

Great Britain had totally wiped out its import duties and collected its revenue entirely from its internal revenue duties, while its working classes might be slightly benefited, it is doubtful whether its "submerged tenth," or "fifth," as it is in some sections, would be helped.

What is the basis of the instinctive shrinking which all workers feel for labor saving machinery and for freedom of imports? Is it not the instinctive recognition that they have only labor to sell and that whatever economizes labor is cheapening it in the interest of the landlords? And as free trade is at bottom a labor saving device may that not be the reason that the masses everywhere shun it? May we even go a step farther and say that while free trade is a logical part of our logical system based on the recognition of the natural rights of all in the land, that it is not a logical part of our topsy-turvy system, which makes the few the lords of the many by giving the few control of the fundamental source of life?

In the last analysis, it is only those who own the earth, who can create effective demand; when their needs are satisfied, unemployment begins. Of course they need many to minister to them in intermediate ways but they are the apex of our inverted social pyramid. Every labor saving device tends to satisfy their own and their servants needs with less labor. No matter how their slaves may strive to stimulate their jaded appetites satiety is finally reached and then comes "over-production."

Every time we approach the subject of social maladjustment, we come away with the same feeling that no reform however just or logical in itself can be other than a mockery or a curse, until the "primal, eldest curse," the exclusion of so large a proportion of mankind from its rights in the earth, commands the assent of the people.

### IS POLITICAL ECONOMY SCIENCE OR PURE FAKE?

A "science" which its votaries refuse to define, and sometimes confess is undefinable, whose terms hardly two of its professors agree to define in the same way; a "science" whose followers confess is without fundamental principles—this is the thing that is being taught in our universities and colleges by men who are getting real money for it.

In place of statements applicable to a science or body of principles we learn (The Economics of Enterprize, Herbert Joseph Davenport) that "it is superlatively important to recognize that a complete acceptance of the private and acquisitive point of view is the only procedure possible in the analysis of the phenomena of society organized upon lines of individual activity for private gain," in which, behind a wall of words we may descry the final abandonment of any theory of a natural law of distribution.

Economics consisting merely of the veriest bric-a-brac of disconnected notions, has no fixed place as a territory to be explored. It is an interchangeable term for any intellectual adventure into the realms of Finance, Politics or Agriculture by one calling himself a political economist. That makes it political economy. There are no principles. Prof. Newcomb himself says that there are no economic principles to save statesmen the labor of working out each case on its own merits.

This is an admirable caution of safety and convenience, and avoids a world of trouble. If Galileo had said, "There are no principles of astronomy which will save theologians from working out their problems on their own merits," he would have escaped the rack, for he would have had nothing to retract. And if similarly before the Inquisition of public opinion the political economists be cited they can all, individually and severally say, laying their hands upon what serves them for a heart: "We have announced no principles; we have nothing to retract."

Not only is political economy *not* defined, but (such is the melancholy outlook) it *never* will be defined. Bonamy Price, of Oxford, in reply to the question, "What is Economics," replied, "A precise answer will never be given." Think of professors of a science that will never be defined. But again we ask why should they get real money for it?

These teachers in universities endowed by privilege are cautious to a fault. Their attitude resembles somewhat that of the Indian teacher on a reservation, who, when asked by the school board if the earth was round or flat, replied: "Some teach that it is round, and some teach that it is flat, but as for me I teach as the parents prefer."

But these professors and writers on economics keep up the pretence of dealing with problems that are of interest to society, and take themselves very seriously. They pay each other compliments that confer philosophic distinction. Thus we read that Professor Clark is "rational and monistic," while Professor Patten is "pragmatic and pluralistic." (Review of Professor Patten's *Reconstruction of Economic Thought, Political Science Quarterly*, March 1913.) They make extravagant claims for one another: Thus Professor Patten actually thinks that the rise of Socialism in this country is due "in large part" to Professor Seligman's "Economic Interpretation of History," calling it the "Bible of Socialism." This in view of the fact that there are, perhaps, more Socialists in Oshkosh than the total number of readers of Professor Seligman's combined works. Professor Seligman himself hands out compliments of this kind, *ad libitum ad nauseum*. Note these few paragraphs among many: "Newman is well known as one of the most prominent writers on finance." Seligman's *Essay on Taxation*, page 545.

"The first volume of this great work (Adolph Wagner's *Science of Finance*) 'is familiar to all students.'" Ibid, page 546. "Pierson's treatment is characterized by broad touches; he is one of the

first to attempt a comprehensive theory of incidence combining Schaffles's amortization theory with some more eclectic views." Ibid 565.

In the name of the Prophet, Figs!

---

### THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW YORK STATE SINGLE TAX LEAGUE

---

The Third Annual Conference of the New York State League met in the parlors of the Union Square Hotel of this city on Saturday, Nov. 6, and the morning session was called to order by President Sague at ten o'clock. A letter was read from General Gorgas, and another from Chancellor Day, of the Syracuse University, offering accommodations in the university for next year's Conference.

Reports of activities in various counties of the State were read from Mr. E. C. Clarke, who reported for Otsego; Mr. Hutton, who reported for Schenectady; Prof. Lewis H. Clark, who reported for Wayne; and Mr. H. A. Jackson, of Tonawanda, who reported for Niagara County.

Mr. F. D. Silvernail, who was present in person, read a report of the activities in Buffalo by Thos. H. Work. Mrs. Katharine E. Bradley gave an account of the work in Olean, which included mention of the several lectures of James R. Brown. A local organization in Olean is under way, some forty-eight persons having interested themselves in the preliminary organization.

Dr. Thos E. Bullard, of Schuylerville, reported for Saratoga County, and Mr. F. D. Silvernail spoke briefly of activities in Lockport.

Mr. William McCabe addressed the Conference in a speech full of happy humor. He has issued a little paper in his home town in Suffolk County to arouse the voters and taxpayers of that county to the deplorable condition in the matter of assessments. Land in Suffolk County is notoriously under-assessed.

Mr. E. H. Underhill reported for the