the division of labour, and disappears when we consider first principles. I employ a man to black my boots. He expends his labour to give me the satisfaction of polished boots. What is the five cents I give him in return? It is a counter or chip through which he may obtain at will the expenditure of labour to that equivalent in any of various forms—food, shelter, newspaper, a street-car ride, and so on. In final analysis the transaction is the same as if I had employed him to black my boots and he had employed me to render to him some of these other services; or as if I had blacked my own boots and he had performed these other services for himself. Even in a narrow view there are only three ways by which men may live—by work, by beggary, and by theft; for the man who obtains work without giving work is, economically, only a beggar or a thief. But on a larger view these three come down to one, for beggars and thieves can only live on workers. It is human labour that supplies all the wants of human life—as truly now, in all the complexities of modern civilisation, as in the beginning: when the first man and first woman were the only human beings on the globe.

Now employment or work is the expenditure of labour in the production of commodities or satisfactions. But on what? Manifestly on land, for land is to man the whole physical universe. Take any country as a whole, or the world as a whole. On what and from what does its whole population live? Despite our millions and our complex civilisation, our extensions of exchanges and our inventions of machines, are we not all living as the first man did and the last man must, by the application of labour to land? Try a mental experiment: Picture, in imagination, the farmer at the plow, the miner in the ore vein, the railroad train on its rushing way, the steamer crossing the ocean, the great factory with its whirring wheels and thousand operatives, builders erecting a house, linemen stringing a telegraph wire, a salesman selling goods, a bookkeeper casting up accounts, a bootblack polishing the boots of a customer. Make any such picture in imagination and then by mental exclusion withdraw from it, item by item, all that belongs to land. What will be left?

Land is the source of all employment, the natural element indispensable to all work. Land and labour—these are the two primary factors that, by their union, produce all wealth and bring about all material satisfactions. Given labour—that is to say, the ability to work and the willingness to work and there never has and never can be any scarcity of employment so long as labour can obtain access to

land. Were Adam and Eve bothered by »scarcity of employment«? Did the first settlers in this country or the men who afterwards settled those parts of the country where land was still easily had know anything of it? That the monopoly of land—the exclusion of labour from land by the high price demanded for it—is the cause of scarcity of employment and business depressions is as clear as the sun at noon-day. Wherever you may be that scarcity of employment is felt—whether in city or village, or mining district or agricultural section—how far will you have to go to find land that labour is anxious to use (for land has no value until labour will pay a price for the privilege of using it), but from which labour is debarred by the high prices demanded by some non-user? In the very heart of New York City, two minutes' walk from Union Square will bring you to three vacant lots. For permission to use the smallest and least valuable of these a rental of \$40,000 a year has been offered and refused. This is but an example of what may everywhere be seen, from the heart of the metropolis to the Cherokee Strip. Where labour is shut out from land it wastes. Desire may remain, but »effective demand« is gone. Is there any mystery in the cause of business depression? Let the whole earth be treated as these lots are treated and who of its teeming millions could find employment?

At the close of the last great depression [1879], I made »An Examination of the Cause of Industrial Depression« in a book better known by its main title, »Progress and Poverty« to which I would refer the reader who would see the genesis and course of business depressions fully explained. But their cause is clear. Idle acres mean idle hands, and idle hands mean a lessening of purchasing power on the part of the great body of consumers that must bring depression to all business. Every great period of land speculation that has taken place in our history has been followed by a period of business depression, and it always must be so. Socialists, Populists and charity mongers—the people who would apply little remedies for a great evil—are all »barking up the wrong tree.« The upas of our civilisation is our treatment of land. It is that which is converting even the march of invention into a blight.

Charity and the giving of »charity work« may do a little to alleviate suffering, but they cannot cure business depression. For they merely transfer existing purchasing power. They do not increase the sum of »effective demand.« There is but one cure for recurring business depression. There is no other. That is the Single Tax—the aboli-

tion of all taxes on the employment and products of labour and the taking of economic or ground rent for the use of the community by taxes levied on the value of land, irrespective of improvement. For that would make land speculation unprofitable, land monopoly impossible, and so open to the possessors of the power to labour the ability of converting it by exertion into wealth or purchasing power that the very idea of a man able to work and yet suffering from want—of the things that work produces would seem as preposterous on earth as it must seem in heaven.

# The Single Tax <sup>9</sup>

## What it is and why we urge it

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I shall briefly state the fundamental principles of what we who advocate it call the Single Tax. We propose to abolish all taxes save one single tax levied on the value of land, irrespective of the value of the improvements in or on it.

What we propose is not a tax on real estate, for real estate includes improvements. Nor is it a tax on land, for we would not tax all land, but only land having a value irrespective of its improvements, and would tax that in proportion to that value.

Our plan involves the imposition of no new tax, since we already tax land values in taxing real estate. To carry it out we have only to abolish all taxes save the tax on real estate, and to abolish all of that which now falls on buildings or improvements, leaving only that part of it which now falls on the value of the bare land, increasing that so as to take as nearly as may be the whole of economic rent, or what is sometimes styled the »unearned increment of land values.«

That the value of the land alone would suffice to provide all needed public revenues—municipal, county, State, and national—there is no doubt.

To show briefly why we urge this change, let me treat (1) of its expediency, and (2) of its justice.

From the Single Tax we may expect these advantages:

1. It would dispense with a whole army of tax gatherers and other officials which present taxes require, and place in the treasury a much larger proportion, of what is taken from the people, while by making government simpler and cheaper, it would tend to make it purer. It would get rid of taxes which necessarily promote fraud, perjury, bribery, and corruption, which lead men into temptation, and which tax what the nation can least afford to spare—honesty and conscience. Since land lies out-of-doors and cannot be removed, and its value is the most readily ascertained of all values, the tax to which we would resort can be collected with the minimum of cost and the least strain on public morals.

2. It would enormously increase the production of wealth—

- (a) By the removal of the burdens that now weigh upon industry and thrift. If we tax houses, there will be fewer and poorer houses; if we tax machinery, there will be less machinery; if we tax trade, there will be less trade; if we tax capital, there will be less capital; if we tax

savings there will be less savings. All the taxes therefore that we should abolish are those that repress industry and lessen wealth. But if we tax land values, there will be no less land.

(b) On the contrary, the taxation of land values has the effect of making land more easily available by industry, since it makes it more difficult for owners of valuable land which they themselves do not care to use to hold it idle for a large future price. While the abolition of taxes on labour and the products of labour would free the active element of production, the taking of land values by taxation would free the passive element by destroying speculative land values and preventing the holding out of use of land needed for use. If any one will but look around today and see the unused or but half-used land, the idle labour, the unemployed or poorly employed capital, he will get some idea of how enormous would be the production of wealth were all the forces of production free to engage.

(c) The taxation of the processes and products of labour on one hand, and the insufficient taxation of land values on the other, produce an unjust distribution of wealth which is building up in the hands of a few, fortunes more monstrous than the world has ever before seen, while the masses of our people are steadily becoming relatively poorer. These taxes necessarily fall on the poor more heavily than on the rich; by increasing prices, they necessitate a larger capital in all businesses, and consequently give an advantage to large capitals; and they give, and in some cases are designed to give, special advantage and monopolies to combinations and trusts. On the other hand, the insufficient taxation of land values enables men to make large fortunes by land speculation and the increase of ground values—fortunes which do not represent any addition by them to the general wealth of the community, but merely the appropriation by some of what the labour of others' creates.

This unjust distribution of wealth develops on the one hand a class idle and wasteful because they are too rich, and on the other hand a class idle and wasteful because they are too poor. It deprives men of capital and opportunities which would make them more efficient users. It thus greatly diminishes production.

(d) The unjust distribution which is giving us the hundredfold millionaire on the one side and the tramp and pauper on the other, generates thieves, gamblers and social parasites of all kinds, and requires large expenditure of money and energy in watchmen, policemen, courts, prisons, and other means of defence and repression. It

kindles a greed of gain and a worship of wealth, and produces a bitter struggle for existence which fosters drunkenness, increases insanity, and causes men whose energies ought to be devoted to honest production to spend their time and strength in cheating and grabbing from each other. Besides the moral loss, all this involves an enormous economic loss which the Single Tax would save.

(e) The taxes we would abolish fall most heavily on the poorer agricultural districts, and tend to drive population and wealth from them to the great cities. The tax we would increase would destroy that monopoly of land which is the great cause of that distribution of population which is crowding the people too closely together in some places and scattering them too far apart in other places. Families live on top of one another in cities because of the enormous speculative prices at which vacant lots are held. In the country they are scattered too far apart for social intercourse and convenience, because, instead of each taking what land he can use, every one who can grabs all he can get, in the hope of profiting by its increase of value, and the next man must pass farther on. Thus we have scores of families living under a single roof, and other families flying in dugouts on the prairies afar from neighbours—some living too close to each other for moral, mental, or physical health, and others too far separated for the stimulating and refining influences of society. The wastes in health, in mental vigour, and in unnecessary transportation result in great economic losses which the Single Tax would save.

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Let us turn to the moral side and consider the question of justice.

The right of property does not rest on human laws; they have often ignored and violated it. It rests on natural laws—that is to say, the law of God. It is clear and absolute, and every violation of it, whether committed by a man or a nation, is a violation of the command, »Thou shalt not steal.« The man who catches a fish, grows an apple, raises a calf, builds a house, makes a coat, paints a picture, constructs a machine, has, as to any such thing, an exclusive right of ownership which carries with it the right to give, to sell or bequeath that thing.

But who made the earth that any man can claim such ownership of it, or any part of it, or the right to give, sell or bequeath it? Since the earth was not made by us, but is only a temporary dwelling place on which one generation of men follow another; since we find ourselves here, are manifestly here with equal permission of the Creator, it is manifest that no one can have any exclusive right of ownership

in land, and that the rights of all men to land must be equal and inalienable. There must be an exclusive right of possession of land, for the man who uses it must have secure possession of land in order to reap the products of his labour. But his right of possession must be limited by the equal right of all and should therefore be conditioned on the payment to the community by the possessor of an equivalent for any special valuable privilege thus accorded him.

When we tax houses, crops, money, furniture, capital or wealth in any of its forms, we take from individuals what rightfully belongs to them. We violate the right of property, and in the name of the State commit robbery. But when we tax ground values, we take from individuals what does not belong to them, but belongs to the community, and which cannot be left to individuals without the robbery of other individuals.

Think what the value of land is. It has no reference to the cost of production, as has the value of houses, horses, ships, clothes, and other things produced by labour, for land is not produced by man, it was created by God. The value of land does not come from the exertion of labour on land, for the value thus produced is a value of improvement. That value attaches to any piece of land means that that piece of land is more desirable than the land which other citizens may obtain, and that they are more willing to pay a premium for permission to use it. Justice therefore requires that this premium of value shall be taken for the benefit of all in order to secure to all their equal rights.

Consider the difference between the value of a building and the value of land. The value of a building, like the value of goods, or of anything properly styled wealth, is produced by individual exertion, and therefore properly belong to the individual; but the value of land only arises with the growth and improvement of the community, and therefore properly belongs to the community. It is not because of what its owners have done, but because of the presence of the whole great population, that land in New York is worth millions an acre. This value therefore is the proper fund for defraying the common expenses of the whole population; and it must be taken for public use, under penalty of generating land speculation and monopoly which will bring about artificial scarcity where the Creator has provided in abundance for all whom His providence has called into existence. It is thus a violation of justice to tax labour, or the things pro-

duced by labour, and it is also a violation of justice not to tax land values.

These are the fundamental reasons for which we urge the Single Tax, believing it to be the greatest and most fundamental of all reforms. We do not think it will change human nature. That man can never do; but it will bring about conditions in which human nature can develop what is best, instead of as now in so many cases, what is worst. It will permit such an enormous production as we can now hardly conceive. It will secure an equitable distribution. It will solve the labour problem and dispel the darkening clouds which are now gathering over the horizon of our civilisation. It will make undeserved poverty an unknown thing. It will check the soul-destroying greed of gain. It will enable men to be at least as honest, as true, as considerate, and as high-minded as they would like to be. It will remove temptation to lying, false swearing, bribery, and law breaking. It will open to all, even the poorest, the comforts and refinements and opportunities of an advancing civilisation. It will thus, so we reverently believe, clear the way for the coming of that kingdom of right and justice, and consequently of abundance and peace and happiness, for which the Master told His disciples to pray and work. It is not that it is a promising invention or cunning device that we look for the Single Tax to do all this; but it is because it involves a conforming of the most important and fundamental adjustments of society to the supreme law of justice, because it involves the basing of the most important of our laws on the principle that we should do to others as we would be done by.

The readers of this article, I may fairly presume, believe, as I believe, that there is a world for us beyond this. The limit of space has prevented me from putting before them more than some hints for thought. Let me in conclusion present two more:

1. What would be the result in heaven itself if those who get there first instituted private property in the surface of heaven, and parcelled it out in absolute ownership among themselves, as we parcel out the surface of the earth?

2. Since we cannot conceive of a heaven in which the equal rights of God's children to their Father's bounty is denied, as we now deny them on this earth, what is the duty enjoined on Christians by the daily prayer: »Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven?«

## Why the Landowner cannot Shift the Tax on Land Values <sup>10</sup>

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A VERY common objection to the proposition to concentrate all taxes on Land Values is that the landowner would add the increased tax on the value of his land to the rent that must be paid by his tenants. It is this notion that increased Taxation of Land Values would fall upon the users, not upon the owners of land, that more perhaps than anything else prevents men from seeing the far-reaching and beneficent effects of doing away with the taxes that now fall upon labor or the products of labor, and taking for public use those values that attach to land by reason of the growth and progress of society.

That taxes levied upon Land Values, or, to use the politico-economic term, taxes levied upon rent, do not fall upon the user of land, and cannot be transferred by the landlord to the tenant is conceded by all economists of reputation. However much they may dispute as to other things, there is no dispute upon this point. Whatever flimsy reasons any of them may have deemed it expedient to give why the tax on rent should not be more resorted to, they all admit that the 'taxation of rent merely diminishes the profits of the landowner, cannot be shifted on the user of land, cannot add to prices, nor check production.<sup>0</sup>

Not to multiply authorities, it will be sufficient to quote John Stuart Mill. He says (Section 2, Chapter 3, Book 5, "Principles of Political Economy") "A tax on rent falls wholly on the landlord. There are no means by which he can shift the burden upon anyone else. It does not affect the value or price of agricultural produce, for this is determined by the cost of production in the most unfavorable circumstances, and in those circumstances, as we have so often demonstrated, no rent is paid. A tax on rent, therefore, has no effect other than its obvious one. It merely takes so much from the landlord and transfers it to the State."

The reason of this will be clear to everyone who has grasped the accepted theory of rent—that theory to which the name of Ricardo has been given, and which, as John Stuart Mill says, has but to be understood to be proved. And it will be clear to everyone who will consider a moment, even if he has never before thought of the cause and nature of rent. The rent of land represents a return to ownership over and above the return which is sufficient to induce use—it is a

premium paid for permission to use. To take, in taxation, a part or the whole of this premium in no way affects the incentive to use or the return to use; in no way diminishes the amount of land there is to use, or makes it more difficult to obtain it for use. Thus there is no way in which a tax upon rent or Land Values can be transferred to the user. Whatever the State may demand of this premium simply diminishes the net amount which ownership can get for the use of land, or the price it can demand as purchase money, which is, of course, rent or the expectation of rent, capitalized.

Here, for instance, is a piece of land that has a value—let it be where it may. Its rent, or value, is the highest price that anyone will give for it—it is a bonus which the man who wants to use the land must pay to the man who owns the land for permission to use it. Nor, if a tax be levied on that rent or value, this in no wise adds to the willingness of anyone to pay more for the land than before; nor does it in any way add to the ability of the owner to demand more. To suppose, in fact, that such a tax could be thrown by landowners upon tenants is to suppose that the owners of land do not now get for their land all it will bring; is to suppose that, whenever they want to, they can put up prices as they please.

This is, of course, absurd. There could be no limit whatever to prices did the fixing of them rest entirely with the seller. To the price which will be given and received for anything, two wants or wills must concur—the want or the will of the buyer, and the want or will of the seller. The one wants to give as little as he can, the other to get as much as he can, and the point at which the exchange will take place is the point where these two desires come to a balance or effect a compromise. In other words, price is determined by the equation of supply and demand. And, evidently, taxation cannot affect price unless it affects the relative power of one or other of the elements of this equation. The mere wish of the seller to get more, the mere wish of the buyer to pay less, can neither raise nor lower prices. Nothing will raise prices unless it either decreases supply or increases demand. Nothing will lower prices unless it either increases supply or decreases demand. Now, the Taxation of Land Values, which is simply the taking by the State of a part of the premium which the landowner can get for the permission to use land, neither increases the demand for land nor decreases the supply of land, and therefore cannot increase the price that the landowner can get from the user. Thus it is impossible for landowners to throw such taxation on land users

by raising rents. Other things being unaltered, rents would be no higher than before, while the selling price of land, which is determined by net rents, would be much diminished. Whoever purchased land outright would have to pay less to the seller, because he would thereafter be called on to pay more to the State.

But while the Taxation of Land Values cannot raise rents, it would, especially in a country like this, where there is so much valuable land unused, tend strongly to lower them. In all our cities, and through all the country, there is much land which is not used, or not put to its best use, because it is held at high prices by men who do not want to, or who cannot, use it themselves, but who are holding it in expectation of profiting by the increased value which the growth of population will give to it in the future. Now the effect of the Taxation of Land Values would be to compel these men to seek tenants or purchasers. Land upon which there is no taxation even a poor man can easily hold for higher prices, for land eats nothing. But put heavy taxation upon it, and even a rich man will be driven to seek purchasers or tenants, and to get them he will have to put down the price he asks, instead of putting it up; for it is by asking less, not by asking more, that those who have anything they are forced to dispose of must seek customers. Rather than continue to pay heavy taxes upon land yielding him nothing, and from the future increase in value of which he could have no expectation of profit, since increase in value would mean increased taxes, he would be glad to give it away or let it revert to the State. Thus the dogs in the manger, who all over the country are withholding land that they cannot use themselves from men who would be glad to use it, would be forced to let go their grasp. To tax Land Values up to anything like their full amount would be to utterly destroy speculative values, and to diminish all rents into which this speculative element enters. And how groundless it is to think that landlords who have tenants could shift a tax on Land Values upon their tenants can be readily seen from the effect upon landlords who have no tenants. It is when tenants seek for land, not when landlords seek for tenants, that rent goes up.

To put the matter in a form in which it can be easily understood, let us take two cases. The one, a country where the available land is all in use, and the competition of tenants has carried rents to a point at which the tenant pays the landlord all he can possibly earn save just enough to barely live. The other, a country where all the available land is not in use and the rent that the landlord can get from the

tenant is limited by the terms on which the tenant can get access to unused land. How, in either case, if the tax were imposed upon Land Values (or rent), could the landlord compel the tenant to pay it?

It may be well to call attention to the fact that a tax on Land Values is not a tax on land. They are very different things, and the difference should be noted, because a confusion of thought as to them may lead to the assumption that a tax on Land Values would fall on the user. Barring such effect as it might have on speculation, a tax on land—that is to say, a tax of so much per acre or so much per foot on all land—would fall on the user. For such a tax, falling equally on all land—on the poorest and least advantageously situated as fully as on the richest and best situated land—would become a condition imposed on the use of any land, from which there could be no escape, and thus the owners of rentable land could add it to their rent. Its operation would be analogous to that of a tax on a producible commodity, and it would in effect reduce the supply of land sufficient to pay the tax. But a tax on economic rent or Land Values would not fall on all land. It would fall only on valuable land, and on that in proportion to its value. It would not have to be paid upon the poorest land in use (which always determines rent), and so would not become a condition of use, or restrict the amount of land that could be profitably used. Thus the landowners on whom it fell could not shift it on the users of land. This distinction, as to nature and effects, between a tax on land and a tax on Land Values, it is necessary to bear in mind.

It is also necessary to bear in mind that the value of land is something totally distinct from the value of improvements. It is a value which arises not from the exertion of any particular individual, but from the growth and progress of the community. A tax on Land Values, therefore, never lessens the reward of exertion or accumulation. It simply takes for the whole community that value which the whole community creates.

While it is not true that a tax on Land Values or rent falls on the user, and thus distributes itself through increased prices, it is true that the greater number of taxes by which our public revenues are raised do. Thus, speaking generally, taxes upon capital fall, not upon the owners of capital, but upon the users of capital, and are by them transferred to the consumers of whatever the capital is used to produce; taxes upon buildings or building materials must ultimately be paid in increased building rents or prices by the occupiers of buildings; imposts upon production or duties upon imports must finally

fall upon the consumer of the commodities. This fact is far from being popularly appreciated, for, if it were, the masses would never consent to the system by which the greater part of our revenues is raised. But, nevertheless, it is the vague apprehension of this that leads by confusion of ideas to the notion that a tax on Land Values must add to rents. This notion will disappear if it be considered how it is that any tax gives to the person first called on to pay it the power of shifting it upon others by an increase of price.

A tax on matches, for instance, will, as we know by experience, enable the manufacturer or dealer in matches to get a higher price. How? Evidently by adding to the cost of producing matches for sale, thus checking the supply of matches that can be offered for sale until the price rises sufficiently to compensate for the tax. It is this knowledge that the tax will add to the cost of production, and thus, below a certain price, check competition in supply, that enables the dealer to mark up the price of his stock of matches as soon as the tax is imposed, or compels him to mark it down as soon as the tax is remitted.

But a tax on Land Values does not add to the cost of producing land. Land is not a thing of human production. Man does not produce land! He finds it already in existence when he comes into the world. Its price, therefore, is not fixed by the cost of production, but is always the highest price that anyone can give for the privilege of using a particular piece. Land, unlike things that must be constantly produced by labor, has no normal value based on the cost of production, but ranges in value from nothing at all to the enormous values that attach to choice sites in great cities, or to mineral deposits of superior richness, when the growth of population causes a demand for their use.

Hence a tax on Land Values, instead of enabling the holder of land to charge that much more for his land, gives him no power to charge an additional penny. On the contrary, by making it more costly to hold land idle, it tends to increase the amount of land which owners must strive to secure tenants or purchasers for. Thus the effect of a tax on Land Values is to increase the amount of land which owners must strive to secure tenants or purchasers for. Thus the effect of a tax on Land Values is not to increase the rent that the tenant must pay the owner for the use of the land, but rather to reduce it. And since the tax must be paid out of what the land will yield the owner, its effect would be to reduce the price for which the land could be sold outright.

Here, let us say, is a lot on the principal select street of a city having an annual or rental value of \$10,000. Such a lot would now command a selling price of some \$250,000. An increased tax upon Land Values would not reduce its rental value, except as it might have an effect in forcing into use unoccupied land at a greater distance from the center of the city. But as less of this rental value could be retained by the owner, the selling price would be diminished. And if a tax on Land Values could be imposed with such theoretical perfection that the whole rental value would be taken by the community, the owner would lose both his income from its present value and any expectation of profit from its future increase in value. While it would be still worth as much as before to the user, it would be worth nothing at all to the mere owner. Instead of having a selling value of \$250,000, it would not sell for anything, since what the user paid for the privilege of using it would go in full to the community. Under a tax of this kind, even though it could not be imposed with theoretical nicety, the mere owner of land would disappear. No one would care to own land unless he wanted to improve or use it.

The general principle which determines the incidence of taxation is this: A tax upon anything or upon the methods or means of production of anything, the price of which is kept down by the ability to produce increased supplies, will, by increasing the cost of production, check supply, and thus add to the price of that thing, and ultimately fall on the consumer. But a tax upon anything of which the supply is fixed or monopolized, and of which the cost of production is not therefore a determining element, since it has no effect in checking supply, does not increase prices, and falls entirely on the owner.

In view of the efforts that are made to befog the popular mind on this point, I have deemed it worth while to show why taxes on Land Values cannot be shifted by landlords upon their tenants. But the fact that such a tax cannot be so shifted is realized well enough by landowners. Else why the opposition to the Single Tax, and why the cry of "confiscation"? Our national experience, like the experience of every other country, proves that those who are called on to pay a tax that can be shifted on others, seldom or ever oppose it, but frequently favor it, and that when once imposed, they generally resist its abolition. But did anyone ever hear of landlords welcoming a tax on Land Values, or opposing the abolition of such a tax?



# Ode to Liberty <sup>11</sup>

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WE HONOR LIBERTY in name and in form. We set up her statues and sound her praises. But we have not fully trusted her. And with our growth so grow her demands. She will have no half service! Liberty! it is a word to conjure with, not to vex the ear in empty boastings. For Liberty means Justice, and Justice is the natural law—the law of health and symmetry and strength, of fraternity and co-operation.

They who look upon Liberty as having accomplished her mission when she has abolished hereditary privileges and given men the ballot, who think of her as having no further relations to the everyday affairs of life, have not seen her real grandeur—to them the poets who have sung of her must seem rhapsodists, and her martyrs fools! As the sun is the lord of life, as well as of light; as his beams not merely pierce the clouds, but support all growth, supply all motion, and call forth from what would otherwise be a cold and inert mass all the infinite diversities of being and beauty, so is Liberty to mankind. It is not for an abstraction that men have toiled and died; that in every age the witnesses of Liberty have stood forth, and the martyrs of Liberty have suffered.

We speak of Liberty as one thing, and of virtue, wealth, knowledge, invention, national strength and national independence as other things. But, of all these, Liberty is the source, the mother, the necessary condition. She is to virtue what light is to color; to wealth what sunshine is to grain; to knowledge what eyes are to sight. She is the genius of invention, the brawn of national strength, the spirit of national independence. Where Liberty rises, there virtue grows, wealth increases, knowledge expands, invention multiplies human powers, and in strength and spirit the freer nation rises among her neighbors as Saul amid his brethren—taller and fairer. Where Liberty sinks, there virtue fades, wealth diminishes, knowledge is forgotten, invention ceases, and empires once mighty in arms and arts become a helpless prey to freer barbarians!

Only in broken gleams and partial light has the sun of Liberty yet beamed among men, but all progress hath she called forth.

Liberty came to a race of slaves crouching under Egyptian whips, and led them forth from the House of Bondage. She hardened them in the desert and made of them a race of conquerors. The free spirit of the Mosaic law took their thinkers up to heights where they

beheld the unity of God, and inspired their poets with strains that yet phrase the highest exaltations of thought. Liberty dawned on the Phoenician coast, and ships passed the Pillars of Hercules to plow the unknown sea. She shed a partial light on Greece, and marble grew to shapes of ideal beauty, words became the instruments of subtlest thought, and against the scanty militia of free cities the countless hosts of the Great King broke like surges against a rock. She cast her beams on the four-acre farms of Italian husbandmen, and born of her strength a power came forth that conquered the world. They glinted from shields of German warriors, and Augustus wept his legions. Out of the night that followed her eclipse, her slanting rays fell again on free cities, and a lost learning revived, modern civilization began, a new world was unveiled; and as Liberty grew, so grew art, wealth, power, knowledge, and refinement. In the history of every nation we may read the same truth. It was the strength born of Magna Carta that won Crecy and Agincourt. It was the revival of Liberty from the despotism of the Tudors that glorified the Elizabethan age. It was the spirit that brought a crowned tyrant to the block that planted here the seed of a mighty tree. It was the energy of ancient freedom that, the moment it had gained unity, made Spain the mightiest power of the world, only to fall to the lowest depth of weakness when tyranny succeeded liberty. See, in France, all intellectual vigor dying under the tyranny of the Seventeenth Century to revive in splendor as Liberty awoke in the Eighteenth, and on the enfranchisement of French peasants in the Great Revolution, basing the wonderful strength that has in our time defied defeat.

Shall we not trust her?

In our time, as in times before, creep on the insidious forces that, producing inequality, destroy Liberty. On the horizon the clouds begin to lower. Liberty calls to us again. We must follow her further; we must trust her fully. Either we must wholly accept her or she will not stay. It is not enough that men should vote; it is not enough that they should be theoretically equal before the law. They must have liberty to avail themselves of the opportunities and means of life; they must stand on equal terms with reference to the bounty of nature. Either this, or Liberty withdraws her light! Either this, or darkness comes on, and the very forces that progress has evolved turn to powers that work destruction. This is the universal law. This is the lesson of the centuries. Unless its foundations be laid in justice the social structure cannot stand.

Our primary social adjustment is a denial of justice. In allowing one man to own the land on which and from which other men must live, we have made them his bondsmen in a degree which increases as material progress goes on. This is the subtle alchemy that in ways they do not realize is extracting from the masses in every civilized country the fruits of their weary toil; that is instituting a harder and more hopeless slavery in place of that which has been destroyed; that is bringing political despotism out of political freedom, and must soon transmute democratic institutions into anarchy.

It is this that turns the blessings of material progress into a curse. It is this that crowds human beings into noisome cellars and squalid tenement houses; that fills prisons and brothels; that goads men with want and consumes them with greed; that robs women of the grace and beauty of perfect womanhood; that takes from little children the joy and innocence of life's morning.

Civilization so based cannot continue. The eternal laws of the universe forbid it. Ruins of dead empires testify, and the witness that is in every soul answers, that it cannot be. It is something grander than Benevolence, something more august than Charity—it is Justice herself that demands of us to right this wrong. Justice that will not be denied; that cannot be put off—Justice that with the scales carries the sword. Shall we ward the stroke with liturgies and prayers? Shall we avert the decrees of immutable law by raising churches when hungry infants moan and weary mothers weep?

Though it may take the language of prayer, it is blasphemy that attributes to the, inscrutable decrees of Providence the suffering and brutishness that come of poverty; that turns with folded hands to the All-Father and lays on Him the responsibility for the want and crime of our great cities. We degrade the Everlasting. We slander the Just One. A merciful man would have better ordered the world; a just man would crush with his foot such an ulcerous ant-hill! It is not the Almighty, but we who are responsible for the vice and misery that fester amid our civilization. The Creator showers upon us his gifts—more than enough for all. But like swine scrambling for food, we tread them in the mire—tread them in the mire, while we tear and rend each other!

In the very centers of our civilization to-day are want and suffering enough to make sick at heart whoever does not close his eyes and steel his nerves. Dare we turn to the Creator and ask Him to relieve it? Supposing the prayer were heard, and at the behest with

which the universe sprang into being there should glow in the sun a greater power; new virtue fill the air; fresh vigor the soil; that for every blade of grass that now grows two should spring up, and the seed that now increases fifty-fold should increase a hundredfold! Would poverty be abated or want relieved? Manifestly no! Whatever benefit would accrue would be but temporary. The new powers streaming through the material universe could be utilized only through land. And land, being private property, the classes that now monopolize the bounty of the Creator would monopolize all the new bounty. Land owners would alone be benefited. Rents would increase, but wages would still tend to the starvation point!

This is not merely a deduction of political economy; it is a fact of experience. We know it because we have seen it. Within our own times, under our very eyes, that Power which is above all, and in all, and through all; that Power of which the whole universe is but the manifestation; that Power which maketh all things, and without which is not anything made that is made, has increased the bounty which men may enjoy, as truly as though the fertility of nature had been increased. Into the mind of one came the thought that harnessed steam for the service of mankind. To the inner ear of another was whispered the secret that compels the lightning to bear a message around the globe. In every direction have the laws of matter been revealed; in every department of industry have arisen arms of iron and fingers of steel, whose effect upon the production of wealth has been precisely the same as an increase in the fertility of nature. What has been the result? Simply that land owners get all the gain. The wonderful discoveries and inventions of our century have neither increased wages nor lightened toil. The effect has simply been to make the few richer; the many more helpless!

Can it be that the gifts of the Creator may be thus misappropriated with impunity? Is it a light thing that labor should be robbed of its earnings while greed rolls in wealth—that the many should want while the few are surfeited? Turn to history, and on every page may be read the lesson that such wrong never goes unpunished; that the Nemesis that follows injustice never falters nor sleeps! Look around to-day. Can this state of things continue? May we even say, “After us the deluge!” Nay; the pillars of the state are trembling even now, and the very foundations of society begin to quiver with pent-up forces that glow underneath. The struggle that must either revivify, or convulse in ruin, is near at hand, if it be not already begun.

The fiat has gone forth! With steam and electricity, and the new powers born of progress, forces have entered the world that will either compel us to a higher plane or overwhelm us, as nation after nation, as civilization after civilization, have been overwhelmed before. It is the delusion which precedes destruction that sees in the popular unrest with which the civilized world is feverishly pulsing only the passing effect of ephemeral causes. Between democratic ideas and the aristocratic adjustments of society there is an irreconcilable conflict. Here in the United States, as there in Europe, it may be seen arising. We cannot go on permitting men to vote and forcing them to tramp. We cannot go on educating boys and girls in our public schools and then refusing them the right to earn an honest living. We cannot go on prating of the inalienable rights of man and then denying the inalienable right to the bounty of the Creator. Even now, in old bottles the new wine begins to ferment, and elemental forces gather for the strife!

But if, while there is yet time, we turn to Justice and obey her, if we trust Liberty and follow her, the dangers that now threaten must disappear, the forces that now menace will turn to agencies of elevation. Think of the powers now wasted; of the infinite fields of knowledge yet to be explored; of the possibilities of which the wondrous inventions of this century give us but a hint. With want destroyed; with greed changed to noble passions; with the fraternity that is born of equality taking the place of the jealousy and fear that now array men against each other; with mental power loosed by conditions that give to the humblest comfort and leisure; and who shall measure the heights to which our civilization may soar? Words fail the thought! It is the Golden Age of which poets have sung and high-raised seers have told in metaphor! It is the glorious vision which has always haunted man with gleams of fitful splendor. It is what he saw whose eyes at Patmos were closed in a trance. It is the culmination of Christianity—the City of God on earth, with its walls of jasper and its gates of pearl! It is the reign of the Prince of Peace!

## Scotland and Scotsmen <sup>12</sup>

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This is the second time I have had the privilege of standing in this hall. I visited Scotland once before, but only Glasgow. I came in by night in a Pullman car, and I went back again by night in a Pullman car, and I saw nothing of the country. The- audience that I then addressed was an Irish audience—it was on St. Patrick's night. This audience is a general audience; I presume a Scottish audience.

Now, I have been pretty well abused. I read in the papers all sorts of things about myself, and if I did not know Henry George pretty well, I had thought he was a cross between a thief and a fool. These charges I have never noticed; nevertheless, there is one charge that has been made against me since I came to Scotland which I would like to say a word about; I have been accused of flattering Scotsmen.

The first place where I spoke in Scotland was in Dundee, and I was glad to get before a Scottish audience. It so happens that in my own country I know very many Scotsmen, and among the men who stand with me are very many Scotsmen. These Scotsmen have always been telling me: "Ah, a Scottish audience is the thing; wait till the Scottish people take hold of this question, and they will go to the logical end."

I was glad to get before a Scottish audience, and I told them about my Scottish friends, and I told them about the letter I had received from a good 'canny' Scotsman, who said to me: "Don't waste your time on these English people. They are a 'beery' set. Beer confuses and dulls their understandings. You can do far more good in Scotland, where they are a logical, clear-headed people; and if they drink anything at all, it is only whisky, which does not have such a confusing effect on the intellect.

"Well, I told them that, in the frankness of my nature, and next morning the papers, in their usual denunciation, said I took an advantage by flattering a Scottish audience. Now, I may have been accused of many things, but I don't think those who know me would accuse me of such a thing as attempting to flatter Scotsmen about Scotland. I doubt if that is possible.

When I came from New York to California, a Scottish banker sought me out and said: "I had a wager about you, and I want to ask you a personal question. You are an American by birth?" And I said: "I am." "Have you not Scottish blood in, your veins?" "Well," I said: "My mother's father was a Glasgow body." Says he: "I have won my

bet; it's through your mother that you get your talent." That man had, and still has, a theory that every great man is a Scotsman, with two or three exceptions, and in these cases a mistake was made. Now, joking aside, I do not want to flatter anybody; and if Scotsmen don't like to be flattered, will you let me tell you tonight some home truths—some things, that are not complimentary?

I draw my blood from these islands. But it so happens this is the only place to which I can trace my ancestry with any certainty. I do not know but that some of my own kindred perhaps today live in Glasgow, and it is from Glasgow men and women some of my blood, at least, is drawn. I am not proud of it. If I were a Glasgow man today I would not be proud of it.

Here you have a great and rich city, and here you have poverty and destitution that would appal a heathen. Right on these streets of yours the very stranger can see sights that could not be seen in any tribe of savages in anything like normal conditions.

"Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the word"—that is the motto of this great, proud city. What sort of a word is it that here has been preached? Or, let your preaching have been what it may, what is your practice? Are these the fruits of the word—this poverty, this destitution, this vice and degradation? To call this a Christian community is a slander on Christianity.

Low wages, want, vice, degradation—these are not the fruits of Christianity. They come from the ignoring and denial of the vital principles of Christianity. Let you people of Glasgow not merely erect church after church, you also subscribe money to send missionaries to the heathen. I wish the heathen were a little richer, that they might subscribe money and send missionaries to such so-called Christian communities as this—to point to the luxury, the very ostentation of wealth, on the one hand, and to the bare-footed, ill-clad women on the other; to your men and women with bodies stunted and minds distorted; to your little children growing up in such conditions that only a miracle can keep them pure!

Excuse me for calling your attention to these unpleasant truths; they are something that people with hearts in their breasts ought to think of.

John Bright, in his installation speech to the Glasgow University in 1883, made a statement, taken from the census of Scotland, in which he declared that 41 families out of every 100 in Glasgow lived in houses having only one room. He further said that 37 per cent be-

yond this 41 per cent dwelt in houses with only two rooms; thus 78 per cent, or nearly four-fifths of the population, dwelt in houses of one or two rooms; and he went on to say further, that in Scotland nearly one-third of the people dwelt in houses of only one room, and that more than two-thirds, or 70 per cent, dwelt in houses of not more than two rooms. Is not that an appalling statement; in the full blaze of the nineteenth century, in the year of grace 1884, here in this great city of Scotland—Christian Scotland!

Now, consider what it implies—this crowding of men, women, and children together. People do not herd that way unless driven by dire want and necessity. These figures imply want and suffering, and brutish degradation, of which every citizen of Glasgow, every Scotsman, should be ashamed.

Here I take at random from one of your papers of this evening a story, a mere item of an inquest held at Peterborough. The deceased was a married woman, the house had no furniture, and the four children were half starved. There was no food in the house, and the only protection against the chills of night were three guano bags—a basket of litter for the whole family. The dead body of the mother was found to be a mass of sores, and the left arm was shrivelled up. The daughter stated that when they got food the father would bite first, and pass it round in turn. The dying woman craved a bun, but they could not give her even that.

In their verdict of death from natural causes, paralysis, deep-seated sores, and exhaustion, the jury stated that the husband had been guilty of gross and unpardonable neglect to his wife and family. But this seems to be based upon the fact that he had not taken his wife to the almshouse, though, as he stated, he had tried to get her into the almshouse, but had been refused, unless he would go too. There is nothing to show that he was idle or drunken. He was but a labourer, and seems to have tried his best to get what work he could, and came home every night to lie beside that poor woman on the rotting straw.

But take the bare facts. Among what tribe of savages in the whole world, in anything like a time of peace, would such a thing as that be possible? I have seen, I believe, the most unfortunate savages on the face of the earth—the Tierra del Fuegians, who are spoken of as "the very lowest of mankind"; the black-fellows of Australia; the Digger Indians of California. I would rather take my chances, were I on the threshold of life tonight, among those people, than come into the

world in this highly-civilised Christian community in the condition in which thousands are compelled to live.

The fault of the husband, the verdict says! I know of this case only what the papers say; but this I do know, from the testimony of men of position and veracity, from officials and ministers of the Gospel, that such things as that are happening every day in this country, not to drunken men, but to the families of men honest, sober, and industrious.

Why, in this great, rich city of yours, there are today numbers and numbers of men who cannot get employment. Here the wages of your engineers were reduced a little while ago, and they had to submit. The engineers of Belfast had also to submit to a reduction of wages, because there were so many unemployed shipwrights and engineers in Glasgow that they feared they could not maintain a strike. Am I not right in saying that such a state of things is but typical of that which exists everywhere throughout the civilised world? And I am bound to say that it is a state of things you ought to be ashamed of. I speak, not because they do not exist in my own country, for in their degree there is just the same state of things in America. But is not the spirit that, ignoring this, gives thanks and praise to the Almighty Father, cant of the worst kind?

Can we separate duty towards God from duty towards our neighbours? Yet here are men who preach and pray, while they look on such things as matters of course, laying the blame upon natural laws, upon human nature, and upon the ordinances of the Creator. Is it not cant and blasphemy of the worst kind? How can people love a God whom they believe responsible for these things—who has made a world in which only a few of His creatures could live comfortably—a world in which the great masses have to strain and strive all their lives away to keep above starvation point?

It is not the fault of God! It is due to the selfishness and ignorance of humanity. And when you come to ask the reason for this state of things, if you seek it out, you will come at last, I believe, to the great fact, that the land on which and from which it was ordained that all humanity must live has been made the private property of a few of their number. This is the only adequate explanation.

Humans are land animals. All their substance must be drawn from the land. They cannot even take the birds of the air or fish in the sea without the use of the land or the materials drawn from the land. Their very bodies are drawn from the land. Take from a human all

that belongs to land, and you would have but a disembodied spirit. And as land is absolutely necessary to the life of humanity, and as land is the source from which all wealth is drawn, those humans who command the land, on which and from which other humans live, command those people.

Take the opposite course; trace up the facts. Why is it that people are crowded together so in Glasgow? Because you let dogs-in-the-manger hold the land on which these people ought to live. Here is one fact that I happened to see in a communication in one of your papers recently. There is a field in Glasgow called Burnbank, comprising fourteen acres, worth £90,000—it is surrounded by houses—and ought to be used for buildings. But the owner is holding it till he can get a higher price from the necessities of the community. You let him hold it. You don't charge any taxes for it. The taxation you put upon the houses.

The same article says, if that field were covered with houses, these houses would pay not less than £7,000 a year in taxation. You charge and fine a person who puts up a house that would give accommodation to the people, yet the person who holds land without making any use of it you do not charge a penny for the privilege. How can there be any doubt as to the reason why you are so crowded together? Or, take the fact that wages are so low; that men are competing with one another so eagerly for employment that wages are brought down to starvation rates. What is the reason? Simply that men are denied natural opportunities of employment

This city of Glasgow has been crowded with people driven from Ireland and your Highlan~s where they were living. When I was over in Ireland two years ago I saw the process. I followed some of those red-coated evicting armies, and saw how, at the behest of men who had never set foot in Ireland, the military forces of the Empire were being used to turn out poor people from the cabins and the land on which their fathers had lived from time immemorial Where were they forced to go? Into cities to obtain Work at any price.

That great man who has stood on this platform, Michael Davitt, is One of that class. His mother, forced from her home, carried him around begging, rather than go to the almshouse; and coming Over here, he had, at an early age, when he ought to have been at play and at school, and not at work, to enter One of your factories, and that empty sleeve on his right side is a memento of that tyranny. Thus is your labour market crowded with people who must get work or

starve, who cannot employ themselves, who are forced into competition for anything they can get.

So with your own people—the people of Scotland They have been crowded here in the same way. There is the explanation. This is the explanation of the fact that, although during this century, by reason of invention and improved methods, the productive Power of labour has increased so Wonderfully, wages have not increased at all save where trades Unions have been formed and have been able to force them up a little.

I have now seen something of Scotland, and let me tell you frankly that what I have seen does not raise my estimate of the Scottish character. Let me tell you frankly—seeing I have been accused of flattering you, and you say you can stand unpleasant truths I have a good deal more respect for the Irish. The Irish have done some kicking against this infernal system, and you men in Scotland have got it yet to do.

The Scots are a logical people, as my friend says. I won't gainsay that; but their major premise must be a very curious one. I have really been wondering, since I have been in Scotland, whether you have not got things mixed a little. The Scots are a Bible-reading people. I have sometimes wondered whether, instead of reading "In the beginning the Lord created the heavens and the earth" they haven't got "In the beginning the lairds created the heavens and the earth."

Certainly the lairds have it all their own way through Scotland. Theirs is the land and all upon it; theirs is all that is beneath the land; theirs are the fishes in the rivers and in the lochs; theirs are the birds of the air; theirs are the salmon in the sea, even the seaweed that is thrown ashore, even the whales over a certain length, even the drift-wood? Theirs are even the water and the air.

Why, in Dundee, do you know, the people there, in order to get water, had to pay £25,000 to the Earl of Airlie for the privilege of drawing water for their use out of a certain loch. The water alone; he retains the right to the fish. The very rain as it descends from heaven is the property of the Laird of Airlie!

Why, just think of it! You know how that the chosen people were passing through the wilderness and they thirsted, and Moses struck the rock and the water gushed forth. What good would it have done if that rock had been private property, and some Earl of Airlie had been there who would say: "You cannot take a cupful until you pay me £25,000?" And this Earl of Airlie does not live in Scotland at all—at

any rate, he does not live in Dundee! He never drinks a cupful of that water. Why—just think of it; here, when you have dry weather, the preachers pray for rain, and then when the good Lord listens to their prayer, and sends it down, it belongs to the Earl of Airlie!

But the people of Scotland have the air—that is, what they can get in the streets and the roads! There is at Dundee a hill they call Balgay. It was never cultivated, and the only thing about it is that there is good air to be obtained there, also fine views. That hill belongs to a non-resident. I think the man's name is Scott, and he lives in Edinburgh. The people of Dundee want to take their walks on that hill. How do they get that privilege? By paying him a rent of £14 per acre! Talk about the taboo!

Do you remember those superstitious South Sea Islanders to whom we sent missionaries, and who are now dying out from rum and disease? Do you know these people had a custom that they called the taboo? Their high chiefs, whom they venerated as gods on earth almost, could say of a certain thing: "That is tabooed," and one of the common sort dare not touch it or use it; he would have to go around for miles rather than set his foot on a tabooed path, go thirsty rather than drink at a tabooed spring, and go hungry though fruit on a tabooed tree was rotting before his eyes. You have just precisely the same thing here. There are miles and miles of this Scotland of yours—that is, the Scotland that you common Scotsmen call your country—that is, the Scotland for which you are told you ought to lay down your lives if necessary—there are miles and miles of it in a state of nature, which one of you common Scotsmen dare not set his foot on.

There is one of my countrymen—an American named Williams—who made a great deal of money in Russia; he comes over here and has a playground stretching from sea to sea, in a state of nature, tenanted by wild animals, and from which every one of you Scotsmen is rigorously excluded. And that is only an example of the country all over. If you were heathens, if you were savages, many of you would be far better off. People would not have to live on oatmeal and potatoes while the streams were flashing with fish and the moors were alive with game.

All the fish are preserved. I got hold of a book the other day, *The Streams and Lochs of Scotland*, and I had the curiosity to look over it. Why, every bit of water in which you can paddle a tub is pre-

served; it belongs to Lord This, or Lady That, or Sir Somebody Else. And the quail!

Why, to go back to what I was just talking about. You remember how, to feed the hungry Israelites, quail were sent from heaven. If they had been sent into Scotland, you common Scots would not have dared to touch them. Here the quail are preserved. Why, through the country that I have been, the common, ordinary working Scots live on potatoes, and are well off when they get salted herrings or a little oatmeal. If the potato rot were to come, you would have just such a famine as occurred in Ireland in 1848. In point of fact, this year there is on the Island of Skye a crop of potatoes only by the charity or the people who subscribed to the destitution fund, and so furnished those people with seed.

Full-fed, comfortable people, who eat hearty dinners every day, professors of universities with good salaries, gentlemen with nice steady incomes and pensions, say: "Oh, everything is going right; the working classes are getting better off"; and they deny most bitterly the assertion that poverty is keeping pace with progress, and they give you long tables of statistics to prove it. Everywhere that I have been I have asked the working people themselves what they thought, and I found everywhere that the very reverse was their opinion.

Certainly, after going through this country, there can be no question that all this progress and civilization has only ground this people lower down, that they were better off hundreds of years ago when they were half-heathen savages. They have now been driven from the good land they used to cultivate, and have been forced upon poor land. Their little holdings have been curtailed, so that they cannot keep enough stock to pay their rent. The rent has been increased and increased, and their only way of paying it is to trench upon their revenue and sell off their stock.

There are places where they used to fish, where they have become so impoverished that they now have no fishing boats. There are places where they used to have horses, where now they have none, and where women—Scottish women—have to do the work of beasts of burden! You can see them today carrying manure and everything else on their backs.

Go to the Highlands and you will see a state of society—of industrial society—that belongs to past centuries. You will find people cultivating the ground with the old-fashioned 'crookit spade' reaping with a hook, and beating out their little harvest of corn with a flail.

Civilisation has done nothing for them save to make life harder. Those people, large numbers of them, have to pay rents which they cannot possibly get out of the ground. They are forced to go fishing, or to come down to the Lowlands to seek work, in order to get money to pay their rents. It is not merely for the ground they are charged, not merely for the virtues of the soil; they are charged for a mere breathing space, a mere living place.

Yet those people who live in that way are called lazy! Lazy! I would like to have some of those well-fed people who talk about the crofters' laziness go up and take a week of that sort of work. Let these men go up and dig a little with the crookit spade, and then go out and face the rough sea in one of those fishing boats; and let those fine ladies go to the Highlands and carry turf on their backs as the women do there. As far as I learned when there, it takes, on the average, about one person's labour to keep up these miserable peat fires in the centre of the hut. As for flowers; since I have been in Scotland I have never seen a single flower around one of those miserable cabins, where most of the people live. I asked one crofter in Glendale if they had ever any fruit. "Well," he said: "They used to have some kail."

I went, as Americans would say, to the jumping-off place—to John o'Groat's. There I saw two very bright fellows bringing up stones from the seashore. One of them stooped down upon his knees to help me to hunt for 'groatie buckies', and we had a talk. He said he was going to build a house. The gentleman who was with me asked if he had any surety in building it except the word of his landlord? He said he was a good landlord. I asked: "How much have you to spare?" I think he said £5. His father lived there, and there were other two sons. I asked:

"What do you make out of it?" One of them said: "We generally get the meal." I said, "Do you get enough to pay your rent?" "No; we have got to make it up. I go off to the fishing, and my brother goes off to work. Sometimes we get enough to pay the rent, but generally we don't."

I said, "The goodness of this good, kind landlord of yours amounts to this, that he lets you live there, and takes from you all that you make, save just enough to live." He said: "That is just about so." But then he said, "He is really better than many other landlords." Well, so he is; some of those landlords are there skinning the people alive.

It is not the crofters who have the worst lot—it is the cottars, who come under the tacks men. The crofter can only be put out once a year; the cottar can be put out at forty-eight hours notice. The cottars are the absolute slaves of the tacks men. There is just as much slavery as there existed in any land where human flesh was bought and sold.

Why, there was the testimony before the Royal Commission. By-the-by, that Royal Commission—to a man who does not know anything about it—looks like a committee of wolves to investigate the condition of the sheep. I would like to see labouring people represented on some of these commissions. Anyhow, a very intelligent Gaelic witness said all the land he had was for a cabin and the grass for a cow. Lord Napier asked how much rent he paid. He replied £5. The Commission did not believe it—it seemed so incredible. They said: "How do you pay it?" He replied: "I work a 100 days in the year at 1/- a day." Is it any wonder that wages are low in your city when that is the state of labour in the outskirts?

Poverty and destitution! There is enough to make you sick at heart if you listen to it. Why, a banker in the Highlands told me that only last week a young fellow had come to him who he knew was an honest, sober, industrious, hardworking man, and a cottar, and asked him for the loan of a couple of pounds. "Well," the banker said: "I can't lend you that as a matter of business. What is the matter?" The man replied: "I don't know where to get anything to eat; myself, my wife, and four children have had nothing but potatoes for over two months, and not enough of them; and now there is not a particle of food in the house. All I have in the world is a cow and a stirk. If I sell them now, I can get nothing for them. If you lend me this money, I will sell the stirk at the term time and give it back to you."

My friendly informant said: "I will give you so much meal, enough to keep you"—I forget how much, so many stones you call it—"to last you up till the time, and bring the money when you sell the stirk." The man dropped down and burst into a flood of tears. My informant said to me: "I never felt so humiliated in my life as to see a human creature, a fellow man driven to such a pinch." And then he said: "The man told me: 'You don't know what anguish I have suffered. Morning after morning I have seen my little children going to school fearing they would fall down from sheer weakness on the road.'"

And the treatment of the poor—the poor broken creatures who have nothing of their own—is something outrageous. This endeavour

to keep down the poor rates! Do you know that in some of these parishes there are poor decrepit creatures who get an allowance of 2/- a month, and in other places 14 lbs of meal for two weeks? Well, I asked, over and over again: "How do they live? They can't live on that." What they live on is the charity of the poor people. The landlords, the rich farmers, shunt this burden of providing for the poor that their rapacity creates upon the hardworking people, who themselves can hardly keep from starvation.

One of the London papers said, jeering at me, that I proposed to take all the property from the landowners, and they supposed, however, I was very kind—I would send them to the almshouse. Well, now, I wish

— I have no ill-will towards them—but I heartily wish that a lot of your ruling classes could be sent to the almshouse. I think if some dukes and duchesses and earls and countesses were treated as these poor people are treated, that the wickedness of it, the sheer cold-blooded barbarity of it, would become apparent to your so-called Christian people.

Utter slavery! Why, as one man said to me: "We have feared the landlords more than we have feared Almighty God, and we have feared the factor as much as the landlord—perhaps even more—and the ground-officer as much as the factor." Why, they are absolutely in their power.

There is a case, I am told of, where the factor was a fish merchant, and compelled the people to sell him the fish, and fined them £1 if they sold the fish to anybody else. Why, a gentleman was telling me—a professional man—how he had ridden, just a week or two ago around with the factor on the estate of one of your members of Parliament. They came up to a man, and the factor said to him: "Look here, why were not your children at school yesterday?" Well, the man sheepishly replied, and the factor said: "Look here, don't you allow that to happen again. See that they are at school." "Yes, your honour," the man replied.

"Heavens and earth, how can you talk to a man like that?" said the professional man, and the factor said: "I can make him toe the mark; I have plenty of power." Why, take the Island of Skye, the factor there is everything except the parish minister.

I spoke at Portree the other evening. I went up there, and some of the inhabitants came to me, like Nicodemus, at night, and said: "You must not leave Portree without speaking here." I said that I did not

want to thrust myself upon them, but if they secured a hail I would speak. They went away, and by and by they came back and said: "There is not one of us who has the courage to ask for a hail." They were afraid, and I said:

"I will take the whole responsibility, and offer myself, if need be, a vote of thanks."

I wrote a letter to the factor. I suppose you have heard of that factor—Mr McDonald, I think his name is. He is Justice of the Peace and everything else, and he has charge of the only hail there. I wrote him a polite note, stating that some of the people wanted me to speak on the land question. He wrote back to me to say that he could not let the hail for a lecture; he could not take the responsibility without consulting all the proprietors. Anyway, we got a schoolhouse. A clergyman at the head of the school board was good enough to grant the use of a schoolhouse, although there were threats of interdicts and other terrible things made against him.

I remember reading in an English book, written some years ago, about an aristocratic Pole in the old times, who took an English traveller over some of his ground, and pointed at some miserable-looking objects. He told the traveller he could kick any of them he wanted to. It was much like that in Scotland today. Your aristocracy takes a pride in all that sort of thing. They like to keep up those Highland romantic notions, the feather bonnet and the kilt, and all that sort of thing. Well, now, really when you come to think of it, those Scottish Highlanders have been an ideal people with the aristocracy. They fight like lions abroad, and they have been taken abroad at the dictate of the very power which has oppressed them, to rob and plunder, and kill other people; but they are as tame as sheep at home. Don't you think that alongside of the Scottish lion you ought to put a Scottish sheep?

There is one thing that has greatly displeased me. The most displeasing thing I saw in Ireland was the police force—the Royal Irish Constabulary. Well, now, you are keeping up here in Scotland an institution very much the same. When I was in Skye I saw policemen loafing around just as the Irish Constabulary loaf about. In a little bit of a village named Dunvegan, where I don't think there are more than six or seven houses, there are two policemen all in uniform. The police of the County of Inverness have been increased by fifty, at a cost of £3,000 to the ratepayers, and £3,000 more to the whole country, on account of the fears of the landlords.

I have been pointing out the evil. How can it be cured?

Well, it cannot be cured by any halfway measures; it cannot be cured by any measures that will be agreeable to your aristocracy. You know that at the beginning of big sheep farming in the Highlands, and the eviction of their brethren by chiefs who had become landowners under an infamous English law, there was a good deal of misery, and one of the earliest measures to relieve that misery was to get up those Highland regiments. They were got up about the time of the American war, and a lot of them were sent over there to fight the American people. You can't relieve poverty by any such measures as that.

In the beginning of the century, when the Duke of Sutherland and other men of that kind were evicting their people with a barbarity that will hardly find a parallel in the annals of savage warfare, there was another measure got up to relieve the destitution—that was the making of the roads. Some £267,000 of public money, in addition to £5,000 a year from the public funds, was, for many years, spent on making roads through the Highlands; but this grant was finally abandoned, on the ground that all it had done was to improve the rents of the Highland landlords. No such measures as that will relieve poverty.

You cannot get rid of it by such measures as you Glasgow people adopted in your City Improvement Trust. You have taxed the masses of the people only to foster corruption; to put large sums into the pockets of speculators and landlords; to improve the property of other landowners; and you have not a whit relieved overcrowding or destitution. You have simply changed the place of the disease. It is like putting a plaster on a cancer and driving it somewhere else.

You cannot cure this deep-seated disease by any such measures as these; you must go to the root, boldly and firmly.

Take no stock of those people who preach moderation. Moderation is not what is needed; it is religious indignation. Grasp your thistle. Take this wild beast by the throat. Proclaim the grand truth that every human being born in Scotland has an inalienable and equal right to the soil of Scotland—a right that no law can do away with; a right that comes direct from the Creator, who made earth for human-kind; and placed man and woman upon the earth.

You cannot divide land and secure equality. It could be secured among a primitive people, such as the children of Israel, who, under the Mosaic law, divided the land; but in our complex civilisation that

cannot be done. It is not necessary to divide the land, when you can divide the income drawn from the land. You can easily take the revenue that comes from the land for public purposes. There is nothing very radical in this; it is a highly Conservative proposition.

Why, I had the pleasure of reading a speech delivered in this Hall by your member, Dr Cameron, proposing substantially the same thing. Dr Cameron and myself, I am glad to say, stand upon the same platform in this respect. He wants to re-establish the old, ancient tax upon land that the landowners have thrown upon the masses of the people. That is what I want to do; and when we have done that, I want to go a little further, but I have no doubt that Dr Cameron, when he had got so far, would be quite willing to go a little further. The real fight will come on some such proposition as that made by Dr Cameron, and I have not the shadow of a doubt that, if the people do their duty, the landlords will be routed—horse, foot, and dragons.

Now, see the absurdity of the present system, even as a great economic measure. Here, in Glasgow, take that field of Burnbank. The owner allows it to be vacant, and pays nothing; but if he puts houses upon it you will then get £7,000 a year in taxation. Have you got enough houses in Glasgow? Why should you tax houses and not land? The person who puts up houses is a public benefactor. The more you tax houses, the less houses you have. But you may tax the value of land 20 shillings to the pound and you will not have an inch less land.

A good part of this city used to belong to your people. It was purchased by a Lord Provost named Campbell. I don't know how he got it. It reminds me of the story I heard in Cardiff, how an ancestor of the Marquis of Bute got a great part of the common of that town—now most valuable property. A predecessor of Lord Bute gave the freemen a dinner every year. In a fit of generosity they voted the common to him; but he did not continue the dinner. I don't know how the Lord Provost got this property. But I am informed he paid £1,500 for it. Now, his successor, Sir Archibald Campbell, draws £30,000 in feu-duties, and he does not pay a penny of the rates of the town. Would it not be better to take that £30,000 in taxation, and remit your taxes on some other things?

I want to call your attention to what an enormous fund you would get for public purposes in this way. The chief advantage of putting taxes upon land is that you would choke off those dogs-in-the-manger, who are now holding the land without using it, or making

deer forests of what ought to be the homes of people; who, that they may compel a larger blackmail, are withholding land around your towns from building uses, while whole families are crowded in four-storied houses, a family to each room.

A great stimulus would be given to industry, to the investment of capital, to production of all kinds, by the removal of the taxes that weigh and press them down. Arid by taking that which goes to the landowner and using it for public uses, you could establish libraries and museums, and public parks, and gardens, and baths, if you chose, in every town; you could all around this coast build safe harbours for your fishermen; and you could give a pension of enough to live comfortably on to every decrepit person.

Preposterous does it seem? Well, it does—this thing of doing anything for the common people. It is highly demoralising, we are told, to give people something for nothing. You don't hear anything about that when individual pensions are granted up to thousands of pounds. Your parliament votes £25,000 a year to a young prince as though it were nothing at all. Judges, officers, and that sort of thing, get most handsome retiring pensions. It doesn't hurt them, it doesn't demoralise them!

And see how enormously your other expenses would be reduced. Why, I saw in an office today a chart showing the expenses of this nation diagrammed, and, according to that chart, it was nearly all for war, and the cost of war, and preparation for war. You have been warring with other people, and out of the present taxes, according to that chart, you pay 16/9, I think a year, for war, the expense of war, and the costs of war, and 3/3 for other expenses. Why is that expense placed upon you? Because you are governed by a landowning aristocracy. The army is a good place for younger sons. You have been governed by the class that likes to make war, and that finds a profit in making war. With the rule of the people that would cease.

There is enough here for all of us. There is no natural reason for poverty, or even for hard work. The inventions and discoveries that have been already made give humankind such a command over material conditions, that we all could live in ease and luxury if we did not scramble and tread each other underfoot. Once give the people an opportunity, give mind a chance to develop, and the forces of production would increase at a rate never dreamed of. Where wages are highest, there is labour always most productive, there is invention most active. And certainly it is time that something were done. Why,

think if one of us, having a family of children, were to go away from home, and come back and find the big ones leaving the little ones out in the cold, keeping them in ignorance, in squalor and misery and disease—what would we say?

Do you believe that the laws of justice can be outraged with impunity? Not so, The whole history of the world shows that, though, on the narrow scale of individual life and individual action, injustice sometimes seemed to succeed, yet on the great scale of national life, the punishment of national crimes always comes sure and certain. And, so sure as God lives, that punishment must overtake such nations as this. The cry of the oppressed cannot go up for ever and ever without bringing down punishment.

Look back at the greatest nation that ever played its part on this world's stage—Imperial Rome. What was its fate? That very fate may be seen coming over this nation today. Italy, when the Roman power went forth to conquer the world, was the home of hardy husbandmen, independent and self-reliant. As fortunes grew, these men were drained off to the wars, evicted, driven out, and Italy was given up to sheep and cattle and great estates. That very same thing is going on in these islands today.

What was Scotland made for? What was this earth made for? Was it not for humankind? Was not humankind given the dominion over the birds of the air and the beasts of the field? Was it not made humanity's duty to subdue the earth? Is not humanity the highest thing that earth can produce? And yet here, in this Scotland, you are driving off people and putting on beasts, and the vengeance is coming.

We know something of the laws of the universe. We do not yet know them all. But there is a strange thing that has been noticed in new countries, and that is the influence that people seem to have by their mere presence upon nature. The bee follows the pioneer across the American continent; where settlements are made more rain seems to fall, new flowers without planting seem to spring up, and the earth to bring forth more abundantly; and, where people retire, nature becomes more savage. See how in Italy fertile districts, when depopulated, became the haunts of fever. Look to the arid wastes of North Africa, once such a teeming hive of population.

The very same thing can be seen in Scotland today. Upon this land the curse that follows the expulsion of people is coming. People have been driven off the richest and best land, and the sites of their

little homes and their little cultivated fields given up to sheep, and the sheep fattened. It was good grass where the people had been. That, everywhere, I learn, is giving way. I am told by capable authorities that where a thousand sheep twenty or thirty years ago could be kept, in places people had been driven off not 700 can be kept now.

There is a fungus moss creeping over the ground; Scotland is relapsing into barbarism again; even sheep are giving way to the solitude of the deer forest amid the grouse moor. Will you, people who love Scotland, let it go on?

## What the Railroad Will Bring Us <sup>13</sup>

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UPON the plains this season railroad building is progressing with a rapidity never before known. The two companies, in their struggle for the enormous bounty offered by the Government, are shortening the distance between the lines of rail at the rate of from seven to nine miles a day-almost as fast as the ox teams which furnished the primitive method of conveyance across the continent could travel. Possibly by the middle of next spring, and certainly, we are told, before mid-summer comes again, this "greatest work of the age" will be completed, and an unbroken track stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Though, as a piece of engineering, the building of this road may not deserve the superlative terms in which, with American proneness to exaggeration, it is frequently spoken of, yet, when the full effects of its completion are considered, it seems the "greatest work of the age," indeed. Even the Suez Canal, which will almost change the front of Europe and divert the course of the commerce of half the world, is, in this view, not to be compared with it. For this railroad will not merely open a new route across the continent; it will be the means of converting a wilderness into a populous empire in less time than many of the cathedrals and palaces of Europe were building, and in unlocking treasure vaults which will flood the world with the precious metals. The country west of the longitude of Omaha, all of which will be directly or indirectly affected by the construction of the railroad, (for other roads must soon follow the first) is the largest and richest portion of the United States. Throughout the greater part of this vast domain gold and silver are scattered in inexhaustible profusion, and it contains besides, in limitless quantities, every valuable mineral known to man, and includes every variety of soil and climate.

The natural resources of this country are so great and varied, the inducements which it offers to capital and labor are so superior to those offered anywhere else, that when it is opened by railroads placed, as it soon will be, within a few days' ride of New York, and two or three weeks' journey from Southampton and Bremen, immigration will flow into it like pent-up waters seeking their level, and States will be peopled and cities built with a rapidity never before known, even in our central West. In the consideration of the effects of this migratory movement; of the economical, social and political features of these great commonwealths shortly to be called into vig-

orous being, and of the influences which their growth will exert upon the rest of the Union and the rest of the world; of the changes which must follow the movement of the centre of population and power Pacific-wards, a boundless and most tempting field for speculation is opened up; but into it we cannot enter, as there is more than enough to occupy us in the narrower range suggested by the title of this article.

What is the railroad to do for us?—this railroad that we have looked for, hoped for, prayed for so long?

Much as the matter has been thought about and talked about; many as have been the speeches made and the newspaper articles written on the subject, there are few of us who really comprehend all it will do. We are so used to the California of the stage-coach, widely separated from the rest of the world, that we can hardly realize what the California of the railroad will be—the California netted with iron tracks, and, almost as near in point of time to Chicago and St. Louis, as Virginia City was to San Francisco when the Washoe excitement first commenced, or as Red Bluff is now. The sharpest sense of Americans—the keen sense of gain, which certainly does not lose its keenness in our bracing air—is the first to realize what is coming with our railroad. All over the State, land is appreciating—fortunes are being made in a day by buying and parceling out Spanish ranches; the Government surveyors and registrars are busy; speculators are grappling the public domain by the hundreds of thousands of acres; while for miles in every direction around San Francisco, ground is being laid off into homestead lots. The spirit of speculation, doubles, triples, quadruples the past growth of the city in its calculations, and then discounts the result, confident that there still remains a margin. And it is not far wrong. The new era will be one of great material prosperity, if material prosperity means more people, more houses, more farms and mines, more factories and ships. Calculations based upon the growth of San Francisco can hardly be wild. There are men now in their prime among us who will live to see this the second, perhaps the first city on the continent. This, which may sound like the sanguine utterance of California speculation, is simply a logical deduction from the past.

After the first impulse which settled California had subsided, there came a time of stagnation, if not of absolute decay. As the placers one after another were exhausted, the miners moved off; once populous districts were deserted, there are probably but few of us who once flourishing mining towns fell into ruin, and it seemed to

superficial observers as though the State had passed the acme of her prosperity. During this period quartz mining was being slowly developed, agriculture steadily increasing in importance, and manufactures gaining a foot-hold; but the progress of these industries was slow; they could not at once compensate for the exhaustion of the placer mines; and though San Francisco, drawing her support from the whole coast, continued to grow steadily if not rapidly, the aggregate population and wealth of the State diminished rather than increased. Through this period we have passed. Although the decay of portions of the mining regions still continues, there has been going on for some time a steady, rapid development of the State at large—felt principally in the agricultural counties and the metropolis, but which is now beginning to make itself felt from one end of the State to the other. To produce this, several causes have combined, but prominent among them must be reckoned the new force to which we principally and primarily look for the development of the future—rail-roads. This year—during which more has been done in railroad building and railroad projecting than in all previous years combined—the immediate and prospective influence of this new force, the great settler of States and builder up of cities, has first been powerfully felt. This year we have received the first great wave of the coming tide of immigration, the country has filled up more rapidly than for many years before, more new farms have been staked off and more land sold. And this year a spirit of sanguine enterprise has sprung from present prosperity.

It is not only the metropolis that is hopeful. Sacramento, Stockton and Marysville feel the general impulse. Oakland is laying out, or at least surveying, docks which will cast those of Jersey City, if not of Liverpool, into the shade; Vallejo talks of her coming foreign commerce, and is preparing to load the grain of the Sacramento and Napa valleys into ships for all parts of the world; and San Diego is beginning to look forward to the time when she will have steam communication with St. Louis and New Orleans on the one hand, and China and Japan on the other,—and be the second city on the coast. Renewed interest is being taken in mining—new branches of manufacture are being started. All over it is felt that the old era of stage coaches and ox and mule transportation is rapidly passing away, and that the locomotive, soon to penetrate the State in all directions, will in future carry the wheat to the wharf, the ore to the mill, the timber to the mine; supply the deficiency of navigable streams, open up millions of

acres of the best fruit and grain lands in the world, and make accessible and workable thousands of rich mines.

In San Francisco the change is especially observable, and no one who walks our streets can fail to be struck with the stirring atmosphere of rapid growth. In the crowded avenues and squares, the bustling business air of the centre, the rapidly rising buildings of the suburbs; in new manufactories, docks and wharves, he will everywhere find evidence that San Francisco is fast rising to the rank of a great metropolis.

To the old resident, the growth of this city during the past few years in which she has taken her second start seems sufficiently marvellous. It does not seem long ago when Market street was blocked below Third by a huge sand dune; when the walk to Russ Garden was esteemed a "Sabbath day's journey;" when the "old road" and the "new road" led past nursery, garden, swamp and sandhill to the suburban village of the Mission; when Mason street bounded civilization on one side and South Park on the other; when the Rasette and International were crack hotels, the Queen City and the Antelope ran to Sacramento, and the gun of the Panama steamer roused the whole town—and when (inevitable reflection) land enough to make a millionaire now might have been had for a song. In striking contrast with these memories of the San Francisco of but a few years back is the widespreading, well built city of the present, whose dwellings, workshops and wharves already straggle past points which ten years ago only the daring would have thought they could reach during the present generation.

Yet the growth of San Francisco has hardly commenced—growing now with greater rapidity than ever, her greatest growth will date from the completion of the railroad next year. The San Francisco of the new era will be a city compared with which the San Francisco of the present is only a little village.

Look for a moment at the geographical position of this city, and all doubt as to her future rank will be dispelled. There is in the whole world no city—not even Constantinople, New Orleans, or Panama—which possesses equal advantages. From San Diego to the Columbia river, a stretch of over 1000 miles of coast, the bay of San Francisco is the only possible site for a great city. For the whole of the vast and rich country behind, this is the only gate to the sea. Not a settler in all the Pacific States and Territories but must pay San Francisco tribute; not an ounce of gold dug, a pound of ore smelted, a field gleaned, or

a tree felled in all their thousands of square miles, but must, in a greater or less degree, add to her wealth. She must be the importer, the banker, the market, the centre of every kind, for all the millions who are shortly to settle this territory. She will be not merely the metropolis of the Western front of the United States, as New York is the metropolis of the Eastern front, but the city, the sole great city—relatively such a city as New York, Boston, Portland, Philadelphia, Richmond and Charleston, with many a coast and inland city rolled into one, would be. The Atlantic shore line is indented with bays and navigable rivers, but from San Diego to the Columbia on the Western coast there is but one bay San Francisco—and the only navigable rivers are those which empty into it. For a thousand miles north and south of San Francisco no cities are possible to become her rivals as the seaboard cities from Maine to South Carolina rival New York. On this single bay the whole business of the coast must be concentrated.

And then, San Francisco has all the advantage of the start. When New York had the same population that San Francisco has at present, Philadelphia was of equal size, Boston and Baltimore were considerable rivals, and the foreign commerce of the East was divided between half a dozen cities. But while San Francisco has today a population of 140,000, from Panama to Alaska there is not a town which, compared with her, is more than an embarcadero, and from Panama to Alaska her influence will be felt in preventing the growth of other cities, by drawing to herself business which should naturally belong to them. Great cities draw to themselves population, business, capital, by the law of attraction—the law that "unto him that hath shall be given;" they prevent the growth of rivals just as the great tree with its wide-spreading branches and deep-striking roots prevents the growth of the sapling over which it casts its shadow.

The start of San Francisco—the concentration of capital and business which is inevitable here—will enable her to draw support from the whole Pacific, stunting cities which might otherwise become her rivals; and when she gets free-trade (as she one day will) she will become the great financial and commercial centre of all the Pacific coasts and countries.

Considering these things, is it too much to say that this city of ours must become the first city of the continent; and is it too much to say that the first city of the continent must ultimately be the first city of the world? And when we remember the irresistible tendency of modern times to concentration remember that New York, Paris and

London are still growing faster than ever—where shall we set bounds to the future population and wealth of San Francisco; where find a parallel for the city which a century hence will surround this bay?

The new era into which our State is about entering—or, perhaps, to speak more correctly, has already entered—is without doubt an era of steady, rapid and substantial growth; of great addition to population and immense increase in the totals of the Assessor's lists. Yet we cannot hope to escape the great law of compensation which exacts some loss for every gain. And as there are but few of us who, could we retrace our lives, retaining the knowledge we have gained, would pass from childhood into youth, or from youth into manhood, with unmixed feelings, so we imagine that if the genius of California, whom we picture on the shield of our State, were really a sentient being, she would not look forward now entirely without regret. The California of the new era will be greater, richer, more powerful than the California of the past; but will she be still the same California whom her adopted children, gathered from all climes, love better than their own mother lands; from which all who have lived within her bounds are proud to hail; to which all who have known her long to return? She will have more people; but among those people will there be so large a proportion of full, true men? She will have more wealth; but will it be so evenly distributed? She will have more luxury and refinement and culture; but will she have such general comfort, so little squalor and misery; so little of the grinding, hopeless poverty that chills and cramps the souls of men, and converts them into brutes?

Amid all our rejoicing and all our gratulation let us see clearly whither we are tending. Increase in population and in wealth past a certain point means simply an approximation to the condition of older countries the Eastern States and Europe. Would the average Californian prefer to "take his chances" in New York or Massachusetts, or in California as it is and has been? Is England, with her population of twenty millions to an area not more than one-third that of our State, and a wealth which per inhabitant is six or seven times that of California, a better country than California to live in? Probably, if one were born a duke or a factory lord, or to any place among the upper ten thousand; but if one were born among the lower millions—how then?

And so the California of the future the California of the new era will be a better country for some classes than the California of the

present; and so too, it must be a worse country for others. Which of these classes will be the largest? Are there more mill owners or factory operatives in Lancashire, more brown stone mansions, or tenement rooms in New York? With the tendency of human nature to set the highest value on that which it has not, we have clamored for immigration, for population, as though that was the one sole good. But if this be so, how is it that the most populous countries in the world are the most miserable, most corrupt, most stagnant and hopeless? How is it that in populous and wealthy England there is so much more misery, vice and social disease than in her poor and sparsely populated colonies? If a large population is not a curse as well as a blessing, how was it that the black-death which swept off one-third of the population of England produced such a rise in the standard of wages and the standard of comfort among the people?

We want great cities, large factories, and mines worked cheaply, in this California of ours! Would we esteem ourselves gainers if New York, ruled and robbed by thieves, loafers and brothelkeepers; nursing a race of savages fiercer and meaner than any who ever shrieked a war-whoop on the plains; could be set down on our bay tomorrow? Would we be gainers, if the cotton-mills of Massachusetts, with their thousands of little children who, official papers tell us, are being literally worked to death, could be transported to the banks of the American; or the file and pin factories of England, where young girls are treated worse than ever slaves on Southern plantations, be reared as by magic at Antioch? Or if among our mountains we could by wishing have the miners, men, women and children, who work the iron and coal mines of Belgium and France, where the condition of production is that the laborer shall have meat but once a week—would we wish them here?

Can we have one thing without the other? We might, perhaps. But does human nature differ in different longitudes? Do the laws of production and distribution, inexorable in their sphere as the law of gravitation in its loss their power in a country where no rain falls in the summer time?

For years the high rate of interest and the high rate of wages prevailing in California have been special subjects for the lamentation of a certain school of local political economists, who could not see that high wages and high interest were indications that the natural wealth of the country was not yet monopolized, that great opportunities were open to all—who did not know that these were evidences of social

health, and that it were as wise to lament them as for the maiden to wish to exchange the natural bloom on her cheek for the interesting pallor of the invalid? But however this be, it is certain that the tendency of the new era—the more dense population and more thorough development of the wealth of the State—will be to a reduction both of the rate of interest and the rate of wages, particularly the latter. This tendency may not, probably will not, be shown immediately; but it will be before long, and that powerfully, unless balanced and counteracted by other influences which we are not now considering, which do not yet appear, and which it is probable will not appear for some time yet.

The truth is, that the completion of the railroad and the consequent great increase of business and population, will not be a benefit to all of us, but only to a portion. As a general rule (liable of course to exceptions) those who have it will make wealthier; for those who have not, it will make it more difficult to get. Those who have lands, mines, established businesses, special abilities of certain kinds, will become richer for it and find increased opportunities; those who have only their own labor will become poorer, and find it harder to get ahead—first, because it will take more capital to buy land or to get into business; and second, because as competition reduces the wages of labor, this capital will be harder for them to obtain.

What, for instance, does the rise in land mean? Several things, but certainly and prominently this: that it will be harder in future for a poor man to get a farm or a homestead lot. In some sections of the State, land which twelve months ago could have been had for a dollar an acre, cannot now be had for less than fifteen dollars. In other words, the settler who last year might have had at once a farm of his own, must now either go to work on wages for some one else, pay rent or buy on time; in either case being compelled to give to the capitalist a large proportion of the earnings which, had he arrived a year ago, he might have had all for of himself. And as proprietorship is thus rendered more difficult and less profitable to the poor, more are forced into the labor market to compete with each other, and cut down the rate of wages—that is, to make the division of their joint production between labor and capital more in favor of capital and less in favor of labor.

And so in San Francisco the rise in building lots means, that it will be harder for a poor man to get a house and lot for himself, and if he has none that he will have to use more of his earnings for rent;

means a crowding of the poorer classes together; signifies courts, slums, tenement-houses, squalor and vice.

San Francisco has one great advantage—there is probably a larger proportion of her population owning homesteads and homestead lots than in any other city of the United States. The product of the rise of real estate will thus be more evenly distributed, and the great social and political advantages of this diffused proprietorship cannot be overestimated. Nor can it be too much regretted that the princely domain which San Francisco inherited as the successor of the pueblo was not appropriated to furnishing free, or almost free, homesteads to actual settlers, instead of being allowed to pass into the hands of a few, to make more millionaires. Had the matter been taken up in time and in a proper spirit, this disposition might easily have been secured, and the great city of the future would have had a population bound to her by the strongest ties—a population better, freer, more virtuous, independent and public spirited than any great city the world has ever had.

To say that "Power is constantly stealing from the many to the few," is only to state in another form the law that wealth tends to concentration. In the new era into which the world has entered since the application of steam, this law is more potent than ever; in the new era into which California is entering, its operations will be more marked here than ever before. The locomotive is a great centralizer. It kills towns and builds up great cities, and in the same way kills little businesses and builds up great ones. We have had comparatively but few rich men; no very rich ones, in the meaning "very rich" has in these times. But the process is going on. The great city that is to be will have its Astors, Vanderbilts, Stewarts and Spragues, and he who looks a few years ahead may even now read their names as he passes along Montgomery, California or Front streets.—With the protection which property gets in modern times—with stocks, bonds, burglar-proof safes and policemen; with the railroad and the telegraph after a man gets a certain amount of money it is plain sailing, and he need take no risks. Astor said that to get his first thousand dollars was his toughest struggle; but when one gets a million, if he has ordinary prudence, how much he will have is only a question of life. Nor can we rely on the absence of laws of primogeniture and entail to dissipate these large fortunes so menacing to the general weal. Any large fortune will, of course, become dissipated in time, even in spite of laws of primogeniture and entail; but every aggregation of wealth

implies and necessitates others, and so that the aggregations remain, it matters little in what particular hands. Stewart, in the natural course of things, will die before long, and being childless, his wealth will be dissipated, or at least go out of the dry goods business. But will this avail the smaller dealers whom he has crushed or is crushing out? Not at all. Some one else will step in, take his place in the trade, and run the great money-making machine which he has organized, or some other similar one.

Stewart and other great houses have concentrated the business, and it will remain concentrated. Nor is it worth while to shut our eyes to the effects of this concentration of wealth. One millionaire involves the little existence of just so many proletarians. It is the great tree and the saplings over again. We need not look far from the palace to find the hovel. When people can charter special steamboats to take them to watering places, pay four thousand dollars for the summer rental of a cottage, build marble stables for their horses, and give dinner parties which cost by the thousand dollars a head, we may know that there are poor girls on the streets pondering between starvation and dishonor.

When liveries appear, look out for bare-footed children. A few liveries are now to be seen on our streets; we think their appearance coincides in date with the establishment of the almshouse. They are few, plain and modest now; they will grow more numerous and gaudy—and then we will not wait long for the children—their corollaries.

But there is another side: we are to become a great, populous, wealthy community. And in such a community many good things are possible that are not possible in a community such as ours has been. There have been artists, scholars, and men of special knowledge and ability among us, who could and some of whom have since won distinction and wealth in older and larger cities, but who here could only make a living by digging sand, peddling vegetables, or washing dishes in restaurants. It will not be so in the San Francisco of the future. We shall keep such men with us, and reward them, instead of driving them away. We shall have our noble charities, great museums, libraries and universities; a class of men who have leisure for thought and culture; magnificent theatres and opera houses; parks and pleasure gardens.

We shall develop a literature of our own, issue books which will be read wherever the English language is spoken, and maintain peri-

odicals which will rank with those of the East and Europe. The Bulletin, Times and Alta, good as they are, must become, or must yield to, journals of the type of the New York Herald or the Chicago Tribune. The railroads which will carry the San Francisco newspapers over a wide extent of country the same day that they are issued, will place them on a par, or almost on a par in point of time, with journals printed in the interior, while their metropolitan circulation and business will enable them to publish more and later news than interior papers can.

The same law of concentration will work in other businesses in the same way. The railroads may benefit Sacramento and Stockton by making of them workshops, but no one will stop there to buy goods when he can go to San Francisco, make his choice from larger stocks, and return the same day.

But again comes the question: will this California of the future, with its facilities for travel and transportation; its huge metropolis and pleasant watering places; its noble literature and great newspapers; universities, libraries and museums; parks and operas; fleets of yachts and miles of villas, possess still the charme which makes Californians prefer their State, even as it is, to places where all these things are to be found?

What constitutes the peculiar charm of California, which all who have lived here long enough feel? Not the climate alone. Heresy though it be to say so, there are climates as good; some that on the whole are better. Not merely that there is less social restraint, for there are parts of the Union and parts from which tourists occasionally come to lecture us where there is much less social restraint than in California. Not simply that the opportunities of making money have been better here; for the opportunities for making large fortunes have not been so good as in some other places, and there are many who have not made money here, who prefer this country to any other; many who after leaving us throw away certainty of profit to return and "take the chances" of California. It certainly is not in the growth of local attachment, for the Californian has even less local attachment than the average American, and will move about from one end of the State to the other with perfect indifference. It is not that we have the culture or the opportunities to gratify luxurious and cultivated tastes that older countries afford, and yet those who leave us on this account as a general thing come back again.

No: the potent charm of California, which all feel but few analyze, has been more in the character, habits and modes of thought of her people—called forth by the peculiar conditions of the young State—than in anything else. In California there has been a certain cosmopolitanism, a certain freedom and breadth of common thought and feeling, natural to a community made up from so many different sources, to which every man and woman had been transplanted—all travellers to some extent, and with native angularities of prejudice and habit more or less worn off. Then there has been a feeling of personal independence and equality, a general hopefulness and self-reliance, and a certain large-heartedness and open-handedness which were born of the comparative evenness with which property was distributed, the high standard of wages and of comfort, and the latent feeling of every one that he might "make a strike," and certainly could not be kept down long.

While we have had no very rich class, we have had no really poor class. There have been enough "dead brokes," and how many Californians are there who have not gone through that experience; but there never was a better country to be "broken" in, and where almost every man, even the most successful, had been in the same position, it did not involve the humiliation and loss of hope which attaches to utter poverty in older and more settled communities.

In a country where all had started from the same level—where the banker had been a year or two before a journeyman carpenter, the merchant a foremast hand; the restaurant waiter had perhaps been educated for the bar or the church, and the laborer once counted his "pile," and where the wheel of fortune had been constantly revolving with a rapidity in other places unknown, social lines could not be sharply drawn, nor a reverse dispirit. There was something in the great possibilities of the country; in the feeling that it was one of immense latent wealth; which furnished a background of which a better filled and more thoroughly developed country is destitute, and which contributed not a little to the active, generous, independent social tone.

The characteristics of the principal business—mining—gave a color to all California thought and feeling. It fostered a reckless, generous, independent spirit, with a strong disposition to "take chances" and "trust to luck." Than the placer mining, no more independent business could be conceived. The miner working for himself, owned no master; worked when and only when he pleased; took out his earn-

ings each day in the shining particles which depended for their value on no fluctuations of the market, but would pass current and supply all wants the world over. When his claim gave out, or for any reason he desired to move, he had but to shoulder his pick and move on. Mining of this kind developed its virtues as well as its vices. If it could have been united with ownership of land and the comforts and restraints of home, it would have given us a class of citizens of the utmost value to a republican state. But the "honest miner" of the placers has passed away in California. The Chinaman, the millioner and his laborers, the mine superintendent and his gang, are his successors.

This crowding of people into immense cities, this aggregation of wealth into large lumps, this marshalling of men into big gangs under the control of the great "captains of industry," does not tend to foster personal independence—the basis of all virtues—nor will it tend to preserve the characteristics which particularly have made Californians proud of their State. However, we shall have some real social gains, with some that are only apparent. We shall have more of home influences, a deeper religious sentiment, less of the unrest that is bred of an adventurous and reckless life. We shall have fewer shooting and stabbing affrays, but we will have probably something worse, from which, thank God, we have hitherto been exempt—the low, brutal, cowardly rowdyism of the great Eastern cities. We shall hear less of highway robberies in the mountains, but more, perhaps, of pickpockets, burglars and sneak thieves. That we can look forward to any political improvement is, to say the least,—doubtful. There is nothing in the changes which are coming that of itself promises that. There will be a more permanent population, more who will look on California as their home; but we would not aver that there will be a larger proportion of the population who will take an intelligent interest in public affairs. In San Francisco the political future is full of danger. As surely as San Francisco is destined to become as large as New York, as certain is it that her political condition is destined to become as bad as that of New York, unless her citizens are aroused in time to the necessity of preventive or rather palliative measures. And in the growth of large corporations and other special interests is an element of great danger. Of these great corporations and interests we shall have many. Look, for instance, at the Central Pacific Railroad Company, as it will be, with a line running to Salt Lake, controlling more capital and employing more men than any of the great eastern rail-

roads who manage legislatures as they manage their workshops, and name governors, senators and judges almost as they name their own engineers clerks! Can we rely upon sufficient intelligence, independence and virtue among the many to resist the political effects of the concentration of great wealth in the hands of a few?

And this in general is the tendency of the time, and of the new era opening before us: to the great development of wealth; to concentration; to the differentiation of classes; to less personal independence among the many and the greater power of the few. We shall lose much which gave a charm to California life; much that was valuable in the character of our people, while we will also wear off defects, and gain some things that we lacked.

With our gains and our losses will come new duties and new responsibilities. Connected more closely with the rest of the nation, we will feel more quickly and keenly all that affects it. We will have to deal, in time, with all the social problems that are forcing themselves on older communities, (like the riddles of a Sphinx, which not to answer is death) with one of them, the labor question, rendered peculiarly complex by our proximity to Asia. Public spirit, public virtue, the high resolve of men and women who are capable of feeling the "enthusiasm of humanity," will be needed in the future more than ever.

A great change is coming over our State. We should not prevent it if we could, and could not if we would, but we can view it in all its bearings—look at the dark as well as the bright side, and endeavor to hasten that which is good and retard or prevent that which is bad. A great State is forming; let us see to it that its foundations are laid firm and true.

And as California becomes populous rich, let us not forget that the character of a people counts for more than their numbers; that the distribution of wealth is even a more important matter than its production. Let us not imagine ourselves in a fools' paradise, where the golden apples will drop into our mouths; let us not think that after the stormy seas and head gales of all the ages, our ship has at last struck the trade winds of time. The future of our State, of our nation, of our race, looks fair and bright; perhaps the future looked so to the philosophers who once sat in the porches of Athens—to the unremembered men who raised the cities whose ruins lie south of us. Our modern civilization strikes broad and deep and looks high. So did the tower which men once built almost unto heaven.

## Is our Civilization Just to Working Men? <sup>14</sup>

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Is our civilization just to working men? It is not. Try it by whatever test you will, it is glaringly, bitterly and increasingly unjust.

If it does not seem so, it is because our moral perceptions are obscured by habit.

The tolerance of wrong dulls our sense of its injustice. Men may become accustomed to theft, murder, even to slavery—that sum of all villainies—so they see no injustice in it, yet that which is unjust is unjust still, and whoever will go back to first principles will see that it is unjust. Work is the producer, the fashioner, the bringer forth; the means whereby intelligence moulds matter to its purpose. The earth and the heavens are they not, as the Scripture tells us, the work of God?

And what kind of a world is that on which we find ourselves? It is a world in which only the raw materials are furnished us—a world in which human life can only be maintained and human wants met and desires gratified by work. Beast, bird and fish take the food they find, and are clothed they know not how. But man must work. Created in the image of the Creator, he, in a lower way, must create in his turn. Food, clothing, shelter—all the things that we call wealth—are brought into being by work. Nature yields to labour, and to labour alone.

These are truisms which everybody knows. The first man knew them.

Yes, the first man knew them; and if we would see how they are ignored in the facts of today, imagine that, in the slumber of night, that first man stood by your bedside in one of those great cities that are the flower, crown, and type of our civilization, and asked you to take him through it.

Here you would take him through wide and well kept streets, lined with spacious mansions, replete with everything that can enhance comfort and gratify taste, adorned with magnificent churches. Again, you would pass into another quarter, where everything is pinched and niggard—where families are packed together tier on tier, sometimes a whole family in a single room, where even such churches as you see are poor and mean, and only the grogshops are gorgeous. Which quarter do you think Adam would understand you to mean if you spoke of the working man's quarter?

Knowing that wealth comes only by work, would he not necessarily infer that the fine houses were the homes of the working men, and the poor, squalid houses the homes of the people who do no work? You might by ocular demonstration convince the simple old man that the very reverse of this is true, but how would you convince him that it is just?

Here is the eternal law—wealth comes only by work. Here, wherever our civilization extends, is the social fact, those who work hardest and longest, those whom we style the working classes, are the poorest classes. The very word working man is synonymous with poverty. A working man's hotel is everywhere a poor hotel; a working man's restaurant is a mean restaurant. In a working man's store you will find only the cheaper and coarser goods. What physician wants a working man's practice if he can get any other? What minister a working man's church? Who wishes his son to become, or his daughter to wed a working man? We prate vainly of the dignity of our labour; facts give our words the lie. Labour is everywhere condemned and despised. Everywhere it slinks to a back seat; aye, even in the house of God! Magnificent churches are dedicated to a carpenter, to a fisherman, and to a tentmaker, but are they working man's carriages which stand on Sundays before the door? Are their well-dressed congregations composed of the class of which the carpenter, the fisherman and the tentmaker of eighteen centuries ago belonged? Why even in the cathedrals of that Church which most boasts that before her priesthood, all are equal, the carpenter, the fisherman and the tentmaker of the present day must go into the five cent place or the ten cent place. The good places are the soft seats—they are for the people who have got above labour.

It were idle to complain of this. The prettiest theory must bend to the logic of facts. God intended labour to be honourable among men. That is clear, for He made wealth the reward of labour. But somehow or other, as we have managed to fix things in the civilization of which we are so proud, labour has been divorced from its natural reward, and this being the case, the signet of respectability is gone.

But it may be said, in speaking of working men, we mean, for the most part, mere handworkers. Manual labour is but a low kind of labour. The great agent of production is mind, not muscle.

Granted that the more intelligent work—the work we call brain-work ought to be paid more than mere manual labour, this does not prove it just that manual labour should get so little. What can the

brain produce without the hand? Suppose Adam, when driven from Paradise, had set himself under a tree and resolved to make a living with his brain, what would have become of him? Suppose that the hand-workers of the world were to stop work today, what would become of brainworkers? Furthermore, is not all handwork brainwork, and have not those in the ranks of hand-workers just as much natural intelligence as those in any other walk of life?

But I make no narrow definition of the term working man. Whoever does productive work of any kind is really a working man. But all exertion is not work. The gambler I do not call a working man, whether he gamble with dice, or cards, or in stocks or produce. The thief I do not call a working man, whether he picks pockets or wrecks railroads. The confidence operator I do not call a working man, whether his gains be dollars or millions; and whether he dwell in an almshouse or in a palace—whether he ride in a prison van or in a coach and pair, I do not call the mere appropriator a working man.

A man may toil from early manhood to hoary age to increase his gains, he may in the struggle for wealth wear out his body, distort his mind, warp his instincts, and lose his soul, and yet be not a working man, if his struggle be merely to take—not to make!

But him I call a working man, who, with hand or with head, takes the part of a producer in the complex machinery of which human wants are satisfied. Whether his work be physical, or whether it be mental, if he would aid in providing for the needs of the body, of the intellect, for the needs of the soul—him I call a working man! And using the term in the widest sense, I still insist that our civilization is unjust to working men.

Is it not notorious that brainwork is, on the whole, as much underpaid as handwork? Are there not many brainworkers who, at times, are tempted to envy the hand-worker? How many authors, how many inventors, how many newspaper writers, how many teachers, do you know of who have got rich by work? I do know of some newspaper writers who have got rich, but it has been by being led into "fat things." I do know of some teachers who have made fortunes, but it has been by successful speculation. I do know of one author who by the sheer earnings of his pen has bought himself what most of us would call a fine house, though it is not as good as some millionaire's stable, but he writes detective stories for boys' papers. Even in business, do not statistics show that something like 95 per cent of all that start fail?

Getting rich by hand-work—that is utterly out of the question; and if you have a strong vigorous brain, and want to get rich, use it not to do productive work, but to appropriate the work of others. That is the way to get rich.

When I was a boy and went to Sunday school, I used to want to be rich. Dollars was the sum I used to dream about, for fortunes were not so large in those days. But since I have seen more of life, since I have seen how great wealth masters the man, I fear the responsibilities. But poverty, in such a civilization as ours, this does not merely mean hard work and poor fare, but weakness and contempt; the dulling of the intellect; the cramping of the soul. The injustice of our civilization to working men is not so much that it deprives them of physical gratifications they ought to have, but that it deprives them of higher things—of leisure and opportunity for mental and moral growth.

The working class is everywhere necessarily the least cultured class.

Go into our prisons and you will find them tenanted not from the rich, but from the poor. Inquire into the history of the girls you may find at night prowling the streets of our great cities, in nine cases out of ten it was poverty that sent them there.

I listened last night with deep interest to the discussion of education.

I fully agree with all that was said as to the superiority of the moral to the intellectual. To merely develop the intellectual faculties without commensurate development of the moral sense seems to me but to make the man a monster.

But what is the education of the school as compared with the education outside the school? How little will it avail if you teach the child in school that honesty is the best policy, when from the time he can think, the lesson that he everywhere learns is if you would escape pain and gain pleasure, if you would win respect and consideration, get MONEY. Get it honestly if you can, but at any rate get money. You ministers may preach every Sunday, of hell and of heaven, but the hell that the mass of your congregation most fear is the hell of poverty. The heaven which most attracts them is the heaven of wealth; nor is it strange that it should be so.

This is the necessary result of that fierce struggle for existence, which rages wherever our civilization extends, and becomes fiercer and fiercer as it progresses. But the fierce struggle is not natural; our

moral perceptions tells us that. The very construction of man, with his capacity for thought and capacity for feeling, show us that he was intended for better things than to spend nine-tenths of his powers to get an animal existence, as most men have to do.

And when we look into the social laws, which are as truly the laws of the Creator as are the physical or moral laws, we can see that civilization, instead of enriching one class and impoverishing another, ought to make it easier for all to live. My time is too short for argument, but let me try, as well as I can, to show this in a word.

Here, let us say, is a primitive community—one part engaged in fishing, one part in agriculture, one in mechanical operations. Now, if in one of these occupations, either by the increase in productiveness of nature or by invention or discovery, which increases the productiveness of labour, the power of obtaining wealth is increased, the benefit will not be confined to those engaged in that particular occupation, but by virtue of what is known to economists as the law of values, must be shared by all.

This principle that increased efficiency in one department of labour virtually increases the productiveness of all labour—the principle that the growth in wealth of one people is a benefit to all other peoples with whom they exchange—runs through all the social laws, and by virtue of the principle, every invention and every improvement ought to make it easier for those in every department of industry to get a living. By virtue of this principle, the rudest manual labourer ought now to live in affluence as compared with his predecessor in a rude state of society.

What is the fact? The fact is that in the very heart of our civilization there are great masses with whose lot the veriest savage could not afford to exchange—masses, who not only can get a bare living by the hardest toil, but who often cannot get a living at all, and would starve but for charity. In the primitive condition, of which we have a record in the Bible, we hear nothing of pauperism; nothing of women compelled to unwomanly toil; nothing of little children forced to monotonous employment; nothing of hungry want in the midst of overflowing plenty-things so common to-day. Six centuries ago before any of the great modern inventions had been made, before even our most prolific vegetables and fruits had been introduced, when all the arts were rude beyond comparison with the present state, pauperism was unknown in England; eight hours was the ordinary day's work, and the rudest manual labour, as such investigators as Prof. Thorold

Rogers tells us, lived in a rude plenty, which is affluence itself, as compared with what they get now, and even in times of actual scarcity were unvexed by the fear of want. Is our civilization just to working men, when that is the fruit of all this advance?

Is not civilization unjust to working men when want so exists in the midst of plenty? Read the papers to day. Everywhere you will read of reduction of wages, or of strikes against reduction of wages. What is the reason? Overproduction, they say. That is to say, there is such a plethora of food—such a glut of goods—that the working man must stint his family.

From the Esquimaux of the North to the Terra del Fuegan of the South there is not a savage tribe that can comprehend the chronic poverty that exists in the heart of our civilization.

Is it any wonder that that which most astonished Sitting Bull on his recent visit to the East was the children that he saw at work—children, who, as he said, ought to be at play. Ought it not astonish us? Discovery and invention have multiplied a hundredfold, yea, a thousandfold, the power of human labour to supply human needs; yet when machinery is in its latest development you will find young girls and little children straining brain and muscle in monotonous work for ten and twelve hours a day. We do not offer our children up to idols; we do not sacrifice our virgins to propitiate the dark powers—we are Christians; but we do give them to disease and death in mill and mine and factory.

These are the bitter fruits of injustice.

What is that injustice? Many minor injustices there may be, but the first, the widespread, the great injustice—an injustice sufficient to account for all these effects—is so glaring that all who will look may see it.

Read the first chapter of Genesis, consider the relation between man and the planet which he inhabits, and you can have no doubt what it is.

It is the injustice, which robs man of his birthright. It is that we have made private property of what the Creator intended for the common heritage of all.

Let me quote the words of a Christian bishop, Thomas Nulty, Bishop of Meath, "The land in every country is the common property of the people of that country, because its real owner, the Creator, who made it, has bestowed it as a voluntary gift upon them. The earth has He given to the children of men." Now, as every human being is a

child of God, and, as all His children are equal in His eyes, any settlement of the land of this or any, other country, that would exclude the humblest of God's children from an equal share in the common heritage, is not merely a wrong and an injustice to that man, but is an impious violation of the benevolent intention of the Creator.

Is not that truth—is not that truth with which religion has to do? Think of it.

## How to Help the Unemployed <sup>15</sup>

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AN EPIDEMIC of what passes for charity is sweeping over the land. From New York, where the new and massive United Charities Building, the million-dollar gift of one philanthropist, gives stately evidence that the battle against actual starvation has permanently transcended the powers of a municipality that appropriates to it millions annually and of the unorganized giving of greater millions; and from Chicago, where the corridors of the City Hall and the doors of churches have been thrown open for the shelter of those so poor as to welcome such a bed, to Seattle, on Puget Sound, or Tampa, on the Mexican Gulf, -- all who have anything to give are being asked to give. Municipalities, churches, boards of trade, real-estate associations, labor unions and merchants' organizations are giving and asking for charity funds. Officials are surrendering a percentage on their salaries, policemen, railroad operatives, the employees of large business establishments, factory hands, and even day laborers, are docking themselves of part of their pay, and trades dinners being given up to swell charity subscriptions. There are charity balls, charity parties, charity entertainments, and charity funds of all sorts. One great paper in New York is raising an old-clothes fund, and another great paper a bread fund, and in Ashland, Wis., they have made a charity mincepie twenty-two feet in circumference and a quarter of a ton in weight. The politicians are always large givers of alms, politicians of the Tammany type especially; but even Tammany has special relief committees at work. One of the chiefs of New York's "400" calls on each pupil of the public schools for a daily contribution of a cold potato and a slice of bread for the organized feeding of the hungry; and to complete the parallel with the "bread and circuses" of the dying Roman republic, he also asks that the churches be opened and their organs played every afternoon, so that to free food may be added free music!

Yet there has been no disaster of fire or flood, no convulsion of nature, no destruction by public enemies. The seasons have kept their order, we have had the former and the latter rain, and the earth has not refused her increase. Granaries are filled to overflowing, and commodities, even these we have tried to make dear by tariff, were never before so cheap.

The scarcity that is distressing and frightening the whole country is a scarcity of employment. It is the unemployed for whom charity is

asked: not those who cannot or will not work, but those able to work and anxious to work, who, through no fault of their own, cannot find work. So clear, indeed, is it that of the great masses who are suffering in this country today, by far the greater part are honest, sober, and industrious, that the pharisees who preach that poverty is due to laziness and thriftlessness, and the fanatics who attribute it to drink, are for the moment silent.

Yet why is it that men able to work and willing to work cannot find work? It is not strange that the failure to work should bring want, for it is only by work that human wants are satisfied. But to say that widespread distress comes from widespread inability to find employment no more explains the distress than to say that the man died from want of breath explains a sudden death. The pressing question, the real question, is, What causes the want of employment?

This, however, is the question that the men of light and leading, the preachers, teachers, philanthropists, business men and editors of great newspapers, who all over the country are speaking and writing about the distress and raising funds for the unemployed, show no anxiety to discover. Indeed, they seem averse to such inquiry. "The cause of the want of employment," they say, tacitly or openly, "is not to be considered now. The present duty is to keep people from starving and freezing, or being driven to break in and steal. This is no time for theories. It is a time for alms."

This attitude, if one considers it, seems something more than strange. If in any village a traveler found the leading men clustered about the body of one who had clearly come to untimely death, yet anxious only to get it buried; making no inquiry into the cause of death, and even discouraging inquiry, would he not suspect them of knowing more of that cause than they cared to admit? Now, this army of unemployed is as unnatural as is death in the prime of life and vigor of every organ and faculty. Nay, it involves presumption of wrong as clearly as cut throat or shattered skull.

What more unnatural than that alms should be asked, not for the maimed, the halt and the blind, the helpless widow and the tender orphan, but for grown men, strong men, skilful men, men able to work and anxious to work! What more unnatural than that labor -- the producer of all food, all clothing, all shelter -- should not be exchangeable for its full equivalent in food, clothing, and shelter; that while the things it produces have value, labor, the giver of all value, should seem valueless!

Here are men, having the natural wants of man, having the natural powers of man -- powers adapted and intended and more than sufficient to supply those wants. To say that they are willing to use their powers for the satisfaction of their wants, yet cannot do so, is to say that there is a wrong. If it is not their fault, whose fault is it? Wrong somewhere there must be.

Of old it was said, "If any would not work, neither should he eat." Men able to work, and willing to work, who could not find work, were not dreamed of. External nature is the same; the constitution of man has not changed. How, then, is it that we now hear, "He who cannot find work shall be fed by charity"? Those who say this do not say, "He who does not work shall be fed by charity." These pseudo-philanthropists know the penalty of such an attempt to boldly annul the natural law that by his toil man shall be fed. By skimming the dole to what will just prevent actual starvation, and by the tests and inquiries and degrading conditions of organized charity, they try to draw the line between those who cannot find work and those who do not want to. But this line it is impossible to draw, for no such clear line exists. Organize charity as we may, men who cannot find work go hungry, and men who do not want to find work are fed, and men willing to work are converted into men unwilling to work.

For willingness to work depends on what can be had by work and what can be had without work, and the personal and social estimate of the relation. Work is in itself painful and repellent. No human being ever worked for the sake of working. I write this article that it may be published in THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, and that I may get the pay for it, and communicate my thought to others. But the work of writing it is as irksome to me as sawing wood. So with all work. In a ruder stage men looked upon the necessity of work as the curse of an offended creator. We who may now see to what marvelous advances it has led, and recognize in it the motor of all human progress, may behold in it, not a curse, but a blessing. But its irksomeness remains. What keeps any of us at work are our desires and hopes -- our wants and our pride. Kill hope and lessen desire by crucifying the feeling of personal independence and accustoming your man to a life maintained by alms, and you will make of the most industrious a tramp. For the law of our being is that we seek the gratification of our desires with the least exertion.

Why should charity be offered the unemployed? It is not alms they ask. They are insulted and embittered and degraded by being

forced to accept as paupers what they would gladly earn as workers. What they ask is not charity, but the opportunity to use their own labor in satisfying their own wants. Why can they not have that? It is their natural right. He who made food and clothing and shelter necessary to man's life has also given to man, in the power of labor, the means of maintaining that life; and when, without fault of their own, men cannot exert that power, there is somewhere a wrong of the same kind as denial of the right of property and denial of the right of life -- a wrong equivalent to robbery and murder on the grandest scale.

Charity can only palliate present suffering a little at the risk of fatal disease. For charity cannot right a wrong; only justice can do that. Charity is false, futile, and poisonous when offered as a substitute for justice. This is the fatal taint that runs through all the efforts of the rich and influential to aid the unemployed, with which our newspapers now are full. Like the gatherings of clergymen called in Chicago by Editor Stead -- blinded leader of the wilfully blind -- their spirit is that of men pretending to look for what they are determined not to find; of men, like those of Moscow of whom Tolstoi tells, willing to do anything whatever to help the poor -- except to get off their backs.

Yet this is to be expected. For the question of the unemployed is but a more than usually acute phase of the great labor question -- a question of the distribution of wealth. Now, given any wrong, no matter what, that affects the distribution of wealth, and it follows that the leading class must be averse to any examination or question of it. For, since wealth is power, the leading class is necessarily dominated by those who profit or imagine they profit by injustice in the distribution of wealth. Hence, the very indisposition to ask the cause of evils so great as to arouse and startle the whole community is but proof that they spring from some wide and deep injustice.

What that injustice is may be seen by whoever will really look. We have only to ask to find.

What do we mean when we say that it is scarcity of employment from which the masses are suffering? Not what we mean when we say of the idle rich that they suffer from want of employment. There is no scarcity of the need for work when so many are suffering for the want of things that work produces, when all of us would like more, and all but a very few of us could advantageously use more, of those things. Nor do we mean that there is scarcity of ability to work or willingness to work. Nor yet do we mean that there is scarcity of the natural materials and forces necessary for work. 'They are as abun-

dant as they ever were or ever will be until the energy radiated by the sun upon our globe loses its intensity. What we really mean by "scarcity of employment " is such scarcity as would be brought about were an ice sheet continued into the summer to shut out the farmer from the fertile field he was anxious to cultivate; such a scarcity as was brought about in Lancashire when our blockade of the Southern ports raised suddenly and enormously the price of the staple that English operatives were anxious to turn into cloth.

What answers to the ice sheet or the blockade? Need we ask? May it not be seen, from our greatest cities to our newest territories, in the speculation which has everywhere been driving up the price of land -- that is to say, the toll that the active factor in all production must pay for permission to use the indispensable passive factor. Across the street from the City Hall of Chicago, where 1,400 men, "the great majority Americans by birth and almost all of them voters," have been this winter sleeping in the stone corridors, stands the Chamber of Commerce Building, thirteen stories high. This great building cost \$800,000. The lot which it covers is worth over \$1,000,000! A few blocks from where the New York World is today distributing free bread, land has been sold since the bread distribution began at the rate of over \$12,000,000 an acre! As for the remotest outskirts, who has not heard of the mad rush for the Cherokee Strip?

If there are any who do not see the relation of these facts, it is because they have become accustomed to think of labor as deriving employment from capital, instead of, which is the true and natural relation, capital being the product and tool of labor. The very term "scarcity of employment," and its opposite, "scarcity of labor," come to us from a state of society in which the idea of labor employing itself directly on land had been forgotten. The primary suggestion of "scarcity of employment " is that the supply of labor for hire is in excess of the demand for its purchase. But the intervention of an employer by no means alters the relation between labor and land. As the price that labor must pay for land increases, the more difficult it becomes for laborers to employ themselves, and the less of the products of their labor can they retain; hence the larger the proportion of laborers forced to seek the wages of an employer, and the lower the wages to which their competition with each other drives them. While, on the other hand, the demand for labor by employers -- those at least who hire labor in order to sell its products, -- is determined in largest part by the demands of those who draw their purchasing power from

what they get by their labor, since they are and always must be the great majority of any people. Thus the same increase in the price that labor must pay for land, which increases the supply of labor offered for hire, and decreases the wages it can ask, lessens also the demand of employers for such labor and the wages they can pay. So that, whether we begin at the right or the wrong end, any analysis brings us at last to the conclusion that the opportunities of finding employment and the rate of all wages depend ultimately upon the freedom of access to land; the price that labor must pay for its use.

"Scarcity of employment" is a comparatively new complaint in the United States. In our earlier times it was never heard of or thought of. There was "scarcity of employment" in Europe, but on this side of the Atlantic the trouble -- so it was deemed by a certain class -- was "scarcity of labor." It was because of this "scarcity of labor" that negroes were imported from Africa and indentured apprentices from the Old Country, that men who could not pay their passage sold their labor for a term of years to get here, and that that great stream of immigration from the Old World that has done so much to settle this continent set in. Now, why was there "scarcity of employment" on one side of the Atlantic and "scarcity of labor" on the other? What was the cause of this difference, of which all other social and political differences were but consequences? Adam Smith saw it, and in his "Wealth of Nations" states it, but it did not need an Adam Smith for that, as everyone who knew anything of the two countries knew it. It was, that in this country land was cheap and easy to get, while in Europe land was dear and hard to get. Land has been steadily growing dear in the United States, and as a consequence we hear no longer of "scarcity of labor." We hear now of "scarcity of employment."

In the first quarter of this century an educated and thoughtful Englishman, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, visited this country. He saw its great resources, and noted the differences between the English-speaking society growing up here and that to which he had been used. Viewing everything from the standpoint of a class accustomed to look on the rest of mankind as created for their benefit, 'what he deemed the great social and economic disadvantage of the United States was "the scarcity of labor." It was to this he traced the rudeness of even what he styled the upper class, its want of those refinements, enjoyments, and delicacies of life common to the aristocracy of England. How could an English gentleman emigrate to a country

where labor was so dear that he might actually have to black his own boots; so dear that even the capitalist might have to work, and no one could count on a constant supply ready to accept as a boon any opportunity to perform the most menial, degrading, and repulsive services? Mr. Wakefield was not a man to note facts without seeking their connection. He saw that this "scarcity of labor" came from the cheapness of land where the vast area of the public domain was open for settlement at nominal prices. A man of his class and time, without the slightest question that land was made to be owned by landlords, and laborers were made to furnish a supply of labor for the upper classes, he was yet a man of imagination. He saw the future before the English-speaking race in building up new nations in what were yet the waste spaces of the earth. But he wished those new nations to be socially, politically, and economically newer Englands; not to be settled as the United States had been, from the "lower classes" alone, but to contain from the first a proper proportion of the "upper classes" as well. He saw that "scarcity of employment" would in time succeed "scarcity of labor" even in countries like the United States by the growth of speculation in land; but he did not want to wait for that in the newer Britains which his imagination pictured. He proposed at once to produce such salutary "scarcity of employment" in new colonies as would give cheap and abundant labor, by a governmental refusal to sell public land, save at a price so high as to prevent the poorer from getting land, thus compelling them to offer their labor for hire.

This was the essential part of what was once well known as the Wakefield plan of colonization. It is founded on a correct theory. In any country, however new and vast, it would be possible to change "scarcity of labor" into "scarcity of employment" by increasing the price put on the use of land. If three families settled a virgin continent, one family could command the services of the others as laborers for hire just as fully as though they were its chattel slaves, if it was accorded the ownership of the land and could put its own price on its use. Wakefield proposed only that land should be held at what he called "a sufficient price" -- that is, a price high enough to keep wages in new colonies only a little higher than wages in the mother-country, and to produce not actual inability to get employment on the part of laborers, but only such difficulty as would keep them tractable, and ready to accept what from his standpoint were reasonable wages. Yet it is evident that it would only require a somewhat greater

increase in the price of land to go beyond this point and to bring about in the midst of abundant natural opportunities for the employment of labor, the phenomena of laborers vainly seeking employment. Now, in the United States we have not attempted to create "scarcity of employment" by Wakefield's plan. But we have made haste by sale and gift to put the public domain in the hands of private owners, and thus allowed speculation to bring about more quickly and effectually than he could have anticipated, more than Wakefield aimed at. The public domain is now practically gone; land is rising to European prices, and we are at last face to face with social difficulties which in the youth of men of my time we were wont to associate with "the effete monarchies of the Old World." Today, as the last census reports show, the majority of American farmers are rack-rented tenants, or hold under mortgage, the first form of tenancy; and the great majority of our people are landless men, without right to employ their own labor and without stake in the land they still foolishly speak of as their country. This is the reason why the army of the unemployed has appeared among us, why pauperism has already become chronic, and why in the tramp we have in more dangerous type the proletariat of ancient Rome.

These recurring spasms of business stagnation; these long-drawn periods of industrial depression, common to the civilized world, do not come from our treatment of money; are not caused and are not to be cured by changes of tariffs. Protection is a robbery of labor, and what is called free trade would give some temporary relief, but speculation in land would only set in the stronger, and at last labor and capital would again resist, by partial cessation, the blackmail demanded for their employment in production, and the same round would be run again. There is but one remedy, and that is what is now known as the single-tax -- the abolition of all taxes upon labor and capital, and of all taxes upon their processes and products, and the taking of economic rent, the unearned increment which now goes to the mere appropriator, for the payment of public expenses. Charity can merely demoralize and pauperize, while that indirect form of charity, the attempt to artificially "make work" by increasing public expenses and by charity woodyards and sewing-rooms, is still more dangerous. If, in this sense, work is to be made, it can be made more quickly by dynamite and kerosene.

But there is no need for charity; no need for "making work." All that is needed is to remove the restrictions that prevent the natural

demand for the products of work from availing itself of the natural supply. Remove them today, and every unemployed man in the country could find for himself employment tomorrow, and his "effective demand" for the things he desires would infuse new life into every subdivision of business and industry, even that of the dentist, the preacher, the magazine writer, or the actor.

The country is suffering from "scarcity of employment." But let anyone today attempt to employ his own labor or that of others, whether in making two blades of grass grow where one grew before, or in erecting a factory, and he will at once meet the speculator to demand of him an unnatural price for the land he must use, and the tax-gatherer to fine him for his act in employing labor as if he had committed a crime. The common-sense way to cure "scarcity of employment" is to take taxes off the products and processes of employment and to impose in their stead the tax that would end speculation in land.

But, it will be said, this is not quick enough. On the contrary, it is quicker than anything else. Even the public recognition of its need, by but a part of the intelligence and influence that is now devoted to charity appeals and schemes, would have such an effect upon the speculative price of land as to at once set labor and capital to work.

This is not "mere theory." It is theory to which all experience testifies. New Zealand is today the one country which enjoys anything like prosperity in the midst of a universal depression. While population is leaving New South Wales and Victoria, and, in the search for cheap land, people are even emigrating to Paraguay, more than six thousand families have settled in New Zealand since the passage of the Ballance Act, a partial application of the single-tax principle.

## What We Stand For<sup>16</sup>

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What we aim at is the abolition of poverty. We propose to accomplish this by abolishing injustice, and our particular aim is to abolish that fundamental injustice which deprives so many human creatures of their natural right to the land which the Lord their God has given them. The relation between man and the planet he inhabits is fundamental, and the laws which affect the tenure of land, the relation between man and the land on which all must live, are the most important of all laws. We do not mean to say that there are not many other wrongs to be righted, that there are not many other things to do, but we do say that the fundamental injustice which deprives men of their natural right to the element from which and on which all must live is most important, and is the one with which we ought to begin. Until we do away with that injustice we cannot abolish minor wrongs or make minor improvements that will effect any permanent good. We do not say that this is the only thing to do, but we say this is the first thing to do.

We propose to establish equality between men with relation to the element on which and from which they must live; not by dividing the land up into equal pieces; not by taking land as the formal property of the state and renting it out; not by taking from anybody any land that he now has, but simply so changing our system of taxation as to abolish all taxes now levied upon labor and the products of labor and take by taxation for public purposes that value which attaches to land by reason of the growth of the community.

We do not propose to interfere with the rights of property. On the contrary, we are sticklers for the rights of property. What a man makes by his own exertion, whether of hand or of brain, that we hold to be his against all the world. If a man plows a field and plants a crop, we say that he alone is entitled to reap it. If a man builds a house he ought to have it and all of it; and we say that it is unjust and a violation of the sacred rights of property when our tax gatherers come down and say to a man because he has cultivated his soil, because he has built a house, because he has produced or accumulated wealth, therefore the state demands a certain portion of it from him. We say that such a system is unjust and that not one penny should be taken from a man because he has been industrious and thrifty.

We propose to leave to labor its entire product; we propose to take for the use of the community that value that is produced by no

individual, that value which attaches to land, not by reason of what its owner does, but by reason of the growth and improvement of the whole community. We say that that is just, that it will give to the community what belongs to the community and leave entirely to the individual what rightfully belongs to the individual; and being just, we say that it is wise.

We say that it is bad policy to tax men for what they add to the common stock of wealth; that he is a benefactor who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before; that the man who builds a house is doing something not merely for himself, but for the whole community; and that it is Stupid to tax men for building houses, or cultivating fields, or erecting factories, or building ships, or doing anything whatever that adds to the common stock of wealth; that the state should encourage industry. Not discourage it; that no tax should be laid upon the industry that produces or the thrift that accumulates; that in this great fund that comes from nothing that the individual does lies the proper, the intended means of supplying all public wants. That fund we propose to take by abolishing our present taxes and laying a single tax upon the value of land irrespective of improvements, increasing it as far and as fast as we can until it shall take as nearly as may be the whole value of the land.

Look in whatever direction you choose and see what benefits will spring from this simple change. How much fraud it will prevent, what temptation to bribery and corruption it will avoid ... Now the enormous advantage of the system of taxation that we propose is that the tax can be certainly assessed, easily collected, and will give no room for much of the fraud that is now carried on, and will not offer the inducement to evasion that now exists.

Land can't run away; it can't be hidden; it lies out of doors; its value can be estimated with more certainty than any other value. And in putting taxes upon that single item we shall get rid of a horde of officials; we shall get rid of all these oaths that people in every direction are now required to take, of all the temptations to perjury that our present laws give, and shall raise our revenue without imposing any restriction upon production or diminishing it in the least. On the contrary, by imposing our taxes in this way we shall prevent that monopolization of natural opportunities which everywhere restricts production, and in this broad and rich country is already producing the tramp and the pauper; that monopolization of natural opportunities that makes us, in the midst of abundance and plenty, think of work as

something good in itself; which forces upon us even in the best of times the spectacle of thousands and hundred of thousands of men willing to work, anxious to work, but unable to find the opportunity to work.

There, we hold, is the cause of all labor difficulties; there, we believe, is the cause of poverty. It is not the fault of the Almighty, this horrid, bitter struggle for existence that is the lot of so many thousands today; it is not caused by the niggardliness of the Creator. He has placed here enough, and to spare, for all of us. All we have to do is to prevent monopolization; all we have to do is to secure to each one his natural right.

This simple plan of ours will utterly stop the monopolization of land by making it unprofitable. What is the temptation to the monopolization of land? Commissioner Sparks in his last report paints in very vivid colors the manner in which the public land has been appropriated by speculators and grabbers, by stretching grants, by making false entries, by everywhere getting hold of the land ahead of the settler. Why? In order to profit by the value that will begin to attach to the land as soon as there is a prospect of settlement coming.

The moment it is made certain that whenever a value shall attach itself to the land irrespective of the value produced by the labor upon it, such value will be taken for the use of the community, then the temptation to all this land grabbing will be utterly gone; and not merely will the temptation to land grabbing in the future be destroyed, but all the land that has been grabbed in the past will be released. Once tax the speculator who holds 160 acres of agricultural land vacant as heavily as the farmer who has plowed his land, has cultivated a farm and made improvements; once tax the holder of a valuable building lot as much when it is vacant as a lot of like quality with a splendid house upon it; once make sure that as the value of land increases the tax upon it shall increase likewise, and the monopolizers who all over this land are holding vacant city lots, untilled agricultural lands and unworked mines from the man who would be glad to use them, will be forced to let them go.

See how the system would operate here in New York. Our vast population is crowded together, yet one-half the area of this city is not built upon! Why? Not because there is not need for more houses; not because there are not plenty of sites for houses; but because the building sites are held by men who will not or cannot use them themselves, and will not allow those who want to use them to have access

to them unless they first pay an enormous price. The simple effect of the change in taxation which we propose would be to compel these men either to build upon those lots themselves or to sell them to somebody else who would. The moment the men who are holding land without using it shall be compelled to use it or give it up there will be an abundance of land for all who want to use it. I don't mean to say that under those circumstances every man would go and build himself a house, or that all of those unemployed men throughout the country would take up farms and open mines; but this I do say, that enough could and would make use of these natural opportunities (i.e., land) for employment to relieve the glut in the labor market; taking themselves out of the fierce competition for wages of an employer, they would not only employ themselves, but in doing so—in producing wealth of some kind they would be creating a demand for the labor of others in producing. In that way it would be possible that any man willing to work should be able to find abundant opportunity to work; and the setting of this vast force of unemployed men at productive labor would create a demand for commodities that would give new vigor to every branch of business.

These, in very brief outline, are the doctrines for which we stand.

## Notes:

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- <sup>1</sup> An address delivered in the Opera House, Burlington, Iowa, April 1, 1885
- <sup>2</sup> Address in Metropolitan Hall, San Francisco, 1890.
- <sup>3</sup> A lecture delivered before the students of the University of California, Mar 9, 1877
- <sup>4</sup> An Address delivered 28 April 1889 in the City Hall, Glasgow, Scotland.
- <sup>5</sup> An Address delivered on 8 May 1887 at the second Public Meeting of the Anti-Poverty Society at the Academy of Music, New York, USA
- <sup>6</sup> An address delivered before the Young Men's Hebrew Association of San Francisco, USA
- <sup>7</sup> An Address delivered on 11 July 1889 at Toomebridge, County Derry, Ireland
- <sup>8</sup> A Contribution to *Once a Week*, New York, March 1894
- <sup>9</sup> An Article published in *The Christian Advocate*, 1890
- <sup>10</sup> An Editorial reprinted from *The Standard*
- <sup>11</sup> Delivered in San Francisco on July 4, 1877. Afterwards incorporated in *Progress and Poverty* under the chapter "The Central Truth".
- <sup>12</sup> An Address delivered on 18 February 1884 in the City Hall, Glasgow, Scotland
- <sup>13</sup> First published in *Overland Monthly*, vol.1, October 1868, No.4
- <sup>14</sup> An Address delivered at the Ninth Church Congress of the Episcopal Church at Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., 8th October, 1884.
- <sup>15</sup> *The North American Review*, February, 1894. pp 175-184
- <sup>16</sup> A speech delivered in November 1887