

Too Many Taxes

AND now, gentlemen," piped the orator, "I just wish to tax your memory." "Good heavens!" exclaimed one of the audience, "has it come to that?"

"How can you buy the right to exclude at will every other creature made in God's image from sitting by this brook, treading upon this carpet of flowers or lying listening to the birds in the shade of these glorious trees—how can I sell it to you is a mystery not understood by the Indian, and dark, I must say, to me."—N. P. WILLIS, Philadelphia, 1846.

High Rents Reduce Purchasing Power

THE failure of rents to follow commodity prices in their downward course is a source of considerable worry for the retail trade. High rents, from the dealer's standpoint, work as a double-edged sword in cutting down business, according to a prominent store executive here.

Since commercial rents have not declined and in many cases actually have advanced this year, he says, the retailer is balked along this line in his endeavors to cut down overhead. On the other hand the higher rents that are being exacted for apartments and homes mean a cut in the buying power of the public. *N. Y. Times.*

Mammy Takes in Washing While Court Ponders on Her \$15,000,000 Estate

DALLAS, TEX.—"Hush yo' mouf, chile; hush up. I ain't got dat money yet. Doan' fere wid mah work."

This is how excited Gussie Taylor, negro washerwoman, is about the decision of the Louisiana Supreme Court giving her title to oil lands valued at \$15,000,000. If Federal courts uphold the Louisiana court, Gussie will be the wealthiest negro woman in the world.

A tract of land left her by her father, and, until oil was discovered on it, considered almost worthless, is now valued at between fifteen and twenty millions.

Mrs. Taylor, busy washing for "white folks," declined to be bothered with any interfering, nosey newspaper men bent on "asting foolish questions." *News Item.*

It is possible that the great end in view might be more perfectly attained by a tax absorbing for the benefit of all the people the unearned increment of land values. Still there is time-honored sanction for the wisdom of taking the half loaf while waiting for the whole. Or must the United States of America lag behind the United States of Brazil in the adoption of practical measures for the relief of house shortage?—*Dearborn Independent.*

Tax Exemption and High Land Values

THAT exemption of homes from taxation does not as a rule inure to the benefit of the people as a whole, but to the landlords as a class was strongly put in a debate in the Aldermanic council of Syracuse. Alderman Frank J. Shaughnessy, who introduced a tax exemption ordinance, said:

"I challenge anybody to show that the exemption I propose will cost the present owners of property one additional cent. The lots on which these tax free dwellings are erected are still taxable. Adjoining and neighboring property naturally increases in value as vacant lots are improved. And at the end of five years, instead of cheap vacant lots, you have valuable residential property to produce taxes. "The laboring people of the city are behind this ordinance. They want it passed."

Whether the laboring people are behind this ordinance or not, it is at least clear that they have not much to gain from it, and for this we have the word of the alderman himself.

There has been a large increase in building plans filed in New York City since the passage of the tax exemption ordinance. This is a demonstration of the effect of tax exemption and to that extent is favorable testimony to the truth for which Single Taxers contend. But it must never be forgotten that such exemption can have no far-reaching effect as long as land values are not taken in taxation. The almost immediate effect of such exemption is to increase land values.

Joseph P. Day, the well known real estate auctioneer, explains this in a recent advertisement of a sale of lots, as follows:

"Tax exemption for new housing in the City of New York has created the strongest and healthiest demand for vacant lots, within the city's limits, I have ever known in all my long experience as an auctioneer. This means that rent-payers are getting ready to buy and to build, and to become their own landlords. This means that vacant lots are going to higher levels of value."

IN chapter 8 of "The Passionate Friends," by H. G. Wells, that popular and most widely read author, says:

"It makes a wonderful history, this history of mankind as a history of labor, as a history of the perpetual attempts of an intelligent minority to get things done by other people. It does not explain how that aggression of the minority arose. . . . one begins rather with a human society that sells and barter and sustains contracts and permits land to be privately owned, and having as hastily as possible got away from that difficulty of beginnings. . . . becomes extremely convincing and illuminating."

Mr. Wells does not advance this thought to its conclusion, but he has started right in his inquiry and it is hoped will go further.