mania, and thence to Pacific Coast ports, going around the Cape of Good Hope.

That run gives lots of mileage and occasionally some cargo.

But the masters of the vessels don't worry about cargo. What they want is mileage. Their solicitude is for French consuls' certifications that they have arrived at certain ports.

They are regularly licensed government grafters, working for graft under a popular delusion that "trade follows the flag."

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French trade is not following the flag on those ships.

A short time ago one of that fleet of sailing vessels arrived in San Francisco with a cargo of coke and firebrick—but from Glasgow, not from a French port.

Trade doesn't always follow the flag, but the flag follows subsidies.

It would cost the thrifty French people less to attach their flag to half a million floating buoys and distribute them about the oceans.

It would cost less and be more productive of trade, if they would buy their own goods with their own subsidy money and sell them at a discount?

It would be most productive of trade, however, and at minimum cost, to tear down their tariff wall.

W. G. EGGLESTON.

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SHOULD WE TAX MEN, OR THINGS?

In the course of a recent debate in the Senate on the tariff, the Senator from Texas asked the Senator from Rhode Island whether he accepted Adam Smith's principle that men should be taxed according to their ability to pay, and the Senator from Rhode Island accepted this principle of the great Scotsman as matter of course.

But men have grown in knowledge of the science of government since Smith's book was written. The steam engine had not then been developed on commercial lines. There was not a cotton or woolen mill, in our modern sense, in the world. The cotton gin had not been invented. The roads were of the kind so well known among us in the poorer towns of Texas and New England. Telford was a boy writing poetry, and Macadam was unknown. There was not a railroad, nor a locomotive, nor a steamship, nor a telegraph line, nor a telephone, nor a power press, in Smith's world. Smith was acquainted with the works of the French economists of his day; but they had lived and worked before the French Revolution, and before the independence of the United States. The system of taxation which Adam Smith knew, had been devised by the ruling classes of Great Britain, the peers and the landed gentry, in their own interest. Its intention was to impose taxes upon the poorer classes while they themselves escaped them.

Why should these Senators from Texas and Rhode Island quote Adam Smith's views on taxation, when it was not possible for him, from anything which he saw in the world around him, to know anything of its true principles? He thought that a man's ability was determined by the revenue which he enjoyed under the protection of the state. But it was not easy to determine the amount of this protection in his day. It is impossible to do it among us. If experience under the present system has taught us anything, it has taught us this. Every assessor of taxes in New England has found this out. There is a great difference in the amount of a man's estate as declared under oath to the assessors, and the same estate as determined in the probate office. There is not now, and there was not in Adam Smith's day, any way of reaching equitably a man's ability in this sense. We might as well give it up. An oath is no defense against covetousness. If all law-made perjurers were damned, very few rich men would be saved.

But there is a still stronger objection to this principle of ability. The state has no right to inquire into a man's private affairs. This is not to say that it has not the power. For it is not easy to define the power of a sovereign state, in the sense of limiting it. But the *right* is a different thing from the power. The state has the power to make of a Negro a chattel; it did so in the memory of some men now living in Rhode Island and Texas; but it never had the *right,* in any age of the world's history. Slavery was always wrong; never more so than when buttressed by the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States. As matter of right a man's private affairs are his own. The state ought not to intrude upon them. Such publicity is repugnant to us all. It is very doubtful whether the authorities of Texas and Rhode Island know, for the purposes of taxation, the ability of the Senators of those States. This is one of those things which no one can find out. And no one has the right to find out.

There is, however, an equitable and practicable way to determine a man's ability, as Adam Smith used that term. His ability in the just sense is determined by the value of the land which he owns. Poor men do not own valuable land. And this

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measure of ability is a public thing. It is as well known to all his neighbors as to the owner himself. It is easier to ascertain by assessors than the insurance value of the improvements upon it are by insurance agents. The title to a piece of land is the first of all monopolies. It is the fundamental source of revenue enjoyed under the protection of the state. It is, therefore, the most fitting thing for the state to tax.

JOHN GREGSON.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

BACK TO THE LAND.

Westover, Md.

We are all well, and as happy as a busy tribe could expect to be. I finished cutting 50 acres of wheat this p. m.; drove the machine part of the time myself. Had to rig it up with the help of a Negro employe, and lay on my back under it with a lantern till 10 p. m. the night before we began cutting—quite automobile style but a heap more fun. With barns to get ready for hay; late crops to prepare ground for—potatoes, cowpeas, buckwheat, rape (for hog pasture), silo corn, etc., etc.; with a neglected (not "a deserted") garden, to bring up to date; with stock to get acquainted with, a regular crusade of errands to this town and that for these things and those—I have been kept jumping sideways.

But I am having the time of my life. Have landed in a most hospitable neighborhood, and am sure to become better acquainted as time goes on.

An institution here is the "Cooperative Produce Exchange" composed of farmers, ostensibly. Majority of stock, however, gradually passes into hands of bankers, lawyers, agents for commission houses, with natural results—line between "farmers of farms" and "farmers of farmers," as you so forcefully phrase it.

Another institution is Negro labor. I am threshing out that problem practically. I find them (I have three) most exceedingly human: so mature and sophisticated in some ways, so like children in others. I am making no deductions yet, and have much to learn about and of them.

But the heart of the problem is visible instantly. My men do all the work on the place. They raise and harvest crops for wages. Then they come to me to buy straw for bed; milk, butter, eggs, meal, corn for a pig or chickens if they have them. Outside of my legal title to the land on which they labor, under a privilege I allow them—to work on it at a fraction only of what they produce—they would own it all and I would have to buy of them unless I produced as they do.

The farmer is going to be slow to give up this legal privilege he enjoys, of land monopoly; and not until the landless far exceed, numerically, the land-owning farmers, will they change the system.

WESTERN STARR.

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The single eyeglass is worn by the dude. The theory is that he can see more with one eye than he can comprehend.—United Presbyterian.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, June 29, 1909.

The Cleveland Traction Fight.

In connection with the Cleveland traction fight (p. 612) the committee of the whole of the City Council, to which the Chamber of Commerce franchise grant to the old company, drafted by Judge Tayler, had been referred, finally disposed of it at a meeting on the 21st by deciding by a vote of 23 to 0 to report against it. The introducer of the ordinance, Councilman Walz (a Democrat), refused to vote, as did Councilman Horner (a Republican). Councilman McClain (a Republican) voted for the adverse report. The other four Republicans were absent. Mayor Johnson and City Clerk Witt, ex-officio members of the committee of the whole, voted for the report.

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A few hours later, on the evening of the 21st, a meeting held under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce and at its rooms, began the organization of a "citizens' committee" of 100 to oppose the adoption of the Schmidt ordinance at the referendum of August 3. Mayor Johnson on the 22d challenged the committee of 100 to a series of debates. No reply had been made at the time of the tent meeting for the Schmidt ordinance that night. The audience at this meeting is described by the Plain Dealer report as one of the most interested yet, hostile questions being asked by a member of the committee of 100, and answered by Mayor Johnson. No reply to the debating challenge had been given on the 23d, and many of the committee of 100 were reported as opposed to accepting. Their reported objection was that Mayor Johnson is an expert on traction technique and this would place anyone who attempted to debate with him at a disadvantage. "If that is given as a reason why the challenge should be declined," said the Mayor, as reported in the Cleveland Press, "I am willing to be barred from participation in the debates. We have five or six others who can hold their own with any representatives the other side may have." "It has been charged in the past that you packed the meetings when you were to debate," he was told. "If the other side thinks there is danger of that, I am willing admittance should be by ticket, and I will give them all the

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