

## A Superior Race

By THOMAS N. ASHTON

“THE land that will produce luscious fruits, beautiful flowers, useful cereals,” said Aristotle 300 years before Christ came to teach His principles, “will also produce a greater crop; that is, it will produce superior men and women, because man is a partner of all he sees and hears and grows through what he does, and the victories over unkind Nature are his.”

Little did this teacher of Alexander the Great dream that the day would come when man, by means of private appropriation of public land-values would plunge illiterate humanity into such miserable poverty that luscious fruits would lie rotting in the shade of the trees which bore them, whilst man and woman went hungry for fruit; that weeds would grow in wild and rank abandon because the building site on which they flourished then appeared to be less valuable for taxation purposes; that cereals, lacking a market among hungry men and their families, would be burned for fuel.

Little did Aristotle dream that as humanity advanced in the arts and sciences the products of its ingenuity, labor and co-operation would be taken from it in the form of monopoly rent and taxes; that rather than a race of superior men and women there would be driven into economic slavery boys and girls from the age of six years and upwards whom, as an eye-witness of national fame avers, death sets free “inside of four years”. Laboring from six in the morning until seven in the evening, “these weazened pigmies” munched in silence their meagre lunches and then “toppled over in sleep on the floor”. The superior race envisioned by Aristotle proved to be, in part, mill operatives consisting of “dozens of little girls of, say, seven years of age wearing only one garment, a linsey-woolsey dress”; sleep-locked little tots who, at the expiration of the lunch period, were shouted at, shaken, cuffed and even kicked into wakefulness to resume their dulled watch for broken threads in the spinning frames—a long, weary watch carried on in monotonous repetition as little feet ceaselessly paced up and down the alleys between rumbling machines—a terrific rumble which “reduced nervous sensation in a few months to the minimum”—a deadened nervous system in which “the child does not think, he ceases to suffer—memory is as dead as hope: no more does he long for the green fields, the running streams, the freedom of the woods, and the companionship of all the wild, free things that run, climb, fly, swim or burrow . . . memory is seared, physical vitality is at such low ebb that he ceases to suffer. Nature puts a short limit on torture by sending insensibility.”

This is the true picture of Aristotle’s superior race as it existed a few decades ago in these United States. If there be alive today any of these seven or eight year old tots who, having worked in a mill a year, “could never learn to read”, they now should be in the prime of life—well under two score years and ten. We wonder if the report of the writer on sociology accurately forecast the future of these little boys and girls—“a year in the mills and he loses his capacity to play; and the child that cannot play, cannot learn.”

The same old tax system totters on. Publicly-created land-values are garnered into private pockets; privately-created wealth is publicly confiscated by legal sanction, legal decree and legal rigmarole—wealth which comes practically in its entirety from the none-too-large wages of ninety-five per cent of our population—wages which now are being augmented by WPA and PWA jobs created for many millions of unemployed men and women whom Aristotle once visualized as a superior race which was to come long after the ancient and venerable philosopher had made his last observation.

In this land which is thought to be “the land of the free and the home of the brave” there might have been the superior race in fact which it pleased the old-time philosopher to contemplate. Ten or fifteen millions of unemployed men and women have become superior in one or two respects—superior in the art of doing unnecessary “projects”—superior in the art of doing them over again, and all because our tax system—cast in plaster of Paris “precedents” born in the oppressive dignity of “law”—has hobble-hitched and hog-tied industry until it palpitates back and forth between tax-assessor sweats and labor-union chills.

If there be alive today any of these tiny tots we wonder what contribution they have made to Aristotle’s superior race. We wonder if the children of these children are boys and girls of promising physique—well educated—and ready to advance this superior race one more generation toward superlative superiority. Or are the children of these children yet in the aftermath of man’s inhumanity to children?

“I thought to lift one of the little toilers to ascertain his weight. Straightway through his thirty-five pounds of skin and bones there ran a tremor of fear, and he struggled toward a broken thread. I attracted his attention by a touch, and offered him a silver dime. He looked at me dumbly, from a face that might have belonged to a man of sixty, so furrowed, tightly drawn and full of pain it was. He did not reach for the money—he did not know what it was. I tried to stroke his head and caress his cheek. My smile of friendship meant nothing to him—he shrank from my touch, as though he expected punishment. A caress was unknown to this

child, sympathy had never been his portion, and the love of a mother who only a short time before held him in her arms, had all been forgotten in the whirl of wheels and the awful silence of a din that knows no respite.

"There were dozens of just such children in this particular mill. A physician who was with me said that they would all be dead, probably in two years, and their places filled with others—there were plenty more.<sup>1</sup> Pneumonia carries off most of them. Their systems are ripe for disease, and when it comes, there is no rebound—no response. Medicine simply does not act—nature is whipped, beaten, discouraged, and the child sinks into a stupor, and dies."

If it is God's purpose to let us discover in ourselves the depths of our depravity—the stench of our social stinks—the degree of hardness in our hearts—the verity of our vanity in improving upon the laws of Nature—the pomposity of our professorial piffle—the banal ballyhoo of our stuttering statesmen—the petrified culture of our pretentious aristocracy—if all these discoveries are His purpose then our stupid slowness in awakening to our inhumanity o'er tops all other weaknesses, greed and avarice, poll-parrot pretensions and self-centeredness which consumes our days from birth to death.

Occasionally there is a commotion among the well-battered faces of those who cling tenaciously to things-as-they-are. Occasionally someone takes up the battle in behalf of the economic slaves who dully look with suspicion upon the pioneers who would save these slaves who have been led to believe that "the poor ye have always with you" was a command, not a warning. Occasionally a Luther, a Savonarola, an Emerson, a Garrison, a George, a McGlynn has stepped forth with vehement protest against this economic servitude only to be classed as a renegade by those who believe that poverty is essential to dividends and to "capital".

In 1900 the superior race envisioned by Aristotle, nearly twenty-five centuries before, easily could have marshalled, in one small area of this nation, "twenty thousand pigmy bondsmen, half naked, half starved, yellow, weazened, deformed in body, with drawn faces that show spirits too dead to weep, too hopeless to laugh, too pained to feel." Today ten or fifteen millions of fathers and mothers, maturing sons and daughters, easily can dwarf in numbers these twenty thousand pigmies as they form an army of unemployed—dwarf them in numbers, but not in shame, as the victims of a vicious tax system which buys the so-called culture for a vainglorious aristocracy which proudly bears a coat-of-arms in the sign of the almighty dollar.

The sweat-shops of Hester Street—the depravity and degradation of Whitechapel—the Ghetto of Venice—the mines of Siberia—these have been the incubators of Aristotle's superior race.

## Rent in Jurisprudence

By JACOB SCHWARTZMAN

ALL Georgeists know—or should know—the law of rent as formulated by Ricardo, and since accepted by all economists of note. In *Progress and Poverty* the law of rent is stated thus:

"The rent of land is determined by the excess of its produce over that which the same application can secure from the least productive land in use."

In this article, I intend to discuss not the law of rent, but the law *on* rent, i. e., the definitions and functions of rent as interpreted and decided by authoritative legal minds.

The definition of rent as given by Henry George is as follows:

"Rent is that part of wealth which is given for the use of land."

The following are the definitions of rent by accepted authorities of the legal profession:

"Rent (Lat. *reditus*, a return). A return or compensation for the possession of some corporeal inheritance. A certain profit, either in money, provisions, or labor, issuing out of lands and tenements, in return for their use.

"The compensation, either in money, provisions, chattels, or labor, received by the owner of the soil from the occupant thereof." (Bouvier's Law Dictionary)

The late Professor John H. Easterday, in *The Law of Real Property I*, 1932 edition, pp. 51-52, defines rent as follows:

"A rent is a right to a certain profit issuing periodically out of lands and tenements.

"A rent may be created either by conveying land to another person and reserving the rent to the grantor or his heirs, but not to a stranger, or by granting the rent to another person and retaining the land. . . .

"Care must be exercised by the student at all times to note the exact sense in which the term 'rent' is used. The right to demand a profit should never be confused with the profit itself."

Formerly, it was possible not only to sell land, and thus to realize capitalized rent, but also to reserve a perpetual rent in the land conveyed. Such rent inhered in the land, and was forever payable to the original grantor, his heirs, or to any person or persons to whom such an everlasting right was sold. It is interesting to note that while the New York State Constitution abolished such rent, so far as agricultural lands are concerned, this rent in perpetuity may still be conveyed in the cases of city structures or lots, mining lands, etc.

A tenant's liability for rent is not affected by condemnation of part of the leased premises; but where the estate