

BUSINESS, A TUB WITHOUT A BOTTOM

The relative values of a tub with a bottom and a tub without a bottom need not be argued with a washerwoman. But it takes all sorts of arguments to demonstrate to the business man the superiority of a tub with a bottom over a bottomless tub.

The nation is now experiencing a period of unusual prosperity, so we are told. But the average person is no better off as a result of this increased business activity. Of course, he experiences the pleasing sensation of feeling more money pass through his hands, but there's the rub—it passes through, for his tub has no bottom.

The labouring man partakes not of this flood of prosperity, for he pays more for his living and whatever entertainment he enjoys than his increase of wages justifies.

The salaried man is even worse off than before, if possible, for everything has advanced except his salary; and if that has advanced at all it has not kept apace with the increased cost of articles of everyday need.

The butcher, the baker and candlestick maker feel the flow of prosperity pouring in, but, alas, also through the tub. The only person actually retaining any of the benefit of prosperity is the monopolist of some natural gift, the landlord.

The only goods that have increased in price but not in cost are land and land products. Why? For the simple reason that land costs nothing, because it is not now, never was nor never will be the product of man. Hence the only fellow who has a bottom in his tub is the landlord. All other men have tubs without bottoms.

As long as there is a monopoly of land, just so long will all the benefits from businesses, of human industry and enterprise, empty into the landlord's tub.

The landlord should not be classed with business men, for he is not a producer. All he does is to sit tight and see all the bottomless tubs empty into his *one* tub with a bottom. If he has any business at all, it is to see that his monopoly on the bottom is not disturbed.

If business men wish to feel true business prosperity; to see every tub hold what it gathers of the waters of prosperity; to see the wonderful energy and industry of the world's workers bear fruit that they may enjoy, they should devise some way to put a bottom in every business tub.

As a matter of course, the natural bottom of every tub of industry is the land. Why should not every business have a bottom? Why should there be more tubs than bottoms? Why should only one class of men own all the bottoms? Why should they be encouraged to withhold them from tubs that need them? Echo answers, Why?

Why have oil, coal and steel advanced? Because they are products of land. Why the advance in bread, meat and clothing? Because they are products of land. What benefit is it to the labourer, hireling and merchant that these things be advanced? What advantage is it to the lawyer, doctor or minister? To the teacher, author or artist? The advancing price of land and rent absorbs it all. The only tub that gathers the waters of prosperity is the landlord's.

Let us do the rational and just thing: put a bottom in every business tub. Land is the basis of wealth and the natural support of each and every business alike. One man's effort is as much dependable upon this support as another's. Any move in the direction of putting a bottom in every business tub, any effort to put business directly on its natural basis, is sane, sound and safe for men to make.

Distribute the one big bottom upon which all human effort must rest by taxing the land to its full value, and freeing business and all human effort from the penalty of tax altogether. Every tub could then stand on its own bottom.

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THE SOCIAL SORROWS OF SCOTLAND

Land Values and Slums

The social sorrows of Scotland, and the remedies that must come, afforded scope on 29th October for observations, trenchant and arresting, by the Rev. Dr. Norman Maclean, St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, the first Murtle lecturer at Aberdeen for the present session. "After Armageddon" was the title he selected. His audience entirely filled the Mitchell Hall at Marischal College, and represented a wide range of academic and business life.

Dr. Maclean, in the course of his address, said that our brothers who had gone forth to fight for the rights of little nations, and right joyfully laid down their lives, were men who had lost their rights in their own country. They and their fathers, in building up an Empire, lost their own land. Out of noisome slums they went forth to fight; but it was not for the perpetuation of those conditions which had enslaved them that they were fighting. After Armageddon the people must set themselves to realise that ideal Scotland of the heart's desire, wherein the slum-dweller and the slum-infected would no longer be found—wherein their cities would be cities of God, and their straths and valleys no longer a desolation.

The greatest of the evils with which they were called upon to wrestle was that of alcoholic intemperance. Their first duty was to root out and destroy that evil. The source of the power of alcohol was the condition of social misery in which multitudes of the people lived. As civilisation developed and wealth accumulated, so social misery increased. The reason was that in the past eighty years the social life of Scotland had been revolutionised. A hundred years ago Scotland was mainly an agricultural country. To-day four-fifths of her people were massed in cities, and half of the population was concentrated in Glasgow and a small area round about it. The people had been driven from the clean countryside: when sheep or game yielded a better revenue men had to go forth weeping, and find in a slum a place to live.

In Glasgow, a total population of 619,000—60 per cent. of the whole—was doomed to live under conditions which rendered all privacy impossible. The medical officer of health in Glasgow had declared that 10,000 houses there were absolutely unfit for human habitation; but a doomed population must go on living in them, because there was no other accommodation to be found. The children perished in the first year of life at the rate of 200 per 1,000; whereas, in the west-end the death-rate was only 50. Out of every three young men from the slums, one was rejected as physically unfit to bear arms. In the process of translation and disinheritance, the people had lost, not only the land, but their bodies. Ten millions of the people went shivering through city streets, on the verge of want.

Alcoholic drunkenness was a State-regulated monopoly for narcotising humanity into submission to virtual slavery. When enquiry was made into the cause which prevented decent accommodation for those people, it was found that it was a question of the cost of building sites. The bedrock of the misery was land values. In the cities the cost of building sites was so great that it was impossible to build any houses that would pay, except noisome tenements. The people's labour increased the value of the land from £50 an acre to £11,000; and the value they created was turned against them, and made an instrument by which the possibility of decent houses was denied them. Until the evils which flowed from the inflated price of land were rectified, until the community was restored to the ownership of those values which the community itself created, the nation could never rectify those social conditions which engendered the misery in which intemperance found its breeding-place