

We suspect more than a mere rhetorical flourish in the closing words of Dr. Silveira's address: "*The idea must triumph, for Democracy must prevail.*" Is South America, with its less stereotyped political creed, to learn before we do that the sign and substance of real democracy is economic justice?

What public interest is served by our present system of placing the burden of taxation more lightly upon the inadequate use of land than upon the adequate use of land?

New Jersey Single Taxers For a National Convention

MARK M. DINTENFASS
NOMINATED FOR GOVERNOR

A MEETING of the State Committee of the Single Tax Party of New Jersey took place Saturday afternoon, March 29th, at the Hotel Robert Treat, in Newark.

There were several resolutions adopted by the meeting. Following is a portion of one of these which after some debate was passed unanimously:

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the State Committee of the Single Tax Party of New Jersey, in meeting assembled at the City of Newark, New Jersey, this 29th day of March, 1919, hereby declare that we are heartily in favor of the formation of a National Organization of the Single Tax Party, having a National Committee to be chosen from among the delegates or representatives from the various States of the Union that shall co-operate in the formation of the said National Organization and shall become integral parts thereof.

It is proposed that on June 20 a New Jersey Single Tax Conference be held.

Mark M. Dintenfass, who is one of the leading figures in the moving picture world, was nominated for Governor of New Jersey, amid much enthusiasm. He said he would make the fight in no half-hearted way, but would make an effort to reach every voter of the State with arguments for the Single Tax. The candidate will make his appeal to voters on the moving picture screen.

A Proposition From Missouri

WE HAVE been very much interested in an article in the January number of *Land and Labor*, the little publication issued by the Homestead Land and Labor League of Missouri. The article is by Vernon J. Rose. The name itself inspires respect as that of one who has labored long and earnestly for the cause. It is apparent, too, that the suggestion offered has been carefully considered. It is therefore in no spirit of cavilling criticism that we purpose to examine it.

We are in a serious time. Something must be done to avert the catastrophe that threatens civilization. There is but one measure adequate to arrest the destructive forces

that are at work. That is the measure that will set free the productive forces of industry and permanently raise wages.

The Single Taxers are beaten in California and Missouri. The Democratic Party is fast becoming the reactionary party; the Republicans offer as little hope for radical after-the-war reconstruction, about which we have heard so much from amateur reformers of all stripes.

It is not surprising that Single Taxers should now be looking for short cuts to the goal. Not necessarily, let us say, for half-way measures; we do Mr. Rose the justice to believe that he would not favor any mere measure of tax-tinkering. He is for the Single Tax unlimited, if it can be obtained. He does not think it can be at the present stage. What he proposes therefore is "a heavy tax on all land values except land actually occupied and used by the owner thereof as a home." He says:

"If we would do this we would remove the fear of confiscation of their homes from the farmers and workers who have striven to secure them. At the same time, we relieve them from a burden of taxation. We stimulate the basic industry of this country. A tax rate high enough to destroy speculation in land and thus reduce the price, will strike at the very tap root of landed privilege and exploitation, and make the securing of homes possible."

We are not inclined to interpose an imperative "no" to this proposal. If we had any notion that it could be carried where the whole measure would fail we would almost welcome it. But we do not think it could. We think it would call for pretty much the same kind of opposition that the full measure arouses, with the addition of a new kind of opposition based on its inequality. It would not close the door to land speculation in home sites, but would rather encourage it. Some purely resident suburban communities would find themselves confronted with insufficient sources of revenue. The man who rents his modest home would know that he was taxed to maintain the public services of his community while his millionaire neighbor who owns his home goes free of taxes on his land and improvements. We imagine that such a system of taxation would not appeal to him.

We cannot impress too often upon our friends everywhere this golden truth—*There is no short cut to the Single Tax.*

BOOK REVIEW

A DESPAIRING PHILOSOPHY.*

Mr. Swift paints with a full brush and lays in the shadows in the deepest of lamp blacks. In his survey of the evolution of human society up to its culmination in the chaotic conditions of today, Man is exhibited not only as a blunderer from the beginning, but as a being in whom brutality and cunning have always been the driving forces, though camouflaged by a veneer of putty and varnish into a semblance of altruism. Breaking away from the natural law through which by variation and the survival of the fittest, animal life has evolved to its highest point, man organized an iron-clad system specially designed to prohibit improvement, and to this end suppressed as quickly as they arose those favorable variations intended by nature to meet changing conditions. He then divided himself into the two categories

*"Can Mankind Survive?" by Morrison I. Swift. Published by Marshall Jones Company, Boston. Price \$1.50.

of masters and slaves and developed hatred as his dominant and abiding creed. But his carefully planned scheme was nearly upset by the appearance of that mysterious and seemingly superfluous element, the milk of human kindness. His native cunning was, however, equal to the emergency. Being unable entirely to suppress it, and being himself not quite impervious to the attractions of gentleness, he made the astonishing discovery that by capturing the friendship of the exponents of kindness and through their services hypnotizing the minds of the slaves into acquiescence in their slavery, he could retain the spoils of his knavery while satisfying the more his refined instincts by a relaxation of his brutality in proportion as the evolution of the slave mind made it unnecessary. And so it came about that the right to live upon others is questioned neither by the slaves nor by the masters. Both have become spiritual drug-fiends and the injunction of duty as regards the many is "the obligation to permit the few to live upon them, whereas the duty of the few is to live on the many as politely as possible." But the worst has yet to be told. Not only have man's hypocrisy and stupidity brought him to that condition of unstable equilibrium that provokes the question contained in the book's title, but his nature has become so depraved through the accumulation of inherited deteriorations as to make it doubtful whether he can ever achieve the stupendous brain transformation necessary to raise him again even to the moral level of the so-called lower animals.

It need hardly be said that the book is a dirge of despair in comparison with which Nietzsche and Max Nordau are harbingers of good cheer, and one's first impulse is to search for the point at which the author has wandered into the bye-path that has led to conclusions which every healthy minded man knows to be untrue. That the mutual relations between both nations and men today are as bad as Mr. Swift can possibly paint them we need not deny. That even in the most peaceable countries of the world, sections of society are literally living upon their fellow-men, though stupified by false philosophies into unconsciousness of the fact, is obvious to the meanest intelligence; and among the valuable truths he brings to light is the fact that Germany only aspired to do on a world scale what the privileged classes of all countries have been doing within their own boundaries—dominating and living upon their fellows. But to account for this tragic denouement it is not necessary to assume an innate depravity of human nature or even to charge it with a colossal and persistent capacity for blundering. It is only needful to recognize that man, being destined to become a free and self-determining creature, emerged from the kingdom that is ruled by instinct with an entirely new possibility in him—that of choosing and therefore of erring—and that at the outset of his career he made one initial mistake to which may be traced all the slaveries, cruelties and self-deceptions that now blacken the face of the world. *He took the wrong way of raising public revenue.* Not having noticed that the increased well-being or wealth due to mutual helpfulness reflects itself accurately in the values of natural opportunities, he failed to tax these values into the public purse, and thoughtlessly permitted their appropriation by individual landowners along with the alternative power of locking up those opportunities at will; thus creating the "man living upon man" conditions which have debased both of the classes whom Mr. Swift describes as the knaves and the slaves. It was an egregious error and one for which mankind has paid a frightful penalty. But it may be that the retracing of his steps and the correcting of this colossal blunder may turn out to be the final discipline required for the tempering of the human soul and its preparation for the boundless possibilities which this glorious world offers.

Will the correcting of this initial mistake in sociology release mankind from all its disastrous consequences? The new school of economists, relying on the righteous working-out of the natural system of taxation and upon the fundamental goodness of human nature, fervently believes it will. Mr. Swift, having evidently no notion that there is such a thing as a natural system of social economics, and being obsessed by the bugaboo of heredity and the cumulative transmission of racial degeneracies, is doubtful as to whether the day of possible salvation for humanity is not past. For the realization of such small hope as remains, he conceives that a titanic effort will be required. "The

change it will require in man's character is staggering. . . . Its accomplishment will demand all human ability. The whole race, or at least all the better races must consecrate themselves to that end. . . . If Man does not now will to make the world perfect and to change his nature cardinally and wholly, there is nothing but red ruin ahead of him."

What is the matter with the mentality of this gifted writer? His attitude suggests an arrested development after a too rapid growth. For it is evident he has missed just those final insights that might have converted his gloomy pessimism into a vision of boundless and immediately-realizable possibilities. The best one can wish is that he might be impelled to a study of the law of rent and the co-relative law of wages; and that he would also go through a course of Weissmanism on "The continuity of the germ-plasm" and the non-transmissibility of acquired characters. From the first he would learn that man's initial error in the laying of taxes is amply sufficient to account for all the chaotic human relationships that have followed. From the second he might be led to suspect that habits whether good or bad, are transmitted from generation to generation, not congenitally or through the channels of heredity, but by becoming part of the social heritage of customs and ideals that greets each new life as it comes to consciousness—and without affecting the quality of the parent stock upon which individual lives are grafted. To realize that the only stubbornly transmissible or heritable quality in animals or man, is the sensitiveness to the influence of environment, is to understand not only how easily human nature is corrupted, but how easily and naturally it may rise to unimaginable degrees of goodness simply through the reversion to an environment of natural freedom. To achieve this natural environment let us work for the rectification of that ancient blunder, and lay our taxes where they should always have lain, on the Social Estates—the value of the land and natural opportunities.

ALEX. MACKENDRICK

CORRESPONDENCE

FROM PROF. HARRY GUNNISON BROWN

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I have been puzzled to note lately, in the columns of the *SINGLE TAX REVIEW*, a discussion as to whether *protection* is necessary in the absence of the adoption of the Single Tax, a discussion in which the editor *seems* to have taken the affirmative side. Owing to the fact that I am only a new subscriber and did not see the beginning of the discussion, I may have misinterpreted the meaning of some of the statements made. But if I have not, I believe I can offer a perfectly logical criticism.

The argument for protection under present circumstances seemed to be, as I understand it, that American industries, e.g., the manufacture of woolen cloth, need protection against foreign rivals *because the former are now taxed on their capital, such as buildings*, instead of being really free from taxation as it is urged they would be under Single Tax. This would be entirely true if the protected industries were alone so taxed. But it is not true if the tax on buildings, etc., is general. For, although such a tax may, indeed, make all home industries be so much less profitable, it is no heavier upon the wool manufacturing business than upon some other business—e.g., the manufacture of structural material for bridges—which our business men would prefer to engage in if not diverted into the manufacture of woolen cloth by a tariff. In other words, if, under the Single Tax, the exportation of structural steel for bridges would be a cheaper method of getting woolen cloth than the making of cloth directly, this would also be true under *any form of taxation of industry* so long as it did not discriminate between the industries. To tax the two industries in question *both alike*, would leave the one which would be better under no taxation, still the better of the two.

To express the matter in a different way, let me point out that if, with no taxes, we could undersell foreign rivals here in woolen cloth, we could and would continue to do so if the woolen cloth business were taxed, provided the bridge material and other businesses were likewise taxed. If the other businesses remained untaxed, Americans might, indeed, only remain in the woolen cloth business by virtue of being allowed higher prices to make up for the tax, because they could escape it by going into some other business [See my Theory of Earned and Un-