

Editor Single Tax Review:

The Single Tax is usually spoken of as a measure for the abolition of private ownership of land. This makes it seem like confiscation and inclines the average man to oppose it. But is there any such thing as private ownership of land?

A has a house which he lets for a fixed sum to B. B, then, is the tenant and A, to whom the fixed sum is paid, is the owner. Again, A has a vacant lot which he lets for a fixed sum to B. B is again the tenant and A, in this case, too, appears to be the owner.

But since the State exacts from A every year, in the form of a tax, a fixed sum for the use of the lot, under penalty of dispossession if he fails to pay it, the real owner of the lot is the State.

Now every square foot of land in every civilized country is held on just such terms. In other words, every so-called "owner" of land is merely a tenant of the State on a one-year lease.

If this view of the matter were made prominent, and kept so, the idea of confiscation would disappear and the Single Tax would appear to be what it really is, a measure to compel the State to deal impartially with its tenants.

DAVID L. THOMPSON.

PLAINFIELD, N. J.

Editor Single Tax Review:

Reading Henry George, Jr.'s interesting article in the Winter Number about Herbert Spencer and his Recantation reminds me that when the book of Spencer's appeared that contains his remarkable argument attempting to show that if the people of England were to resume their title to the land of England they ought first to compensate the landlords for the money that has been paid by the landholding class for poor law relief (some \$2,500,000,000), and that this would make the people indebted to the landlords, "The Tribune" of this city published a review or notice of the book in which it quoted this argument at length as though it was considered perfectly valid. Thereupon I wrote to the Editor of the "Tribune" calling his attention to the fact that if the landholding classes of Great Britain had really paid this vast amount for the benefit of the landless it must be evident that it constituted only a very small fraction of the amount that the land owning classes had received from non-land owners in return for the privilege of living, and that the balance, i. e., all that had been received by the land owners less the amount paid by them into the poor fund was by the same token due and payable to the people, and that if the figures for this were examined it would be found that the balance would be tremendous on the other side. The "Tribune" "did not find my communication available," but to my mind this view of the case shows

more clearly than any other the utter childishness and puerility of this argument of Spencer's.

FRED J. MILLER.

EAST ORANGE, N. J.

Editor Single Tax Review:

Now that fearfully absorbing and intensely interesting mathematical puzzle "How old is Ann?" has been editorially and therefore definitely decided by the editors of the funny picture newspapers, perhaps some of your serious minded readers may think it worth while to scratch their heads over at least a few of the following conundrums which, if not so popular are at least as important to humanity and especially to the city dweller. To wit:

Why is it that rent are the first thing to go up and the last thing to come down?

Why is it that wages are the first thing to come down and the last thing to go up?

Why is it that when ice is cheap, coal is dear and vice versa?

Besides wages mention something that has been reduced by the trusts?

Name one thing (except the ocean and the atmosphere) that is not, at present, owned and controlled by these Christian men to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given control of these United States?

When Jesus said: "The poor ye have with ye always," did he mean, "The poor ye will always have with ye?"

Why are the building trades mechanics so anxious to strike in the Summer when wages are high, while in the Winter they would cheerfully shovel snow from their bosses' stoops to keep themselves and their families from starvation?

Why do the trades unions limit the number of American apprentices (their own children) who are anxious to learn a trade while they cheerfully admit any foreigner into their local assemblies who is willing to put up the initiation fee?

Why does Theodore Roosevelt insist on digging that canal by hook or by crook (especially crook) to facilitate the exchange of foreign commodities while both he and his party foster a prohibitive tariff to exclude them?

Why is it that the industrious builder and farmer who improves his property, gives employment to labor and benefits humanity, is taxed more than the fellow who is just holding his equally desirable location, for a rise. Why, Why?

Why is it that articles manufactured in this country are sold cheaper in Europe than they are here?

Why is it that the men who do useful things for their fellowmen get so little while the fellows who do nothing get so much of the good things of this earth?

If, as the socialists proclaim: "That the capitalists and machine owners are the despoilers of labor," why is it that according

to Bradstreet, who ought to know, ninety-five per cent of the business men and manufacturers (machine owners) bust up?

Why don't the people join one of Andrew Carnegie's fifty-seven varieties and read the works of Henry George, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer and for dessert tackle the bonny Scotchman's "Triumphant Democracy" and find out why it is that despite the wonderful improvements in machinery the producers get a bare living.

DAN CAVANAGH.

New York City,

BOOK REVIEWS.

SPEED MOSBY AND HIS BOOK.

Single Taxers all over the country know Speed Mosby. He has been an active worker for the cause, and his writings have made him well and favorably known wherever our movement has found adherents. For a number of years he has been deputy clerk of the Supreme Court of Missouri. The *Jefferson City Democrat* is under his editorship, and he has not failed to make it the medium for the propagation of sound democratic doctrines.

Recently he has written a novel which lies before us. "Ben Blunt" is its title, and in this work, which is an entertaining story, he has given free rein to his powers of keen criticism of social and political follies and abuses. It is said that some of the characters portrayed therein are drawn from life. At least, some of those who stand high in the political life of Missouri, as lobbyist and grafters, have, with the uneasy conscience that haunts the guilty mind, found their own personalities reflected all too faithfully in its pages, and have regarded it as an offensive indictment. They have accordingly succeeded in ousting Mr. Mosby from his position as deputy clerk of the Supreme Court of the State.

Our friend is probably fortunate in obtaining for his book this sort of recognition. His picture of Missouri politics must be singularly faithful to have obtained such immediate testimony to the accuracy of its portraiture. The revenge that has been taken is characteristic of those who fatten at the public crib in the devious ways known to their tribe.

As to Mr. Mosby's book it is full of many sly touches that add to the piquancy of its pages. As a whole, it may be fairly criticised as a rather uneven performance. There is, too, at times, an unpleasant ornateness, and a too profuse sprinkling of adjectives. But this is redeemed by much clever characterization. What can be better than his picture of the socialist who "talked of human brotherhood in a most vindictive way" of his "ferocious rhapsodies upon the moral excellence of human brotherhood."

This, too, is worth quoting; "And there he stood—the Governor, his head cocked back, viewing them through half-shut eyes, in bland etherial majesty. Yes, there he stood, with his own immaculate hands thrust into the pockets of his gubernatorial trousers, blending in the mild unrepentful gravity of his manner the suave loneliness of Casabianca and the heroic dignity of Little Bo Peep."

There are those in Missouri who claim that the following is a picture of Governor Dockery, and that it is easily recognizable:

"The governor was winking one eye thoughtfully, and had just placed the forefinger of his right hand by the side of his nose, as if about to say, as he always did at the close of every private conversation. 'All right, but, remember, it's confidential between you and me,' when, lo! the curtain rose. Mr. Rounder had stepped aside, and revealed the caucus-visaged governor in this refreshingly frank and knowing attitude.

"His excellency was a man of about 50 years, medium build, with gray eyes, a very fat neck, a mustache, and a goatee, which passed over his chin in a dashing, wavy curl, like a cataract. When Rounder's withdrawal exposed him to the public view, his countenance quickly lost its star-chamber expression and assumed the look it usually wore in public; that is, he placed his hands in his pockets, threw back his head, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and looked out upon the world through half closed eyes. It is doubtful if both his eyes were ever wide open at the same time—in a literal sense. When his head was erect, his eyes seemed cast upon the ground, and only when it was thrown back would he look one in the face, but even then he did it only in the manner just described.

"He was one of those ingenious characters who seem always to be playing at hide-and-seek with their own thoughts. The governor never allowed his right hand to know what the left was doing, except when he undid with one what he had done with the other. He was always playing at pussy-wants-a-corner with himself."

Following is one day's history in the all strenuous life of Mr. William Rounder, who is the State Auditor. This type will be recognized in States outside of Missouri:

"In the meantime he was opening his mail, 'incidentally pocketing the accompanying railroad passes as the spoils of battle.' Then, among other things he dictates to Ben Blunt a characteristic letter. 'Whet up your pencil there, and we'll send a few lines to the Ephesians,' he remarked to the waiting Blunt. And the letter was then dictated as follows;

To the Hon. J. H. Clodgett, General Solicitor
Wabash Railway Company, St. Louis, Mo.

DEAR MR. Clodgett: Yours of 18th inst. received, containing pass from here to Buf-