

After a little further conversation with Allegori, who proved himself a most agreeable and intelligent companion, the gentlemen withdrew, and left the Hospital. Re-entering their carriage, Courtesie gave the motorman instructions to make a general tour of the city and finally to stop at the Public Treasurer's Department.

*(To be Continued.)*

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## THE COMMON WEALTH DEVOTED TO PUBLIC USES WOULD MAKE POSSIBLE THE ABOLISHMENT OF ALL TAXATION.

*(For the Review)*

By EDWARD HOWELL PUTNAM.

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It was unfortunate that the method proposed by Henry George for collecting the common wealth of society was called a tax—the "Single Tax." Everyone who comprehends the "Single Tax" doctrine will perceive that the appropriation for public uses of the common wealth of the world is not a tax at all. In saying this, I merely repeat what many others have said. Why, then, should we, who understand the question, go on calling it a tax?

The sooner we quit it the better. A tax is a burden to the producer. It is not a burden to any one but the producer. To illustrate: If the government were to collect from thieves, say, ten per cent. of their filchings, it would impose no burden; nay, it could not be called a burden (in the economic sense) to the thief if all his plunder were taken from him. He did not produce it. He imposed a burden upon his victims when he robbed them. If the money were taken from him and devoted to the public use, it would lighten by so much the burden to society in general, the victims of the thief sharing in the benefit.

Or, again: Suppose that the unlawful railroad rebates secured by Standard Oil had been taken by government and devoted to the public use, would that have put a burden upon Standard Oil? Certainly not. Standard Oil did not produce the sum represented by the rebate. It merely extorted from others that much, to which it had no title, in equity, law or morals. It gave no value in exchange. To take it for the public use would be merely to distribute to society in general so much that had been taken without valid warrant from the individual producers who, having sustained the burden of exploitation, would now share in the benefits of the distribution.

Mark—the only burden in this connection was imposed by Standard Oil, upon the exploited individuals. And that burden is partly removed when government reclaims the money and uses it for the public good.

If it were practicable for government to do all this (in respect to such law-

less corporations, thieves, etc.) the practice would manifestly benefit society generally, lightening by so much the necessary burden of taxation, while putting no burden whatsoever upon anybody. But who would think of calling the government's part in the matter an act of taxation? Nobody.

Now, the individuals to whom, by virtue of social convention—law—the common wealth of the world is diverted, though they are not to be classed, morally, with Standard Oil, thieves, or any other outlaws, but on the contrary, are presumably innocent of wrong intent or action, nevertheless, from the standpoint of economics, they are in precisely the same category—they do not produce the common wealth which the law diverts to them. And if government take it from them and apply it to public use, it imposes thereby no burden upon them. It prevents them from appropriating to their individual uses the common wealth, and, distributing it to general society by defraying the expense of government therewith, abolishing entirely the burden of taxation.

The "Single Tax" is not a tax at all. It is merely the simplest possible method for conserving the common wealth for the benefit of society in common.

The common wealth—that wealth which naturally and of right belongs to the people in common—is the surest, most dependable of all funds. It increases with the increase of population. Every advance in productive power augments it. The birth of each human being adds to its sum. The life of each succeeding generation not only increases, but multiplies the sum of the common wealth. The common wealth to-day is amply sufficient to support in comfort every human being who, by any kind of natural misfortune is unable to support himself, and to raise to a condition of splendid affluence the millions who are perennially struggling in penury. To him who understands, it becomes gloriously manifest that Almighty God ordained in the beginning that it should be so. That more and more with the development of human society, the common wealth should augment, until the voluntary, enthusiastic, happy industry of men, in self-interest, should perpetually (and inevitably) produce a common wealth fund so ample as to insure comfortable existence to every human being.

Our problem is: The equitable distribution of this fund. Its solution depends upon the co-operation of the public. But we are handicapped in propagandizing by the fact that the mere naming of our proposed method produces a false impression, and repels. If it be answered that the name "Single Tax" has been in exclusive use for so long a time that we who proclaim the philosophy would find it extremely difficult to substitute another, I shall beg to ask: What of the alternative? For either we must assume the burden of expressing ourselves with precision, or else we must ask the public to "take us as we mean, rather than as we say!" which latter, it seems to me, would be preposterous.

And if we renounce the term "Single Tax," what shall we fix upon to take its place? It is a difficult question, and not to be lightly answered. "The common wealth" would pretty accurately indicate, it seems to me, the fund in question. "Rent" will not do, for that is an old term, and, popularly, too

inclusive. The thing we propose to do is to apply the common wealth to public uses in lieu of taxation. I shall not, at this time, propose a name. I think I have not overstepped the bounds of modesty in my attempt to impress upon the minds of my fellow Single Taxers the urgent need of change, and I shall be glad to leave the question at this point in abler hands.

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## LAND MONOPOLY, THE CURSE OF THE CENTURIES.

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I—Poverty Caused by the Denial of the Common Right to the Use of the Earth.

II—Rise and Growth of Land Monopoly in Great Britain and Ireland.

(For the Review)

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By H. MARTIN WILLIAMS.\*

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### I

That there is increasing poverty amidst abounding plenty; that there are hungry men, women and children in a land teeming with grain and all the fruits of the earth; that there are hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of men, able and willing to work, in enforced idleness in a country which, under natural conditions, affords opportunities for labor and productive enterprise superior to that of any country on earth, are conditions which should challenge the earnest attention of all lovers of liberty and justice, and of all who desire to see "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people," endure among the nations of the earth.

These conditions are not confined to any clime or country. They are as wide-spread as civilization. They are apparently as deep seated as the institutions of human government. Where civilization has made its greatest triumphs where human invention and human skill have done most to economize labor and strength, and increase the productive power of man; where the refining influences of education have been most potent; where the arts and sciences have done most to improve and elevate the human mind, there, strange to say, we find these conditions intensified.

Beside the greatest wealth we find the most bitter, biting poverty.

Beside the greatest moral and intellectual refinement, we find the deepest moral and intellectual degradation.

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\*H. Martin Williams, who has written a series of papers on land monopoly for the *SINGLE TAX REVIEW*, of which this is the first installment, is one of the "old guard" in the movement which began with the publication of *Progress and Poverty* in 1879. He has not ceased during this period his interest and activity in the work. We are glad to be privileged to print this result of Mr. Williams mature study of conditions based on statistics he has carefully collected.—Editor *SINGLE TAX REVIEW*.