

of masters and slaves and developed hatred as his dominant and abiding creed. But his carefully planned scheme was nearly upset by the appearance of that mysterious and seemingly superfluous element, the milk of human kindness. His native cunning was, however, equal to the emergency. Being unable entirely to suppress it, and being himself not quite impervious to the attractions of gentleness, he made the astonishing discovery that by capturing the friendship of the exponents of kindness and through their services hypnotizing the minds of the slaves into acquiescence in their slavery, he could retain the spoils of his knavery while satisfying the more his refined instincts by a relaxation of his brutality in proportion as the evolution of the slave mind made it unnecessary. And so it came about that the right to live upon others is questioned neither by the slaves nor by the masters. Both have become spiritual drug-fiends and the injunction of duty as regards the many is "the obligation to permit the few to live upon them, whereas the duty of the few is to live on the many as politely as possible." But the worst has yet to be told. Not only have man's hypocrisy and stupidity brought him to that condition of unstable equilibrium that provokes the question contained in the book's title, but his nature has become so depraved through the accumulation of inherited deteriorations as to make it doubtful whether he can ever achieve the stupendous brain transformation necessary to raise him again even to the moral level of the so-called lower animals.

It need hardly be said that the book is a dirge of despair in comparison with which Nietzsche and Max Nordau are harbingers of good cheer, and one's first impulse is to search for the point at which the author has wandered into the bye-path that has led to conclusions which every healthy minded man knows to be untrue. That the mutual relations between both nations and men today are as bad as Mr. Swift can possibly paint them we need not deny. That even in the most peaceable countries of the world, sections of society are literally living upon their fellow-men, though stupified by false philosophies into unconsciousness of the fact, is obvious to the meanest intelligence; and among the valuable truths he brings to light is the fact that Germany only aspired to do on a world scale what the privileged classes of all countries have been doing within their own boundaries—dominating and living upon their fellows. But to account for this tragic denouement it is not necessary to assume an innate depravity of human nature or even to charge it with a colossal and persistent capacity for blundering. It is only needful to recognize that man, being destined to become a free and self-determining creature, emerged from the kingdom that is ruled by instinct with an entirely new possibility in him—that of choosing and therefore of erring—and that at the outset of his career he made one initial mistake to which may be traced all the slaveries, cruelties and self-deceptions that now blacken the face of the world. *He took the wrong way of raising public revenue.* Not having noticed that the increased well-being or wealth due to mutual helpfulness reflects itself accurately in the values of natural opportunities, he failed to tax these values into the public purse, and thoughtlessly permitted their appropriation by individual landowners along with the alternative power of locking up those opportunities at will; thus creating the "man living upon man" conditions which have debased both of the classes whom Mr. Swift describes as the knaves and the slaves. It was an egregious error and one for which mankind has paid a frightful penalty. But it may be that the retracing of his steps and the correcting of this colossal blunder may turn out to be the final discipline required for the tempering of the human soul and its preparation for the boundless possibilities which this glorious world offers.

Will the correcting of this initial mistake in sociology release mankind from all its disastrous consequences? The new school of economists, relying on the righteous working-out of the natural system of taxation and upon the fundamental goodness of human nature, fervently believes it will. Mr. Swift, having evidently no notion that there is such a thing as a natural system of social economics, and being obsessed by the bugaboo of heredity and the cumulative transmission of racial degeneracies, is doubtful as to whether the day of possible salvation for humanity is not past. For the realization of such small hope as remains, he conceives that a titanic effort will be required. "The

change it will require in man's character is staggering. . . . Its accomplishment will demand all human ability. The whole race, or at least all the better races must consecrate themselves to that end. . . . If Man does not now will to make the world perfect and to change his nature cardinally and wholly, there is nothing but red ruin ahead of him."

What is the matter with the mentality of this gifted writer? His attitude suggests an arrested development after a too rapid growth. For it is evident he has missed just those final insights that might have converted his gloomy pessimism into a vision of boundless and immediately-realizable possibilities. The best one can wish is that he might be impelled to a study of the law of rent and the co-relative law of wages; and that he would also go through a course of Weissmanism on "The continuity of the germ-plasm" and the non-transmissibility of acquired characters. From the first he would learn that man's initial error in the laying of taxes is amply sufficient to account for all the chaotic human relationships that have followed. From the second he might be led to suspect that habits whether good or bad, are transmitted from generation to generation, not congenitally or through the channels of heredity, but by becoming part of the social heritage of customs and ideals that greets each new life as it comes to consciousness—and without affecting the quality of the parent stock upon which individual lives are grafted. To realize that the only stubbornly transmissible or heritable quality in animals or man, is the sensitiveness to the influence of environment, is to understand not only how easily human nature is corrupted, but how easily and naturally it may rise to unimaginable degrees of goodness simply through the reversion to an environment of natural freedom. To achieve this natural environment let us work for the rectification of that ancient blunder, and lay our taxes where they should always have lain, on the Social Estates—the value of the land and natural opportunities.

ALEX. MACKENDRICK

## CORRESPONDENCE

FROM PROF. HARRY GUNNISON BROWN

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I have been puzzled to note lately, in the columns of the *SINGLE TAX REVIEW*, a discussion as to whether *protection* is necessary in the absence of the adoption of the Single Tax, a discussion in which the editor *seems* to have taken the affirmative side. Owing to the fact that I am only a new subscriber and did not see the beginning of the discussion, I may have misinterpreted the meaning of some of the statements made. But if I have not, I believe I can offer a perfectly logical criticism.

The argument for protection under present circumstances seemed to be, as I understand it, that American industries, e.g., the manufacture of woolen cloth, need protection against foreign rivals *because the former are now taxed on their capital, such as buildings*, instead of being really free from taxation as it is urged they would be under Single Tax. This would be entirely true if the protected industries were alone so taxed. But it is not true if the tax on buildings, etc., is general. For, although such a tax may, indeed, make all home industries be so much less profitable, it is no heavier upon the wool manufacturing business than upon some other business—e.g., the manufacture of structural material for bridges—which our business men would prefer to engage in if not diverted into the manufacture of woolen cloth by a tariff. In other words, if, under the Single Tax, the exportation of structural steel for bridges would be a cheaper method of getting woolen cloth than the making of cloth directly, this would also be true under *any form of taxation of industry* so long as it did not discriminate between the industries. To tax the two industries in question *both alike*, would leave the one which would be better under no taxation, still the better of the two.

To express the matter in a different way, let me point out that if, with no taxes, we could undersell foreign rivals here in woolen cloth, we could and would continue to do so if the woolen cloth business were taxed, provided the bridge material and other businesses were likewise taxed. If the other businesses remained untaxed, Americans might, indeed, only remain in the woolen cloth business by virtue of being allowed higher prices to make up for the tax, because they could escape it by going into some other business [See my Theory of Earned and Un-

earned incomes, Ch. I, § 3, and Ch. II, §§ 2, 3, 4, 5]. But if they are equally taxed no matter what they go into, they will not therefore be driven out of the woolen cloth production—for they can do no better—nor will the cloth become scarcer and higher in price. The people in the business—including their employees—will simply have to take smaller returns. In other words, such taxes *simply subtract from earned incomes*. Likewise, any *inability* of the woolen cloth industry to stand alone against foreign competition, would be equally great, *even if all taxes on earned incomes were removed*. Woolen cloth making would, then, yield larger income than before. *But so would the business of making bridge material and all other kinds of business*. It follows that men could no more afford to produce woolen cloth in the one case than in the other and that, therefore, *in either case*, protection to the woolen cloth industry would divert men from a line in which the country was relatively efficient to one in which it were not. [See my Principles of Commerce, Part II, Chs. I, II, IV]. Such a tariff would put a new burden upon the better industries, *in addition to the undesirable internal taxes already levied*.

To conclude, if I may be permitted thus to attempt to mediate between the editor and his critics, I should say the editor is right if and so far as discriminatory taxes are meant; while his critics are right if the taxes under discussion are general and not discriminatory against any business as such, however undesirable these taxes may be in themselves.

HARRY G. BROWN

#### REASONS FOR OPENING THE FIGHT IN OREGON.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I have thought much recently of the probability of a successful fight for the Single Tax in Oregon, on a campaign devoid of pussy-footing, apology and subterfuge.

I think best to deal with the phases of the matter in the following order:

General reasons are: (1) We have the Initiative and Referendum. (2) The State is not as large as nor as expensive to handle as California. (3) The population is much smaller and therefore requires less effort. (4) The majority of the population lies over a much smaller area, I believe, than in any other I & R State. (5) Independent political action has advanced beyond any state except N. Dakota.

Particular reasons are:

The first campaign, (one of unqualified education), secured endorsement of nearly one third of the vote of the State. (2) This vote remains and is a substantial foundation. (This vote fell off as a result of pussy-footing schemes. Conviction remains.). (3) Vote can be depended upon for a straight-forward Single Tax issue. (4) The leaven of that campaign has automatically increased to a noticeable extent. (5) The general world movement to restore the land to the people is bearing fruit to a noticeable degree. (6) Increase of conviction among farmers. (7) The Non-Partisan League has started the farmers of this State mulling. (8) The interests have loaded taxes on to the people until they are mad. (9) Labor will stand back of us solidly as will all radicals. (10) The farmers vote has been and probably is still the deciding vote and the bulk of the farmers are within easy reach. Four counties would positively decide the issue. (11) Disposition to argue against the Single Tax has practically passed, the people listen, looking for a way out. (12) Soldiers have been offered stump lands while tillable lands lie idle on every side. The result is a widespread disgust and altered opinion regarding landholding. (13) Rent profiteering, which has been excessive, has developed hatred of landlordism. (14) In about eighty per cent. of the cases the reply to my question "Don't you think land monopoly is responsible for the conditions?", was either "Yes" or, "partly". (15) A ridiculously small amount of money has accomplished all that has been accomplished in this State. The large sum spent by the Fels Fund was as injurious to the cause as if it had been contributed and disbursed by and under direction of special privilege. The first campaign did lasting and efficient work. The work remains a tribute to the unashamed and perfect truth.

Portland, Ore.

A PRIVATE of the First Oregon Campaign.

#### THINKS WE ARE UNFAIR.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

In opening your latest issue the first thing that catches my eye is your comment on Secretary Baker's article in *Everybody's*, which I must say I think is unfair. I have not read the article in full, but there is certainly nothing in Mr. Baker's wonderfully effective career to indicate that he is untrue to Single Tax principles, which he has announced as publicly as you or I have.

The extract you quote is plainly meant for thought along our lines, and there was nothing Henry George insisted on more than that it was not half so useful to our purpose as to what men should believe in as to how to lead them along right lines for themselves.

Taken in conjunction with your criticism of Secretary Lane I cannot help thinking that it is simply part of a partisan attack on Democratic officials simply because they are of the democratic and not of the unborn Single Tax party. We all know that Mr. Kitchin's tax schemes are the crudest and most unscientific possible, but they were the best he could get through Congress in a most critical and immediate emergency.

New Brighton, S. I.

E. J. SHRIVER.

#### REPLY.

Mr. Shriver ignores the fact, or perhaps does not know of it, that Mr. Baker some time ago, while confessing a belief in the Single Tax, said he was not in favor of its application. So that disposes of one point in the controversy. We will have to insist, too, that deriving his inspiration from Henry George, a fact known to most of us if not to the general public, his appearance as the author of a magazine contribution in which one contention of Henry George is presented in a diluted form, he might, if he desired to give prominence to our doctrines, have named the source of his inspiration. Mr. Baker, who owes his start in political life to espousal of the reforms inaugurated by Henry George and Tom L. Johnson, could have done no less were he actuated even by that spirit of intellectual loyalty which lesser men are supposed to share. We invite comparison of Mr. Baker's literary effusion in *Everybody's* with that of Dr. Crane who advises Kitchin and his fellow congressmen to read Progress and Poverty. Dr. Crane owes nothing to the Single Tax; indeed he makes his living by newspaper writing for employers who may be inclined to look askance at the Doctor's boldness.

We cannot help it if Democratic office holders (former preachers of our faith) confirm by their conduct and policies the arguments for independent political party action by Single Taxers. When we find those whose conduct offers no such argument we shall be glad to give credit where credit is due.—EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW.

#### LAND VALUES AND POPULATION.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Does site-rent result from any cause except population?

Public improvements and services seem to create "site-rent". Logicians know that two things may exist together and one not be the cause of the other.

Where a cause is assumed, the effect claimed should always result. Now, I have seen streets laid out, graded, planted and drained, but after forty-seven years the site-value is less than at first. Population did not move that way. In San Francisco after the earthquake, public improvements and public services were nearly nothing; yet the price of sites were even higher than before.

Perhaps both rent and public services are results of population. This is evident: Rent will increase before public services are furnished if population presses upon a location. And if population declines for some local reason, all improvements and service you can supply will not keep up site rent.

When an increase in site-rent in Vancouver resulted in the "boom" that location seemed attractive to labor, and rent increased; but it must have been at the expense of the locations from which the laborers came.