

experience. You are invited to get into a very small, iron-clad elevator. Suddenly down you glide with a speed that seems like a mile a minute. Your thoughts are necessarily rapid, too. My predominant one dealt with the bottom—how high we'd bounce when we hit.

But we didn't hit. We came to a gentle stop several hundred feet short of the bottom, and stepped out on the 1,200-foot level, not without speculations, however, as to what we might hit when we should shoot up. Suffice to say that within a couple of hours I was walking on the surface of the earth again without having hit anything, going up or down the mine shaft.

That trip down the copper mine taught me how mines must be assessed when the single tax on ground values, irrespective of improvements, shall be applied, and so get a great revenue into the public treasury while penalizing the holding of valuable natural opportunities out of use.

The usual way of taxing a mine is upon the basis of output. No output, no basis for any tax whatever, as witness the Minnie Healey Mine, notoriously one of the richest mines in Butte, but which, I was told, is, for reasons sufficient unto the combination owners, not at this time being worked. Also witness the piece of copper land for which ex-Senator Clark refused a million dollars, but which he was only nominally working.

Of course this mineral land should be taxed, not upon its output—which makes the tax depend upon the industry applied—but upon its market price.

Public assessors should be mining engineers and should determine the value of the ore land precisely as buyers and sellers determine it. They follow along the ore seams, get the breadth and thickness of such seams, and make frequent assays of the ore. These two things determine quantity and quality of ore. The experienced mining man knows that this is the only way to determine what he is buying. The way he arrives at the value of what he is buying is the way the public assessor must determine the value for assessment.

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The evening of the day I went down the mine I lectured in Butte, under the management of Mr. F. H. Monroe of the Henry George Lecture Association. Following the lecture many came out of the audience to shake hands. Among these were three gentlemen who invited me to go with them to the Butte club. I went, and found them anxious to ask about the application of the single tax. One of them proved to be an important man in the administration of the Butte mines. He questioned and listened with undisguised interest. He was not, however, too communicative about how he thought the single tax would operate, especially upon the copper land not in use. But another of the gentlemen thought such a tax would have a very wholesome effect on a lot covered by a wretched, abandoned and partly fallen stable on a corner opposite the club. The club was anxious to have the lot cleared or properly built upon and used, but the owner refused to allow either unless he got a big price.

The truth is that just as the tax would force the stable lot into a good use, so would it force the

idle copper lands into use. Incidentally it would extract an immense public revenue from all the copper lands, thus breaking the back of the copper combination.

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There can be no doubt of the rapid spread of the single tax ideas through Montana. Discussion of tariff taxation is very general. The Canadian reciprocity proposal has stimulated this discussion greatly. Arguments for free trade are no longer violently antagonized. Discussing free trade raises the question of alternative means of taxation. Hence consideration of the single tax.

One of the most interesting Montana audiences, before which I was invited to lecture on three subjects, was in the northwest at Whitefish, under the auspices of a Catholic young men's association—the Borromeo Club. Three young progressives—David Phelan, James Cavanaugh and Carl Walters—are at the head of it.

The priest of the parish, Rev. Dr. C. M. Van Aken, is the secretary of the club. He is the kind of priest to keep your eye on. He believes that Catholics should be abreast of the times—hear every live question discussed. He was born in Holland, as his name might suggest; had a finished education; and has three or four languages at his command. He developed such remarkable organizing abilities that he was "lent" by the Bishop of Helena, Montana, to the Bishop of Alberta, Canada, for three years, to bring over from Holland and colonize in the Province of Alberta farmers and their families. He brought over eighty such families and established them on 160 and 80-acre farms which the Canadian Pacific is selling—each with a house built, a well dug, the land plowed and the whole enclosed by a fence. I have forgotten about what the price of such farms is, but the impression left on my mind is that as such things go the price asked was reasonable.

Dr. Van Aken located his farmers six or eight miles from Calgary, the largest city in Alberta, and had the honor of having the neighborhood named after him—"Akenstad," meaning Aken City.

HENRY GEORGE, JR.

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PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRACY IN PENNSYLVANIA.*

Pittsburgh, March 17.

The Democratic reorganization committee met at Harrisburg March 14th, and deposed J. M. Guffey as national committeeman and A. G. Dewalt as State chairman, naming Congressman A. Mitchell Palmer and former Mayor George W. Guthrie of Pittsburgh to take their places. This was welcome news to every true Democrat in the State.

For years they had waged battle for a change in leadership, but, the party machinery being in the hands of Republicans masquerading as Democrats, the task was fruitless. Not until the shameful deal of last fall, when it became clear to every Democrat that their leaders had again served Penrose instead of their own party, did the Democrats throughout the State come to a full realization of

*See The Public, volume xlii, p. 1208; volume xlv, p. 102.

this double dealing. They saw their party vote in the State reduced from 400,000 to 129,000. They recalled other results almost as humiliating, and then resolved to oust the leaders in whom they had lost confidence.

This was not accomplished easily. The old leaders fought to the last ditch. They summoned to their aid all the political trickery in which they are so well schooled. They begged for a little time in order to resign "honorably." They used their formerly effective plea for "harmony." But none of their schemes worked. The reorganizers had met to reorganize, and were not disposed to accept any overtures or counsel from men who had time and again proven themselves recreant to their trust.

Reluctantly do the Interests view the birth of a new Democracy in Pennsylvania. The Penrose-Guffey oligarchy had hoped to retain control of what was left of the Democratic machine until after the nomination for President in 1912. Their plans are foiled, and this should be welcome news to Progressives of both parties throughout the nation.

The new leaders, Palmer and Guthrie, are democratic Democrats. They have the respect and confidence of their followers. They are clean leaders. The Democratic party of this State has now the long hoped-for opportunity to redeem the past and establish its future.

It was a happy coincidence that while the reorganization committee were in session at Harrisburg doing this great work, William Jennings Bryan was delivering throughout the State his lecture on "The Passing of Plutocracy."

BERNARD B. MCGINNIS.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

LETTERS FROM CHINA—I.

Peking, January 15, 1911.

An Awakening Country.

I have been in Peking two months. It is the most interesting place in the world, though there is much about it that gives one a feeling of horror—such a great, monstrous, helpless mass of ignorance and poverty and dishonesty—a chief servant and cook receiving four or five dollars a month and providing his own food; a whole neighborhood attributing an epidemic of grip to a bit of decent highway recently constructed; all classes of officials as dishonest as our Tammany. A book concerning Chinese village life, which I have been reading, is enough to break your heart.

Here's a glimpse in a little story. A farmer in China expects to sleep in his field when the wheat is ripening, because otherwise his neighbors will steal it. An American imported a cradle to cut wheat, hoping to induce the natives to substitute it for the sickle. The villagers looked on as it cut the wheat. Then an old man lifted up his voice to say that the implement would do very well so long as you had it yourself, but it would not be safe because if your enemy got it, he could come and cut your wheat in a hurry before you could catch him. This argument was accepted as decisive by all the villagers, and the cradle has been rejected.

And of course also it is true that the work of educating the great mass and raising them even to the level of the United States, will take time. But there is one thing that is most encouraging, or rather these two: first, the country has developed a number of very great men and women, for there has been a possibility, though but a slender one, for a woman to make herself a force in China; and second, here, as nowhere else in the world, the ruling classes have accepted the inevitable and have forwarded the means by which the new era is to be brought in. I do not mean, indeed, to imply that there has been no opposition, for, in fact, it has happened that the ruling powers have found it hard to accept the working out in practice of the new ideas which in principle they accept. Of this I shall give you some illustrations later. The question why the Government of China itself, with so little struggle, appointed the Commission for the Study of Constitutional Government, ordered the meeting of the Provincial Assemblies, and in other respects is steadily working in the same direction,—this is an interesting one, and to my mind suggests that China has immense possibilities and will make rapid progress to catch up with other nations. Possibly the long sleep of China, like the lying fallow of ground, may have left conditions for tremendous efficiency when once the nation awakes. Possibly the exaltation of the scholar, the appointment to office by literary tests, and the rejection of the soldier, have made this change easier.

Irritating Foreigners.

Now to understand what has taken place here, or at any rate to understand my theory of it, you must remember that until recently the whole Chinese people have believed themselves superior to foreign nations and have been quite content to remain ignorant of all their ways.

But foreigners of all nations had been coming in for many years, both as missionaries and on mercantile errands,—and they constantly, when they got into trouble, appealed to their own governments for protection. In the case of missionaries particularly, it was perhaps natural that they should find themselves, and even more, their native converts, becoming objects of suspicion and hatred, that they should sometimes be treated, or believe themselves treated, unjustly by their native neighbors, and that they should appeal to their own governments for protection.

But it is equally natural that the Chinese should be aggrieved at this interference with the control by their authorities of the administration of justice in their own country.

A further and even more serious cause of exasperation arose from the extra-territoriality doctrine and practice of other nations. An illustration of this is found in the position of the legations here. Along the road from my hotel toward the Forbidden City, in which the Emperor lives, is a tract of land nearly three-quarters of a mile square, wholly within the walls of the Tartar city of Peking; and there, within the walls, less than a rifle shot from the Emperor, the authority of his officers is not recognized, and instead each of the foreign nations represented by legations has jurisdiction within its own lines.

The thing which impresses me most about the