

The Single Tax, April, 1902

Mr. W. E. Macklin, who just now is translating China. Patrick Edward Dore's "Theory of Human Progression" into Chinese, writes to the Editor of the Single Tax Review, U.S.A., as follows :—

"Mr. Pohlman, in his article in the summer number of the Review, is wrong about the origin of the single tax in Kiaochou. A friend of mine who read 'Progress and Poverty' at my place, suggested it to Governor Schrameur and Admiral von Diedrichs, so it was started locally.

Kiaochou is not the only place in China where the single tax is applied. We have a health resort in the hills a few miles from Kuthang, which is on the Yangtse. These hills are 4000 to 5000 feet high, and the resort is quite flourishing. There are now over 100 houses, ranging in value from [unreadable] dols. to 10,000 dols.

In establishing a constitution a very rich Scotchman, a charity giver, like Mr. Carnegie, led. It was evidently modelled after George III.'s methods. I very strongly opposed it, and suggested equal voting power, but was hooted down.' Kings of society have great power, and many pay court and toady. Several of my single tax missionary friends and myself got up political meetings next year, broke up the property vote, and applied the "one man, one vote" system.

We had, in the old regulation, to pay 10 dols. a lot, and 24 dols. house tax. We then adopted a 20 dols. lot tax, and 14 dols. house tax. This is equal to 2 per cent, on the land values. Lots have come down from 1200 dols. to 500 dols. and 600 dols. as a result, and many vacant lot holders have sold out. It is now understood that it does not pay to hold vacant lots at 2 per cent. tax.

A Captain Flagg, on one of the river steamers, told a friend of mine that I had hurt the place by the heavy tax on lots, and that he had sold out, as he would not pay such taxes. My friend told him that that was the purpose of the tax. Our Shanghai evening paper publishes all I can write on single tax. Two hundred or more landlords rule Shanghai, keep rents up to 25 per cent, and 50 per cent., and makes the tenants pay 10 per cent, and 12 per cent, taxes in their huts and houses.

There is no more landlord-cursed city than Shanghai in the world, but the leaven is working.