

ers, in exiling some to the country, in helping others to win lawsuits?"

In urging the taxation of the nobility he admitted that their diminished income would reduce the brilliancy of the court, but said, "Who cares for the splendor of the court?"

Of course the nobles resented his sharp criticism, but he told them it was unjust that those who worked should pay the taxes while aristocratic idlers enjoyed all the privileges.

He opened the parks to the public which had hitherto been monopolized by the nobility. The nobles protested against having to rub shoulders with the plebians, and his extraordinary emperor retorted, "If I were to associate with my equals I would have to descend to the vaults of the Capuchin church (where the Hapsburgs are buried) and there spend my days." He made frequent appearances in the public parks which were now the people's parks, but issued a decree that no one should pay any attention to him. He inscribed at the entrance of one of these parks, "This amusement place is dedicated to the people by their well wisher." It can still be read.

Emperor Joseph accomplished much but he sought to achieve a great deal more. He annulled from the statute books the crime of heresy and with it the imposition of torture; he strove to abolish the death penalty; he abolished serfdom; he sought to keep separate church and state; he urged complete religious liberty; he suppressed the censures.

When a lady applied to him protesting against his anti-pension decree he treated her with scant courtesy.

"How can I live on a hundred florins? I demand justice of Your Majesty." "It is precisely because of justice that you will not get that pension. As to your standards, for those you believe you are entitled to, am I to assist you at the expense of the unfortunate poor? Justice demands that I shall not accord to you what would support five or six thrifty families."

"What will become of my daughter? She is without resources."

"She can go to work."

My daughter work? But, Your Majesty."

"Work," snapped the Emperor. "Yes, work. I, too, work."

Joseph sought to establish the Single Tax. All industry was to be free and land to be the sole source of revenue. To get at the values a registrar of real properties had to be made. The nobles objected and in Hungary the army had to be called out.

The measure of course would have resulted in the abolition of the nobility. The nobles called the Emperor the "peasant God," and rose in rebellion.

Three months after this attempt to enforce the edict the Emperor died, and his brother Leopold who succeeded him found it necessary to revoke the decree. And thus came to an end the first nation-wide attempt to secure

the freedom of industry and man's natural right to the earth.

Brave Joseph! He left as his own epitaph the record of his failure and requested that it be engraved on his tomb. This request was disregarded. The people he sought to benefit did not know their friend and so he passed almost unrecognized by his ungrateful subjects.

The war he had tried to carry on in their behalf had been lost, and another great fight for human liberty had come to naught.

Lonely Joseph! Except for his easy going brother Leopold he went his way alone, cherishing his great dream of human enfranchisement. One thought was a comfort to him—the memory of his wife, Isobel, torn from him by death in his early manhood. He never forgot her, and it is as beautiful a love story as was ever told. But there was no other man or woman to share his solitude, with mother, brothers and sister unable to understand him, or openly or secretly hostile.

We have spoken of him as a hero. The designation is richly deserved. For who among the reformers of the world has traveled so desolate a path? Brave Joseph!

## Causerie

BY THOMAS N. ASHTON

HONNEUR ET PATRIE

AS between a bad, bold, brazen exploiter and an unctious, psalm-singing statesman who operates behind the cloak of private "legal" title to public site-values, the bestowing of our scintilla of respect goes to the former.

Dick Turpin acted the man he professed to be—a highwayman. Jesse James made no pretense at being an exemplary citizen. Al Capone intended to violate the statutes against rum and rackets and cared not a hoot who knew it.

When a gun-man suddenly looms out of the night and pokes a gat into our ribs we need no scientific treatise to clarify his aims. Pietistical platitudes are a waste of time in his purposeful programme. When the Moham-medan banditti semi-annually swooped down upon the natives, a couple of hundred years ago, the victims knew that taxes were due—that their homes would be burned to the ground if the tax collectors felt the least bit bilious, that their property might be destroyed in sheer cussedness if not taken in tribute—that it was time to take to the tall timbers to save, most precious of all, their very lives.

These poor souls were far more fortunate, in one respect, than we tax victims of this enlightened age—they were not called upon to learn and believe that wrong is right through the media of political economy as taught in our universities, nor needed they learn to be awed by a title-deed filled with to-haves and to-holds and know-alls

and seals and wax—all of which give to the holder thereof the right to exact ground-rent to the full extent of production, if the deed-deviser deems it wise, in return for nothing.

In one respect the aims of the brazen exploiter and of the suave ground-rent collector are identical—both intend to take from the victim a part—mebbe all—of the products of his earnest and honest labors.

In a second respect those Mohammedan victims were twice as fortunate as we—the banditti did *all* the tax collecting at one operation on each occasion, whilst we pay twice—once to the official tax collector and once to the ground-rent collector, on each occasion. Furthermore, the victims of the great Mogul learned the worst in a few moments, but we—Lord help us—are subjected to a prolonged agony, not knowing for weeks or months or mebbe years whether we are in the red of ruin, after each occasion.

The pages of history run rank with tales of the time-tried rapacity of man—the man who stole the food and fields and families of the toiler; with tales of tyranny and starvation in India, of six millions of Indians perishing in hunger en masse; with harrowing details of Chinese mire and misery and poverty where mandarins waxed wealthy and smooth and sleek; with prosaic recitals of Irish famines wherein Irish foods were carted away for exportation “along roads lined with the starving and past trenches into which the dead were piled.”

The crude methods of India's banditti have given way to a more refined, a more cultured, exploitation of laborers—modern methods in which our nation and that of our British forebears assume a statesmanlike atmosphere—streamlined methods whereby billions of dollars and hundreds of millions of pounds periodically are levied in taxation upon illiterate workers to finance wars growing out of man's rapacity for power and plunder—methods pursued to perpetuate the legal right of the few to exploit the many whilst hymns and organs soothingly sound in the distance.

As we visualize the physical and mental tortures which accompanied tax collections in ye olden dayes we can appreciate the difficulty experienced, by charitable readers of today, in controlling a rising feeling of contempt for “a race of people who, stung by such wrongs, have *only occasionally* murdered a landlord.” But what greater contempt arises as we witness nary a landlord taken for even an oratorical castigation by a race of this day's ostensibly cultured, erudite, parliamentarians who are easily buncoed by legal bombast which carefully has confused private and public wealth under the mediocre mark of “real estate”—the whole structure being painstakingly carried on rickety cribbing placed, one log at a time, in the names of commonsense, common-law, statute-law, university economics and legal precedent.

'Tis well nigh impossible to cool our boiling blood as we

read the sordid stories of ancient Hindoos selling the souls for a handful of rice—of emaciated coolies clawing the gutters for roasting rats and pups—of tiny tots toiling in textile sweatshops until death brought an early release. Yet all this—as nauseating as it is—creates less heat in our hardening arteries than does a revelation of the successful span of suave, sanctimonious, noiseless thievery whereby industry—both man, woman and child—today starves human stomachs and stunts human minds because of being busily engaged in bringing home the bacon to beneficent racketeers.

As between a bad, bold, brazen exploiter and an unctious hymn-humming statesman who carefully steers the ship of state away from public site-values into the private pockets of labor, our scintilla of respect still sticks to the guy with the gat.

### TELLING POINTS

As we bore our way into the boring schemes, plans and programmes for rescuing humanity from depression recessions—yea, and obsessions—we note that in order to be a la mode to you, the reform genius, should have a programme of so many points. Ten points, twenty points, or so—any substantial number which will lead the reader to suspect that you carefully have analyzed the entire social problem and have boiled it down to an all-inclusive, fixed and limited, number of essential features.

A one-point reform, like Single Tax, haint enough 'Taint got enough heft. It's too simple. Readers and taxpayers like a lot for their two-bits. Take care, however, that you don't have too many points because a fifty-point programme for social relief, f'rinstance, might cause your readers to suspect that your scheme had got the best of you—had got you down—and that you had finished your monumental proclamation on the floor under your desk buried in a litter of copy-sheets. It is better to stick to a manageable number of points—say a baker's dozen or less.

At the close of the World War our dexterous Democrats juggled a plenty-of-points programme onto the international stage and outpointed the Ten Commandments by several. In political campaigns both major parties usually dish out a plenitude of points, although our robed Republicans ordinarily are not as lavish with points as are our daedalian Democrats.

To blurt out the fundamental truth which is the key to social chaos—the failure to collect site-values for public expense—is a one-point programme which cannot politically compete with the 57-point programme of our sovereign State's legislative experts on taxation.

Take the new, Republican, “eight-point” programme of Senator Vandenberg, f'rinstance, as enumerated under four items by a smart reporter: (1) a balanced budget, (2) repeal of surplus profits tax, (3) avoidance of entangling foreign alliances, and (4) a balanced respon-