

WHAT THE SINGLE TAX WILL DO.*(For the Review)*By **W. H. T. WAKEFIELD.**

If considered a tax at all it is the natural tax. Is it a tax, in the usual meaning of that justly hated word? I have never thought so. Is it not a clearing house to settle values or balances between the individual and the organized society, nation, state, municipality, of which he is a unit, a cell in the living organism of man as a whole? There is but one Earth upon which two billions of people must find a place and subsistence. How shall each one of the two billions be given his or her just share of the planet's natural bounty, his or her inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, is the problem of the ages which Henry George sought to solve, and which I believe he did solve.

It is the peculiarity of the land value tax that it solves not one or two questions, not the financial question of taxation alone, nor yet the land question only, but practically all the problems necessary to establish public justice, promote tranquility and the reign of universal peace, and that perfect freedom which is the fairest flower and fruit of social justice. This is why I have usually used the words, "The Philosophy of Freedom" in preference to Single Tax. Mr. George, in a letter expressing his appreciation of an editorial in my paper, *The Anti-monopolist*, written in 1887, said my term "The Philosophy of Freedom," was the broadest and most comprehensive name for his system, and he preferred it to any other. General James B. Weaver of Iowa once said to me that while he was a disciple of Mr. George he thought the term Single Tax a most unfortunate one for propaganda purpose as it conveyed no definite meaning to the average man and was apt to excite prejudice against the idea until fully understood. Thomas G. Shearman's term, natural tax, is preferable.

As the object of our system of taxation is to establish "reciprocity" between the individual and society by a tax upon the special privilege of the exclusive possession and use of socially produced land values, the terms "Reciprocity Tax" or "Special Privilege Tax" would be appropriate, expressive, and easily comprehended.

Special privilege, or monopoly, means a corruptly granted legal power to exact tribute from producers of wealth, to levy a toll upon industry, to receive service without giving service in return. The presence or absence of special privilege in any country constitutes the dividing line between aristocracy and democracy. In olden times when the specially—and highly—privileged monarch laid his sword upon the shoulder of his kneeling subject and said: "Arise, Sir Thomas," he always added: "I give to thee the county of Blank" or the "Barony of Richlands," landlordism being then the principal method of exacting tribute from labor. Without the landgrant a mere title was a worthless thing, an impoverished "noble" being the subject of gibe and sneer from all classes. Later, when there was no more lands to be bestowed the sover-

eigns granted their favorites a monopoly of the manufacture or the right to sell certain articles of necessity. This country has inherited from the old world both these methods of granting special privilege. Land grants have been made by the congress and state legislatures with reckless prodigality on the flimsiest pretexts, usually through almost open bribery, and by the same methods through protective tariffs, patents, excise taxes, etc., monopolies worth many billions, altogether creating a power to levy tribute and a concentration of wealth in a few hands that excites the envy of the richest nobles of Europe.

When our Revolutionary ancestors put the new wine of political democracy into the monarchical (leathern) bottles of special privilege only Jefferson, who had seen landlordism and its results in France, and Franklin, who had seen the same things in England, raised a warning voice, but they were unheeded. When the first white men landed on the American continent all the potential wealth of the world's richest continent, our vast stretches of fertile soil, our splendid and varied climate, our lakes, rivers and bays, our wealth of magnificent forests, mines, oil, gas, fisheries and game, were here awaiting the magic touch of labor to make the wilderness blossom as the rose. Had this noble patrimony been justly administered in the interest of all the people instead of for the lucky or unscrupulous class we could be to day a highly civilized, generally intelligent, prosperous and contented people, with no strutting, debauched multimillionaires and cringing serfs, no women and little children toiling in mill, mine or shop to earn money to be spent in riotous living in Europe or to pay the gambling debts of dissolute titled rakes like DeCastellane and his successor. The reforms advocated by the followers of Henry George will correct our great mistake, undo its lamentable consequences and render their recurrence impossible. Nothing else will do so.

The one (or single) tax on special privilege or natural monopoly is the complete and the only solution of the social problem. The term: "Special Privilege Tax" must not be too rigidly restricted to a tax on land-values, as, temporarily at least and perhaps always, franchise and police or nuisance taxes, as on dogs, liquor, etc., may be necessary. The purpose of the tax is to separate natural or socially produced values from personally produced values, giving to each its own. It is to establish social equity between the individual and society through a clearing house that shall separate and adjust these values. As the individual gives to the public nothing he has himself produced, nothing of value belonging to himself, this is really an abolition of taxation, rather than a new form of it. Its effect will be to make production, free gift, or inheritance the sole legal, as they are the sole *moral* titles to property. Because it will thus establish justice between each person and all other persons it is pre-eminently a moral and religious movement. Because it will eliminate the land-grabber, extortions of landlordism, tariff and franchise beggars and bribers with their public and private corruption, it will raise the tone of public and private morals and advance civilization to heights not now dreamed to be possible. Because it will unlock the door that now separates idle labor

from unused land it will enormously increase the production of wealth, lead to its equitable distribution, abolish all involuntary poverty and rid the world of the ignorance, misery, degradation, degeneracy and crime which are the results of poverty undeserved. Equally beneficent will be its elimination of millionaires of the Carnegie, Rockefeller, Thaw, Schwab, Corey class, and the entire 400 with their Seeley and monkey dinners and lap-dog parties. With the gamblers in Wall street and the corruption in national, state and city legislatures will go the soup houses, bread lines, the saloon and the social evil, while the mother will leave the shop for her home and the little children will be found in the schools instead of the mines, stores and factories. This will inaugurate that perfect justice which is the highest attribute of God; it will make practical instead of theoretical that Christianity that loves ones neighbor as himself, for this implies that we have first treated him justly.

And it will be true, for freedom is the daughter of justice and the mother of peace and order.

THE QUEER THEORY OF GEORGE HENRY.

(For The Review.)

By J. W. BENGOUGH.

PREFACE.

To those who—without perhaps knowing much about it—dismiss from their attention the theory of Henry George, or something impracticable and absurd, it is the intention of the narrative to suggest that the real honor for impracticability and absurdity belong to the theory of George Henry—that is to say, to the theory which underlies the existing system of society. If justice had always been the basis of the State, the promulgation by any individual of the present system in theoretical form would—had it in any way succeeded in attracting general notice—have entitled its author to the chief place amongst irresponsible cranks.

CHAPTER I.

PROFESSOR GEORGE HENRY.

Gentle Reader, if you will obligingly consider yourself on board the good ship *Golden Gate*, of San Francisco, in mid-Pacific, on a pleasant June afternoon in the year 1897, we will have the pleasure of introducing to your notice a rather interesting specimen of humanity. We refer to the gentleman yonder pacing the quarter-deck in conversation with the ship's master, Captain Blinkhorn. The stout, well-put-together man is the Captain—his sunburnt face and nautical swing will, of course, have told you that; the other is Mr. George Henry. Did you ever see a better marked personality? Tall, you notice,