

he fails to get work, and next he must pay a big price for the necessities of life which monopoly has cornered.

I am not blaming the charity organizations for not doing more. (After the workers' salaries are paid, they probably do their best with the inadequate means at their disposal—as we nurses do our best, yet fail to make the slums healthy.) I blame popular apathy and ignorance for the continuance of this burden of undeserved poverty. Every one of us who does not work his utmost to spread knowledge of the principles of justice, involved in the Singletax, is personally responsible.

I want to close with some words of the Chinese sage Ye Yen, the greatest minister of the Shong dynasty, who with high sense of duty took upon himself the heavy charge of the Empire. Thus spoke Ye Yen: "If among all the people of the Empire—even the most lowly men and women—there are any who do not enjoy such benefits as the gods confer, it is as if I myself have pushed them into a ditch." And again he said: "The purpose of heaven in the production of mankind is to cause those who first apprehend, to instruct those who are slower to apprehend; and those who are awakened, to awake those who are slower to wake. I am one of heaven's people who have been first awakened. I will take these principles given to me and awake this people in them. *If I do not awake them, who will do so?*"



THE CHARITY POULTICE.

Forms of Letters Used in Reply to Appeals for Charity.



1. From Bolton Hall, of New York.

The following appears to me to be good sense:

I am trying to do what I can to relieve those who are suffering; but long experience and observation has convinced me that benevolent donations or charity can do little more than relieve a few individual cases of distress. What the poor need is not even education, but a change in social conditions that will make donations and charity unnecessary. Only to help in bringing about such a change can I give work or money.

Lest this seem unreasonable, I cite the case of what seems to me the most meritorious benevolent work—the tuberculosis sanitariums are for the care and cure of poor consumptives; but we cannot help seeing, when we look, that the conditions under which the poor must live and work inevitably breed more consumption and more poverty.

Our social system so restricts opportunities and employment that thousands must work under the most harmful conditions; this inevitably produces

invalids by the thousand. Our system puts a premium on withholding valuable land from use and crowds millions into disease-breeding tenements. Yet we are tempted to believe that, when we care for a few hundred victims of this system, our whole duty has been done. The cause of this evil and of similar evils should be removed, so that the further wholesale production of misery may be stopped, and existing invalids and their relatives enabled to become self-supporting so as not to need charity.

Your work is doubtless excellent in its intention, but we cannot deny that every improvement in the condition of the earth, whether agricultural, mechanical, educational, political, ethical or even religious, must go eventually and mainly to the profit of the owners of the earth. We are all responsible for the system that gives the use of the earth to a few.

Asking help from supporters of things as they are is merely asking the persons responsible for poverty, misery and disease to do something to relieve their victims. But asking help from Singletaxers is practically asking those who are using all their spare means to prevent further mischief to relax their efforts in order to enable others to evade the duty of relieving those whom they have made poor.

For these reasons I do not feel that I can comply with your request.



2. From Dr. Walter Mendelson, of New York.

About twice every week, year in and year out, I (and you) get appeals for "charity."

The ever increasing number and variety of these appeals must convince any thinking person that this method of combatting a great evil is useless. True, many poor individuals are doubtless relieved, but does not Poverty itself stalk as gaunt and as hideous as ever? Is there less poverty, or is there more today, in New York, in London, in Paris, Berlin or Bombay, than there was thirty years ago?

From my means I can give to about one one-hundredth of all the appeals I get. Why give to yours more than to any other? And would it not be more logical, as well as more just, to appeal rather to those who are the beneficiaries of this social system that makes millionaires on one side and paupers on the other? They get the benefit, let them pay the cost.

What we need is not pitiable alleviation, but *cure*; not "charity" but *justice*. A cancer poultice may be agreeable to the victim; but, slowly and ever beneath it, his vitals are being remorselessly eaten out. To my mind every "charity"—and by that I mean any essential thing that is given a man because his poverty denies it to him—is a mere cancer poultice.

As a physician I would despise myself, and be rightly held contemptible by my colleagues, did I content myself with treating symptoms alone and never touching the cause. For the whole tendency of scientific modern medicine is to cure by prevention—to go to the root of things—and not merely to dabble with effects.

Yet—think of it!—in not one single one of all the appeals for “charity” that I have received in the past thirty years has there been so much as a hint that poverty is a curable disease of the social body, and that the charitarians, in addition to relieving, were seriously trying to eradicate poverty by going down to its cause! How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable to the medical mind seems all this ceaseless cry of “Relieve, relieve, relieve!” untempered by the faintest whisper of “Cure”!

Now I, and many, many besides me, believe with Henry George that poverty *can* be cured, that it is not a divine institution but a devilishly infernal one. And because one thousand people will blindly give money for measures merely alleviative where one will give for eradication, therefore shall I devote what money and time I can to means that, to my mind, strike deep down at causes—strike not at symptoms but at the disease—and I shall give nothing, or next to nothing, to “charity.”

Perhaps you have never seriously considered the philosophy of Henry George. If so, do me the favor to read the enclosed. It will at least give you an outline of a doctrine that has encircled and enriched the world, that has infused new life and hope and religion into thousands, that is daily gaining new adherents and losing no old ones, and that is based on reason, on justice and on brotherly love.



IN A SWEATSHOP.

Richard Burton in *The Atlantic*.

Pent in, and sickening for one wholesome draught
Of air,—God's gift that cities sell so dear,
They stitch and stitch. The dim lights fall upon
Bent bodies, hollowed bosoms and dead eyes.
Their very mirth is horrible to hear,
It is so joyless! Every needle-stroke
Knits into dainty fabrics that shall go
Where Fashion flaunts, the protest and the pain
Of ravaged lives, of souls denied their food.
At last the clock-stroke! From the beetling shop
The prisoners file, and up and down the street
Scatter to hatches humorists call Home,
To sin, to die, or, if it may be, clutch
Some pleasure fierce enough to drown the thought
That on the morrow they must meet again.



The co-operation of all for the benefit of the few,
we are going to put into the rag-bag where Reform
keeps the other old clothes of history.—Henry
Demarest Lloyd.

POVERTY AND ORGANIZED CHARITY.

First Part of Address of Louis F. Post, Editor of
The Public, Before the Thirty-ninth National
Conference of Charities and Correction of
the United States, at Cleveland, Ohio,
June 17, 1912, on “Distribution of
Industry in Relation to Con-
gestion, Rent, Taxes.”*

As I understand the matter, I have been invited here in consequence of a letter which was addressed to the Charities and Correction Conference of last year by Joseph Fels. It seems to me well, therefore, to read that letter by way of introducing my subject and for the light it may throw upon what I shall have to say. This is the letter:

June, 1911.

To the Members of the National Conference Charities and Correction, Boston, Mass.:

Nineteen hundred years ago a charitable man was so eager to help the poor that he openly found fault with a woman who used costly oil in a ceremony in honor of One she highly esteemed. “It would have been better,” remarked this philanthropist, “to sell the oil and give the proceeds to the poor.” But he was soon informed that there are better ways to use wealth than in alms-giving.

The ceremony in which this oil was used was a practical method at that time of calling attention to the principles for which the man stood to whom honor was shown. Popular education on fundamental principles of justice and on practical means of enforcing them are required to establish conditions which will make alms-giving unnecessary.

That it is better to use money to remove the causes of poverty than for alms is a truth that is no longer denied by most prominent contributors to charity. But though the fact is conceded, action in accordance with it is not so freely taken. I have particularly in mind a remark made by a Kansas City gentleman who is prominent in the charitable circles of that city. He said that social workers admit the injustice on which the modern industrial system is based and that modern charity only aims to support helpless ones until the basic evils can be removed. If such is the case, I will be glad to co-operate with charity organizations in spite of the inexpediency of alms-giving, but I have seen too much that convinces me that it is not so.

The greater number of charitable contributors whom I know are either bitterly opposed or utterly indifferent to the reforms that will remove the fundamental wrongs which cause poverty. It will not do to plead in excuse for these that they do not know the cause, and are trying to find it. The cause is known and any one who sincerely wants to learn can easily do so in a short time. It is more than thirty years since Henry George showed in “Progress and Poverty” how land monopoly deprives the masses

*The Second Part of this address will appear in the next issue of *The Public*, under the title of “Poverty and the Singletax.”