

The Pollytaxers

They prattle in a solemn way
 About "Ability to pay."
 Their little hearts are sorely grieved
 By talk of "Benefits received."
 But what they mean by either phrase
 Is hard to gather in the haze
 Of mystifying verbiage
 That issues from their gilded cage.

(People who believe that many sources of revenue should be drawn upon, may properly be called pollytaxers.)

"You can teach a parrot to say 'Just as good,' but it won't know what it means." This advertisement constantly meets the eye of the traveler on the cars in New York. It is intended as a condemnation of the policy of recommending substitutes. Similarly we find in numbers of pseudo-scientific articles on taxation, that such and such a method of taxation offends against the sacrosanct doctrine of "ability to pay." But the parrots do not know what it means. A sapient student of taxation in Winnipeg discovers that six properties in that city valued at \$1,162,600 are taxed \$27,322,00, or (horrible to relate) \$7,000 more than the net income. The net rents are stated to be only \$20,271.00. There is no attempt in stating the case, to separate value of land and buildings, and therefore we can only guess that these properties are highly valuable land and quite inconsiderable improvements. But if there are people operating a property worth the sum named and they are only getting the return specified, the sooner they cease "to cumber the earth" the better. Can it be regarded as justice or good business policy for the State to discriminate against energy and enterprise, while coddling the dog in the manger, who can't eat the hay and won't let the horses get at it? A man who seeks exemption from taxation because he does not use his opportunities fully resembles the one-eyed man, who sought admission to the circus, at half price, because he claimed he could only see half the show.

Francis A. Walker made it clear that what he meant by ability to pay was potential ability, and assuming the full use of the opportunity, not the absurd concept which has grown up around the phrase. What kind of a scientific tax system could ever be constructed if the State had to assess the citizen according to his ability to pay? Merely to ask the question is to demonstrate the absurdity of the proposal. But, alas! ability to think is even rarer in economic circles than ability to pay—and that is rare enough; any system based on ability to pay means—hell to pay.

OWEN MERRYHUE.

"THE proposition of Henry George will do more to lift humanity from the slough of poverty, crime and misery than all else; and in this I recognize one of the greatest forces working for temperance and morality."

—MISS FRANCES E. WILLARD.

The Frog Republic

REEL ONE

ESOP told the story of the frogs who became tired of self-government and the necessary mental effort involved. Like the human species who came into existence long afterwards, they much preferred to do a hard day's work with pick and shovel than to put in one hour of constructive thinking and they therefore petitioned the stork to do their thinking for them and govern them. They appeased their conscience in so doing by saying that politics is a dirty game.

The stork, of course, had never read Senator John Ingall's poem, "Opportunity," but he nevertheless jumped at the job and in his speech of acceptance, he feelingly expressed his great appreciation of the confidence the frogs placed in his wisdom, integrity and patriotism and, that although he accepted the arduous duties at great sacrifice to himself, he nevertheless felt that duty's call in such a case was imperative.

The frogs soon became alarmed over the strange and unexpected fact that the stork was eating with great relish and gusto a nice, fresh batch of frogs three times per day and that more and more strange storks attended the king's banquets. When these began to grow to high class functions, some of the frogs timidly petitioned the king to limit these functions and to limit the number of guests invited, but the petitioners were thrown into the hoosegow and eaten at the next function. When those who had refused to sign, saw this, they said: "We told you so." Every frog in the pond hoped that he would not be the next one, but as the sun was nice and warm on his log, he did not want to stir and was too lazy to do anything about it, although by this time the stork had grown so lazy and fat that he could easily have been drowned by a combined assault. Instead of acting on the advice of the more daring, they reported these to the stork who promptly included them in his next bill of fare. Some of the other frogs got a "hunch" from this episode and organized royal legions and framed disloyalty charges against other frogs which served the double purpose of saving their own hides and bringing them to the favorable notice of the stork.

When the rebellion broke out, the great majority enlisted under the banner of the stork. They believed him invincible and wanted to be on the winning side. He never had been conquered and they believed that he never would be—besides they held many special privileges under his grant.

Wherever the stork led his battleline, the rebels were driven back with slaughter, but his weight and gout soon compelled him to surrender active command to his subalterns and since these officers had not been permitted to think except under the direction of his leadership, they soon displayed unexpected weakness in command. This proved fatal to the king's campaign and the tide of battle

began to veer towards the rebels. When his lines were everywhere giving away, the stork was transported in state to Holland by his faithful retainers.

REEL TWO

When "The shouting and the tumult cease, and kings and captains pass away," so said Kipling, the frogs re-established a democracy with universal franchise. They were warned that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty and for several years they cudged their brains in the administration of their government, but they found it more and more difficult to maintain this high plane of patriotism, and slowly at first and then with accelerated speed they petitioned political parties and partisan newspapers to do their thinking for them and soon they were accepting canned opinions like the lazy housekeeper who lives on tinned foods, and a poison squad would have been necessary to ascertain how much they had been poisoned and ptomained by it. Public opinion disappeared and farmer's opinion, merchant and manufacturer's opinion, banker's opinion, labor union opinion, and other class opinion took its place, but it was not public opinion and got them nowhere and in the welter of much discussion the truth was lost sight of. The curse of kings was again fully established in the frog republic and afterwards history repeated itself in a certain king of England who granted the monopoly of the Thames Harbor to one of his courtiers who attracted the favorable notice of the king by throwing his cloak over a mud puddle in the king's path. In the frog republic, the courtier was called the "good mixer" and the frog voters peddled their votes to him in exchange for this most subtle touch to their personal vanity. These courtiers possessed an uncanny insight into the simple brain processes of the frogs, knew their thought and industriously framed these thoughts into glittering generalities, so that the frog voters were wont to go home, saying: "He expressed just my sentiments, don't you know," for the motto of the courtiers was: "Send them home with the idea that **THEY** are the wise guys and they will sell themselves to a yellow dog."

NICHOLAS A. VYNE.

Man's Divorce from Nature

WHY are we still spending billions of dollars and training millions of men for the work of destruction, when all the world is war-worn and weary with the atrocities of the past? Is it not at the behest and demand of those who believe that might makes right? Those who believe in upholding by the sword the injustice mostly responsible for all the wars of our so-called civilization.

Virtually, millions of God's children, divorced from the soil today are ill, diseased, and dying prematurely for want of contact with the earth, which is denied them by this "crooked and perverse generation," crooked and perverse just as they were in the time of Christ, because now as

then, "The son of man hath not where to lay his head."

The earth is our common mother, but two-thirds of God's children divorced from the soil, are orphans, separated from her who gave them birth and denied a normal amount of fresh air, sunshine, and most of the things that make life worth while. "I came that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly," was Christ's oft reiterated message to humanity, yet now as then the greater part of the children of men are sodden in poverty, languishing in prison, or wander as pilgrims and strangers on the face of the earth.

Man should live close to the soil and dig in it every day of his life, if he would be normal, healthy and happy. All originality comes out of the soil. This divorcement of man from nature is what makes cities "wens on the face of civilization," which as Max Nordau has said would soon become vast cemeteries, were it not for the constant influx of people from the country. This divorcement of man from nature, this denying men their birth-right in the soil is back of most of the ills to which flesh is heir. We have founded our thrones and altars on the premise that a small per cent. of the people can own the earth and all be well. The fallacy of such an assumption has been disproven by all the blood stained history of the past. The inequitable distribution of wealth as a result of these premises has given us swollen fortunes on the one hand, and dire poverty on the other for which all the charities and palliatives under the sun can never atone.

Man's divorce from nature spelled "Paradise Lost." Man's restoration to nature will spell "Paradise Regained."

JOSIE THORPE PRICE.

The Enlightened Selfishness of Unselfishness

NAUGHT save poverty, or the fear of future poverty, or lowering of present living and social standards, can greatly retard the *real* progress of civilization.

This fear constitutes, in varying degrees, in *every* level of society, either the most generally depressing influence, or the strongest incentive to inordinate selfishness and greed. It is the basal barrier to *general* prosperity, to reasonable degrees of human happiness, and to both domestic and international peace.

The chief duty of man, toward both himself and society, is genuinely earnest seeking for the fundamental cause of and remedy for such "unearned," or needlessly excessive, production and distribution costs as inevitably superinduce artificially high "overhead" in every process of production and thus necessitate undeserved and unavoidable poverty.

Before either general or continuous prosperity and peace can obtain, the compelling divinity and intelligently directed selfishness innate in man must be *conscious* of a goal sufficiently adequate to make them possible. This goal cannot be less, and need be no more, than merely *just* and *natural* human relations.