

RELATED THINGS

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PARLIAMENT OF MAN.

Read by the Author, Robert Cumming, at the Sunday Evening Meeting of the Recent Singletax Conference in Chicago.

The nations were not born like men to die,
Nor like lone hives to swarm and multiply,
Were not designed to be like beasts of prey,
As are the mighty of the earth today.
'Tis not democracy, 'tis class-rule crime
Bestrews with nations dead the shores of time.
Let every people rule themselves alone,
Let special favors be annulled—unknown—
Then true democracy—each people free—
Will live and flourish while the world shall be,
And civilization like a vine spread on,
Trade weaving all the nations into one,
The Parliament and Brotherhood of Man,
The full fruition of the Social Plan—
State, village, hamlet, free, through all the years,
To guide, as each sees fit, its own affairs.
Nations may live as long as human kind;
In passing, leave their progeny behind.

Oh, who can tell what Liberty will bring,
What seer will prophesy, what poet sing!
To prophesy aright the state to be,
When Justice reigns and men are truly free,
He unto whom prophetic power is given,
Must tell of Freedom what is true of Heaven.
Eden itself, with its perennial bowers,
Could not be fairer than this world of ours.
Each but to will, to be with fig-tree blest,
Its blissful shade inviting him to rest,
None to molest and none to make afraid,
None to command whose will must be obeyed,
He of all greatest who most serves the free,
He least of all who would the master be.

No slavish task will freemen's powers employ,
Their chosen work will be their constant joy.
Love's labor making pleasant pathways bear
Fruit for the pilgrim breathing incense there.
Though scenes like these may tempt him far to
roam,

Sweet memories then will lure the wanderer home.
Oh, who can tell what Liberty will bring,
What from the Order Heaven planned will spring!

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OUR UNJUST TAXATION.

Address Delivered by W. A. Douglass, B. A., in Willard Hall, Chicago, November 26, Before the Singletax Conference.

Some years ago I noticed a sign over a store with the cabalistic words, "Fels-Naptha." Now, I know what "naphtha" meant, and I knew enough of German to be aware of the fact that "Fels" meant a rock. This, therefore, I inferred, is some "rock naphtha." But after some time I

learned my mistake, and found that it was some kind of soap. But, subsequently, I learned a most marvelous fact; namely, that this was the most wonderful soap that had ever been compounded, and the most wonderful that would ever be compounded. Why do I make a statement so extraordinary? For this reason: That soap will not merely wash out the stains from your garments, but it will work this miracle: wash out the blots of our civilization—poverty and the slums.

The last visit I paid to your city was in the year 1893. I came for a double purpose. I wanted to see your magnificent exposition, where were displayed the latest triumphs in science, and also to meet with that band of true reformers whose aim was to secure to every man the heritage that God had provided for him, by applying community values to community purposes.

The sight of that exhibition I shall never forget. Standing after nightfall in the Court of Honor, gazing on that majestic group of buildings, so magnificent in their proportions, so beautiful in their details and so unrivaled in their harmony; looking with exalted admiration on the galaxy of electric lights, strung as pearly necklaces on pediment, tower and eave, following the illuminations on the Lake; then beholding with rapture the illuminated fountains, now glowing as burnished silver, then again changing to the beauty of gold, finally transforming into the varied colors of the rainbow—verily, it was a fairy land, manifesting the triumph of human ingenuity, the victory over the physical forces.

At the same time, however, I witnessed another exhibition. As I passed daily through the Park by the Art Institute, I saw a crowd of men, stranded, out of work, not knowing where they were to get their next meal. Amid unparalleled wealth, at a time when improved processes enabled men to produce the necessities of life in greater abundance than ever before, here was a multitude of people in abject destitution. Like the Ancient Mariner,

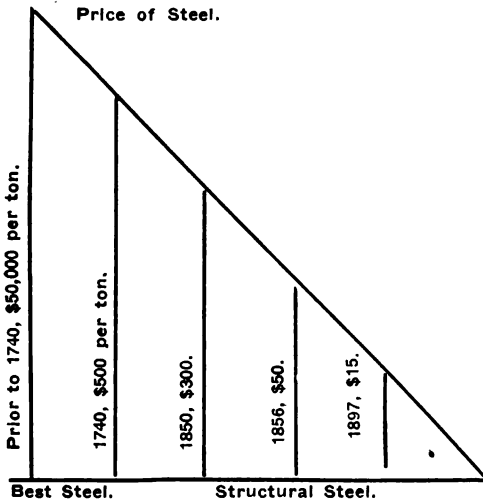
Water, water, everywhere,
But not a drop to drink.

The contrast between these two exhibits could not well be greater. On the one hand, physical science had progressed at a rate truly amazing. On the other hand, the science that treats of man's higher relationships, the religion of the Golden Rule, the religion that enjoins us to render to every man his due, was marking time in the wilderness. The church was still enacting the part of the priest and the Levite, leaving to the despised Samaritan the rescue of men from the thralldom in which they were held by bad social adjustments.

The one exhibition was the glory and triumph of the ages; the other was the reproach and disgrace of our civilization. When dealing with iron, steel, electricity or steam, our success eclipsed all

past ages, but when dealing with the adjustments of society, of man's right to the earth, and of man's obligation to man, could our failure be more pronounced?

Let me call your attention now to another contrast. In the year 1740 the best steel sold in England at the rate of \$50,000 per ton. A man named Huntsman, after some seven years of experiments, produced a superior steel which he could sell at the rate of \$500 per ton. A century afterwards Bessemer invented the conversion process, whereby he reduced the price of structural steel from \$300 to \$50 per ton. Steel rails have since that sold as low as \$15 per ton. Look, if you please, at this diagram. Here is a base line. Let this tall vertical line on the left represent \$50,000, the next to the right \$500, the next \$300, the next \$50 and the last \$15. Now we will draw a line through the top of these up-rights and you have a marked descent from \$50,000 to \$15, more than a 1,000 to one.



Let me now tell you the story of a wonderful board bill, just as wonderful as the story of the widow's cruise of oil or Pandora's box. Early in the last century a British officer, when about to leave the country, found that his funds were insufficient to pay the arrears of his board bill. The chances are that his bill did not amount to a hundred dollars, but he managed to satisfy the claimant in a very peculiar way, which I must explain.

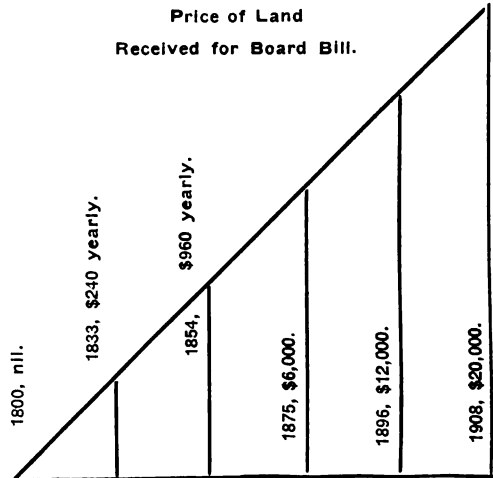
The farmer supplies food to the clothier, and the clothier supplies clothing in exchange. This closes the transaction. If the farmer were to come back the following year and demand a second payment from the clothier, the latter would laugh him to scorn. If he were to come again the next year and again repeat his claim, the clothier would laugh still more scornfully.

Well, the officer did not say that he would furnish some equivalent service or product in ex-

change; but he said to the boarding house keeper, "Here is a piece of land, an eighth of an acre in extent, one of the best corners in the city. Now, if you take this lot you can charge the people who come there to do business, and from them you can collect the payment of your bill." The offer was accepted and the man soon began to collect. I cannot tell how much he collected during the first few years, but from the year 1833 he obtained a rental of \$240 for twenty-one years, a little over \$5,000. Then he raised the rent to \$960 for another twenty-one years, something over \$20,000. Then he raised it again to \$6,000 for another period of twenty-one years, which amounted to more than \$120,000. After that he raised his demand to \$12,000 which he collected for ten years, another \$120,000, when he, or rather his heirs, sold the land so as to realize them \$20,000 yearly. And after all these payments, that board bill is still unpaid. Though the people who have done business on that lot have had to pay to that boardinghouse-keeper and his heirs, a sum of more than a quarter million dollars to settle an account of less than a hundred dollars, they and their successors, if the law is not changed, will have to pay and pay a larger and larger amount to the end of all time.

We have here an illustration of that monstrous injustice which compels a vast multitude of people, placed under an increasing and unending tribute, to pay an account which originally they had nothing to do with.

Let us draw another diagram, erecting on a base line a series of perpendiculars representing, successively, \$240, \$960, \$6,000, \$12,000, \$20,000. Through the top of these vertical lines let us draw an inclined line rising higher and higher indefinitely.



The first diagram represented a downward and downward direction as improved methods made the steel cheaper and cheaper. The second diagram

shows the higher and higher price of the land as population made it more and more scarce.

Is there any man, woman or child here who does not see the essential difference between these two things? Let him stand up.

[The speaker waited a few seconds, but no one responded. Mr. Joseph Fels then jumped up and declared, "The people of the United States do not understand that difference."]

For centuries legislatures and parliaments have been discussing taxation; but this distinction, so important and so essential, has been ignored. Let an accountant ignore the difference between a plus and a minus, a debit and a credit, or an asset and a liability, and his mistake would be no more fatal than that of the legislature which confounds the value of the land caused by the community, and the value of the crops or buildings made by the individual.

I ask you for a few minutes to look at the manner in which we impose our taxation at the present time. Some time ago I appeared before a tariff commission appointed by the Government of Canada, to which I pointed out the following facts: The statistics show that the workmen in this country receive on the average less than five hundred dollars yearly. If, however, I owned an acre of land well situated in this city I could easily collect fifty thousand dollars' ground rent yearly. Without doing the first productive act I could collect as much in one year as the workman with his toil could collect in a hundred years. In adjusting your tariff you find almost every article in that workman's home, so that whether waking or sleeping, working or eating, he is subject to some tax. When he goes to buy tools, food, clothing, furniture, bedding or any other commodity, while he pays for the goods he also pays a tax. The nominal rate is thirty or thirty-five per cent. But with the additions of the wholesaler and the retailer it mounts up to fifty per cent. Thus you compel him by an insidious method, by an occult process, to pay three dollars for two dollars' worth of goods. Very often by your tax you take from him every third day's work. With such meagre pay, without a dollar or an hour to spare, you compel him to make a large sacrifice every year for the support of government. On the other hand, I could collect my fifty thousand dollars yearly without spending the first hour in productive effort. I have both money and time to spare, in superfluous abundance. Now I wish you gentlemen to look at this monstrous injustice. You search that workman's home for the minutest article, that you may put a tax thereon, where there is nothing to spare, while my land with its enormous value does not appear in your schedules at all. You can find the little mole-hill, while you cannot see the mighty mountain. Look for a few minutes, please, at the social effect of this method of tax-

tion. That man goes forth in the morning, heroically determined to secure for his wife and little ones the advantages which this civilization should afford. He exerts his skill and produces abundance; but by processes which he sees not, I deprive him of the wealth he has produced. He produces abundance, but by my extortion I send him to a home of scarcity. His ambition is to give that lad the intellectual and physical development that will produce not a mere industrial machine to maintain a meagre animal existence but that his mind may be fitted to revel in all the luxuries of science, art, philosophy and literature—not that he may be a mere accumulator of lucre, of the earth, earthy; but that he may develop a full-orbed noble manhood. But I stand in the way. The wealth which he has honestly earned I appropriate to add to the glory and ostentation of my stately home. I drive that child from the school to the factory. A stunted intellect, a dwarfed life, a perverted existence is his doom. I drive him towards the degradation of the Beggars' Alley or the misery of the Slum. Then when I have thus thwarted his ambitions, blasted his hopes, deprived him of his rights, and stripped him of the glory of a full-orbed manhood, with the wealth which I have exacted I erect a temple, majestic in its proportions, with pointed arch and lofty spire. Then I procure the tongue of eloquence to proclaim: "Dearly beloved brethren, let us come to Jesus."

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A PLEA FOR FREE TRADE.

For The Public.

South of the Lakes the Stars and Stripes
Float proudly on the breeze.
While Britain's standard waves supreme
North of these inland seas.
The accidents of politics
Divide, for ill or good,
Two peoples of a common race,
One in both speech and blood.

But why should Yankee or Canuck
Look with suspicious eyes,
Each on the other one whose home
Beyond the boundary lies?
Tear down your custom-houses both!
Antipathies will fade
Upon improved acquaintance,
That will follow with Free Trade.

J. K. RUDYARD.

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"See here, Mr. Casey," said Pat to the tax assessor, "shore and ye know the goat isn't worth \$8."

"O' m sorry," responded Casey, "but that is the law," and, producing a book, he read the following passage:

"All property abutting on Front street should be taxed at the rate of \$2 per foot."—Boston Transcript.