

Destitution and Crime

CHAIRMAN KENNEDY of the New York Prison Commission reports that there are about 12,000 boys from sixteen to twenty-one years of age, confined in the prisons of that State, charged with crimes of violence.

The principal cause of youthful delinquency, he says, is want of religious instruction, and next, the lack of parental restraint in a well-ordered home.

Commenting on this report, the Catholic weekly, *America*, says:

"A conviction at eighteen may often trace back to a fourteen-year-old criminal in the making. This unhappy fact is a challenge to our schools, to our religious societies, and, in a larger sense, to society itself. * * *

"When social and economic conditions make homes impossible for thousands of upright, God-fearing fathers and mothers, it is greatly to be feared that the efforts of church and school will fail of their full effect. We all know of the Saints and heroes who grew up in the midst of grinding poverty. Perhaps we do not inquire so carefully into the effects of want and destitution. Poverty, voluntarily embraced, or accepted with resignation to the Divine Will, is a powerful quickener of sanctity. But the want and destitution which crowd a family into a hovel where there is no privacy, and often not even decency, and which force the growing boy and girl into the streets for amusement, count their victims by the thousands. * * *

"Until we can establish an economic system which will minimize the evils of the present regime, much of the work for the child which really belongs to the parent, must fall to the church and the school. Commissioner Kennedy is correct in stressing the need of religion and parental influence. But we must not forget the further need of social reform."

Port Newark

PORT NEWARK is a harbor and industrial development comprising about 1600 acres of land, bought by the City of Newark, N. J., in 1914 for about \$80 an acre. Most of this was marsh land adjoining Newark bay, and is being filled in and improved gradually. A new 40-acre tract has just been put under contract and will be ready for development by December, complete with dock facilities, railroad sidings, etc. Then this tract will be leased by the city on a twenty year basis with a sliding scale of increase.

So far the city has invested about ten million dollars in this enterprise, and last year the port showed a profit, though some of it was indirect. An income of \$122,000 was derived from rentals, and the city officials estimate that the added taxes from adjacent property which has gone up in value because of the port project reached \$500,000 for the year. This rental comes from only 320 acres, and as the expense of developing the rest will be much less proportionately, a very large income is expected when the project is finished. And as the city will not sell, but plans to lease on a sliding scale, the revenue will increase as land values rise because of the greater commercial activity resulting from additional development.

Of course while the public reaps the benefits of the increased land values within the area owned by the city of Newark, only a part of the value given to adjacent areas by these public expenditures goes to the treasury through taxation; a far larger part going to the owners of such adjacent land. But until our land and tax systems are changed so as to take the rent of all land for public purposes, such projects as that of Port Newark are useful in retaining for the people the increased rent of so much of the land as the City acquired; and useful also as an object lesson to show how under a proper system, public revenues would be directly increased as a result of public expenses.

How to Pay for a Court House

THE following item is from the *New York Times* of February 11.

When Borough President Julius Miller of Manhattan formally turns over the New York County Court House, Pearl and Centre Streets, to Acting Mayor McKee at the dedication of the new structure at 10.30 o'clock this morning, he will announce that the \$11,500,000 site of the court house centre has practically paid for itself. It has nearly done so by the yearly increase in unimproved real estate values since the City of New York assembled the large plot for the new court house and Civic Centre.

The surplus land, which was left over after a site for the court house was utilized, is equal in value, according to President Miller, to the original purchase price of the entire plot. The surplus is to be used for other buildings to be erected as part of the New York Civic Centre.

Several months ago the city sold its surplus unused land at auction and made several million dollars above cost. A few years ago Hon. Edward Polak, at that time Registrar of the Bronx borough, advocated that the city lease this land for home building purposes so as to supply the housing shortage, obtain a revenue for the city, and the city would receive the increment. This land would come in handy now for the Limited Finance Building Corporation to build cheap apartments upon. Their complaint is now that they cannot buy land at a low enough price so as to erect buildings at a low rental. This is another object lesson for our public officials to ponder over.

An Old Established Paper For the Single Tax

THE *Montreal Witness* in answer to our friend, Alexander Hamilton, of Pender Island, B. C., who wrote that he was glad that the paper had taken a definite stand on our principles, replies as follows:

We can reciprocate our correspondent's pleasure by saying that we are glad that he has discovered the *Witness*, which has always held his main proposition, namely, that ground rent belongs properly to the community, and has

never ceased, as occasion offered, to affirm or assume it, without any consideration of its own private interests or those of others. Our readers know quite well where we stand on the subject, and are, we assume, in the abstract at least, generally of the same mind. We can easily understand how journalists generally have had to be cautious about touching the subject, in view of the torrent of erudite and mystifying philosophy allusion to it was of old time sure to tap. It is now sixty years since Henry George challenged the world with this thesis. Probably, unless it were Karl Marx, there was no philosopher of the nineteenth—perhaps of any—century whose teaching took such a hold on mankind as that of this poor printer who observed in California in the crudest form the evils of landlordism. The currency of both these revolutionists was subterranean, little heeded on the learned surface of life, where the crazy Satanism of Nietzsche took such ready and blighting hold. It was no doubt, as our correspondent implies, willingly neglected by those whose interests could not welcome it.

An Eloquent Tribute to Henry George

AT the beginnings of the several divisions of "Progress and Poverty" Henry George put quotations from old poems that had evidently haunted his mind with a kind of compelling melody; there were some verses by Charles Mackay, and one as we recall by Gerald Massey. These lines from poets little known to most men, with their refrain of a slowly emerging beneficent end foreshadowed through the sad human pages of oppression and misery, of social justice that was to come long after the centuries of the wretched toiling Egyptians, of old Socrates trudging through his cell "cheerily to and fro"—it was manifestly some such inspiring theme as this that ran in the heart and mind of that great leader along with his developing thought of a better time coming for all mankind. It was this fundamental note of faith that made "Progress and Poverty" one of the most profoundly eloquent works that have ever come from the hand of man.

—MCCREADY SYKES in *Commerce and Finance*.

No Answer But One

WHEN the purchaser of the Senator Clark house and lot on Fifth Avenue, New York City, said that he would have paid more for the property had there been no house on it, he said more than words.

This house cost about seven million dollars twenty-five years ago. It is to be replaced by an apartment house that will pay dividends. Real estate rides along on other folks' courage. A person who bought real estate in New York City 25 years ago and let it ride, gets millions out of nothing ventured.

People who own real estate are sometimes great objectors to the courage of others and profits arising from the successful ventures in what they call public equities. What greater public equity than in land monopoly? Is land with water-falling a public ownership and land with buildings on it private ownership? Is a wheat field essentially different from a water-power-field? These are questions that the Single Taxers will ask you. In cases like this, you have to think a whole lot before you can answer them, if you ever do answer them.

—*Evening Journal*, Lewiston, Me.

SEATTLE'S Chief of Police tells how a landlord recently visited him and complained that the cops would not let his tenants alone.

"I am paying \$18,000 a year taxes. How do you expect me to pay my taxes?" "Don't you know your tenants are operating brothels and blind pigs?"

"Yes," he replied. "But who else would rent the places (they are nothing but old shacks I am holding for speculation) and pay me enough to meet carrying charges."

This is a suggestion of one type of land speculation, and the indirect but efficient help it extends to vice.

THERE is a personal equation involved in the attitude of each and all of us toward the problems and tendencies of our time. Life is immeasurably freer, happier and fuller for us because other men and women of other times stood for justice and freedom when all the world seemed black and yet did not yield to the Devil's whisper, "What's the use?" At bottom we have that debt to pay and when we go over the Great Divide and meet the spirits of Milton and Franklin and Jefferson and Garrison and Lincoln and Emerson and Whitman and George and Hugo and Mazzini and above all, the Carpenter of Nazareth—we shall have less humiliation if we are able to give a positive answer to their question, "What did you do with that which I bequeathed you?"

—JUDSON KING.

“THE great criticism against rating is not merely that it lacks uniformity, and is unfair between the parties, but that it is unfair to the value of property that you tax and rate. This is the greatest grievance of all—that it taxes improvements. The more a landlord improves his property the higher he is rated; the more he neglects his property the less he is rated. . . . If he allows his cottages to fall into decay and become empty, his rates are less; but if he is a good sound landlord, who repairs ruinous cottages and builds new ones, up go his rates. The man who trusts to obsolete machinery in his business can keep his rates low; but the man who puts in new machinery and improves his buildings has to pay a higher contribution to the rates.”—MR. LLOYD GEORGE.