

Unions have never yet hit on the elevating and sublime ideas of their French prototypes, is easily explicable on the ground that they are only narrow-minded bourgeois ignorant of the modern class-war. That the results of these new tactics have been mainly negative is attributed to the fact that the "capitalistic murderers" have command of the military forces of the State. Therefore militarism must be abolished! Iron logic. If only there were no guns, you could smash windows to your heart's desire. But if you attempt to do so today, there is a great risk of getting a bullet through your head. Murder! Murder! they cry hysterically when, in consequence of their own senseless fancies, some poor devil, carrying out their ideas, is shot down. But when the "murderous Capitalistic Government" dares to withhold its pension from one of their number, then the picture is slightly altered. Limitless indignation that the "cursed band of murderers" should dare to withhold the payment of pensions. Capitalistic money doesn't stink. Paris is doomed to darkness through a two hours strike of electricians. "Darkness arising from the depth of the capitalistic system of production," as eloquent Comrade Jaures announces prophetically. After taking this dreadful revenge on the "mad, capitalistic, murderous society," things are allowed to go on as usual.

Socialists prefer to describe the military forces as the watch-dogs of Capitalism. And just as beggars are always more concerned to get rid of watch-dogs than with the restoration of their rights as men, so, too, Socialists are far more concerned with the abolition of militarism than with the restoration of the equal rights of all to the use of the earth.

(To be continued.)

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## THE DESTRUCTION OF THE POOR IS THEIR POVERTY.

(Prov. 10, 15.)

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(For the Review.)

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By ARTHUR H. WELLER.

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One Sunday evening I heard an address on poverty by a preacher whose sympathy with the victims of social injustice is beyond question. He took for his text a verse from Proverbs "The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty," and he based his remarks on "Round About a Pound a Week," a book that describes with great wealth of detail the conditions under which respectable, sober people live in Lambeth (London) whose incomes average the sum of 22s. a week. The dreary streets were portrayed—the awful monotony of which is rarely relieved even by a drunken brawl—and the daily tragedies of poverty within the wretched, cramped, insanitary houses, where the most rigid economy cannot save the children from the inevitable penalties of insufficient food, air, clothing and

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warmth. We were told how many of the children per thousand die during infancy; at what rate these little victims of injustice (nearly all of whom are born healthy and normal) become defective: how the murderously inadequate income, supporting sometimes eight or more persons, works out at less than 1s. 6d. per person per week for food (except in the case of the father whose wage earning capacity depends upon a certain degree of physical efficiency); and many other ghastly details. How I hate these statistics of human agony! They remind me of nothing so much as the horrors of the vivisection chamber where all the pangs of the wretched victims of human cruelty are carefully classified and tabulated for the nice regulation of future torture. But I bore the text in mind and waited hopefully.

Here is a poverty that is not officially recognized—the fathers are in regular employment and the weekly bills are duly met—and that is not in any sense picturesque. Everything is sordid, dreary and terrible, and it was told as the book was written—a dispassionate statement of facts which does the investigators of these horrors much credit. People around me were visibly impressed. The premature aging of young men and women and the wholesale slaughter of the innocents that were described perhaps touched the hearts and awakened the sympathies of many of the hearers. As for me, my blood boiled with indignation, partly, perhaps, because I know Lambeth, its people and their lives, and I know the story to be no exaggeration of the terrible truth, and partly because I also know such poverty to be unnatural and unnecessary, and therefore damnable rather than pitiable. There was only one gleam of brightness in the sad picture, the love of these people for their children. They remain human under inhuman conditions. And that love is tested as never in the experience of parents in better circumstances and as human love never should be tested—by daily sacrifices and cruel self-denial, ungrudgingly endured, in the vain attempt to supply the things that love prompts and that nature demands as part of the price of health.

After these harrowing details, told with a self-suppression and calmness that I envied, the preacher proceeded to suggest some means of dealing with the problem. In passing he alluded appreciatively to the boon these poor women are deriving from the maternity benefit of the Insurance Act, and then he showed what might be done by establishing school clinics, the provision of meals for the children, and a scheme of subsidizing the wages of these deserving men. This would strengthen their independence, we were told, and would enable them to make a bold, combined fight for better conditions, which they cannot do to-day because they dare not risk even the temporary loss of their meagre incomes. And they should be better housed. The State would be able to do its duty to these people by providing houses when land had been made available for such purposes. And that was all! My discomfiture was complete. I had listened with what patience I could command to a heartrending account of the hopeless struggles of the poor souls who live in the hell of respectable poverty, hoping to the end that the preacher would express my own burning anger in a scathing exposure and

denunciation of the cause of poverty. But I had hoped in vain. Perhaps he did not know; perhaps he thought that was not the time or place. The service closed with the hymn "When Wilt Thou Help Thy People, Lord?", a most fitting conclusion, I thought, to a discourse that could not fail to impress one with a sense of human helplessness in the face of man-made disaster.

When will good people recognise the fact that poverty is the result of human maladjustments? that God has provided for all his children a globe richly stored with everything that is necessary to the sustenance and comfort of every living soul, but that some have taken possession of those free gifts (land) and therefore some are unwholesomely rich while many are degradingly poor? If "The destruction of the poor is their poverty" it seems to me that the only way to end the destruction is by removing the poverty. To make the lot of the defrauded poor a little less intolerable by feeding and medically attending the children and by doing the many other things these people would do for their own children if they were not poor, is but to perpetuate their poverty, because such measures can only make the good people who advocate them feel a comfortable consciousness of having discharged their obligations to the unfortunate, and also lessens the unrest of those whose murmurings are disturbing respectable society and making people think.

Who can doubt that the poverty of the poor is their destruction, physical, mental or moral? Who in these days dare attribute that poverty to "a mysterious dispensation of providence?" Involuntary poverty is the result of robbery. It is robbery that is producing poverty and disease among the submerged millions, that is slaughtering the thousands of little children who die in Lambeth and elsewhere, and that blasts those who do not find release in early death. Involuntary poverty in all its horrible features and effects—unemployment, low wages, slums, sickness, hunger, vice, degradation, and crime—is the result of the great social injustice of land monopoly, and that evil thing, enormous and powerful though it be, can be destroyed by the progressive taxation of land values.

Wages are low in Lambeth because men are cheap. In Christian England to-day labor is a marketable commodity which varies in price as the supply is great or small in proportion to the demand. There are many more men than jobs and that is why men are cheap. The first thing to do is, therefore, to so increase the demand for men as to absorb the surplus labor, or to reach the same end by expediting the murderous elimination of the "unfit." Until that is done no real improvement can be secured, whatever may be attempted by Trade Union action or parliamentary palliatives. The taxation of land values will force millions of acres of land in town and country into good use and thereby create an enormously increased demand for labor of every kind that will soon make men dear. Their independance will grow with their value. Does it sound too good to be true? Certainly none who

have learned the inspiring truth taught by Henry George in *Progress and Poverty* can be tormented by such doubts.

Who, believing that "the destruction of the poor is their poverty," and knowing poverty to be caused by robbery, dare rest until justice is done?

## THE SINGLE TAX—A DEFINITION.

HEREAFTER IN ALL ISSUES OF THE REVIEW THERE WILL APPEAR A DEFINITION OF THE SINGLE TAX FROM THE EDITOR.

The Single Tax has for its purpose—it being an instrument only—the opening up of all natural opportunities included in the term *land*.

It is designed to effect the extinction of poverty by giving to the unemployed the opportunity to apply their labor to the land, and by removing competition for employment to make the wage-worker independent of the hiring employer, save to the extent that work—*production of wealth*—includes a mutual interdependence of laborer and capitalist.

The Single Tax is an instrument for effecting the resumption of social wealth for social needs—not merely for the needs of government as now administered, but going beyond it, if necessary, in order to take all the land value. It therefore has nothing in common with "the Single Tax limited," save as *political steps* to the ultimate goal.

The Single Tax aims at the taking of all the value of land because such value is a social creation and is due to the presence of population—the value of land being in a very real sense *population value, or community value*. Other values being due to labor should be held sacred, and at all events are not needed for community purposes. The Single Tax upon the value of land, and laid according to its value, will give the only solution of the labor question, the problem of the unemployed, and allied problems.

We have described what the Single Tax as an instrument is designed to effect. As to the instrument itself, or method of effecting what has been described, that takes the form of the tax already applied in part, for we now take some land values in taxation. This will be increased until all land values are absorbed. With its gradual application will go the abolition of all other taxes, thus making this tax "single," or the only method of securing public revenue. But it really involves the abolition of all taxes, since the annual value of land, if not paid to the State, must be paid to some individual who holds the title deed, either in annual rent or purchase price.

We need not trouble ourselves as to the validity of land titles, or the metaphysics of the right of land ownership. Land will continue to be owned in the sense that undisturbed possession will continue. But land has never been regarded in the same light as other property, and the primitive percep-