

Jefferson as a totem pole or waving the trophies of General Jackson at every election.

It was the traditions of Jeffersonian democracy that lured the Single Taxers into the Democratic ranks and led them to hope against hope that the old guard would and could come back. They were doomed to disappointment and disillusionment for the Single Tax is fundamental dynamite to vested wrong and it never had a chance.

The Single Taxer blundered in believing that the old guard cared anything for the faith of Jefferson. To their mind, that was ancient history. Had they read history with ordinary care, they would not have blundered. One striking instance of this stands forth in familiar sacred history:—The New Dispensation in the history of the Jews. The old guard of the Synagogue would have nothing of Him while the rank and file heard Him gladly. When He became dangerous to their organization, they found a way to get rid of Him. Nor did the Nazerene attempt to promulgate his truth through the perfect and powerful religious organization of his day. It was too fundamental. Even His disciples could not understand this and they cried out against Him, but He would not spare them the light. He chose the only possible way—the rough and stony path and saved the Cross.

The truth recalled by Henry George in "Progress and Poverty" is bringing on another irrepressible conflict. It is already vitally affecting human thought over the world. England, her colonies and war stricken Europe are gradually turning to it. Through what length of time it will run, nobody knows, but the blunder of the past is corrected. It is again becoming NEWS and the day of suppression is over and a new SINGLE TAX PARTY a going concern in the U. S. and elsewhere. The paths will be kept open and the standard unfurled to serve as a rallying point for those who have lost hope in the "Old Guards." It has taken geologic patience, but the day is breaking and the movement can no longer be ignored. It will find more and more men and women who will ask nothing of it but the right to work and fight for it for the spirit of the Single Taxer is the spirit of the Crusader. It is the only answer to bolshevism and the doctrine of Karl Marx and is native to American soil and not associated with a foreign accent, for Henry George was a native born American of an honored stock.

N. A. VYNE.

Now, go into the cities, and what do you see? Why, you see even a lower depth of poverty; aye, if I would point out the worst of the evils of land monopoly I would not take you to Connemara; I would not take you to Skye or Kintyre—I would take you to Dublin, or Glasgow or London. There is something worse than physical deprivation, something worse than starvation; and that is the degradation of the mind, the death of the soul. That is what you will find in those cities. —HENRY GEORGE.

Letters to A Socialist Friend

I

My Dear Bob:—

We have known each other too long not to be perfectly frank on matters upon which we differ. You know that I esteem very highly your knowledge of history, of literature and belles lettres. But for your opinions on economics, which you fondly call your "convictions," I am forced to entertain a rather contemptuous indulgence.

For you are like so many men of literary gifts. Your mental attitude toward questions of economic or social importance are aesthetical rather than ethical. You do not think it becoming or really polite to be moved strongly, to hold to truth with the vigor and strength of deep-seated conviction. All this jars upon your sensitive temperament, your love of beauty, your sense of the rhythmical in nature. Yet one of your favorite poets has said:

"Beauty is Truth, Truth beauty—that is all
We know on earth and all we need to know."

Your hatred of our present unjust social system springs therefore from your love of beauty, or what is the same thing, your hatred of ugliness. The ethical seems too hard and rigid a thing. Therefore your philosophy is one-sided. You miss so much of the problem.

You are attracted to socialism principally because of your aesthetical attitude toward every problem. You make your own socialism, just as every other socialist does—out of your imagination. You make a beautiful picture—and call it economics. You anathematize social institutions, and think your fulminations sociological, whereas they are only the reactions of a super-refined intellect to the ugliness of which you complain.

I do not quarrel with your attitude. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." But somehow you do not feel this as Keats did. Your intellect succumbs to the aesthetical, is overwhelmed by it. You construct your social structure as an artist in love with beauty, you do this with the creative impulse, and because you are an artist, and love to see the thing taking shape, as under the sculptor's hand the plastic clay is moulded to shapes of grace and beauty. But social and economic institutions are not builded in this way. There is no need to construct them artificially. They are here, as much a part of the ordained universe as the suns and the seasons.

THE NATURAL LAWS

You grow impatient when I talk of laws—the laws of wages, the law of rent, the law of competition. You see the anarchy of distribution—straightway, because of its imperfections, its actual hideousness, you would substitute for it a creation of your own imagining, like the artist, never like the scientist.

Your love of beauty has made you intellectually lazy. You will not think—you prefer to feel—again like the

artist. It is so hard for you to realize that your attitude is fatal to an understanding of the fundamental natural laws in economics. These you will not see. You will not even admit their existence. So enamoured are you of the social structure you have builded with your imagination and your sense of the artistic, like the palace of Kubla Khan, out of your dream, beautiful indeed, but not natural—not out of nature, and therefore not real.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The same attitude of mind makes you impervious to the conception of natural rights. This is the more remarkable in that you might presumably be looked to to include an inheritance in the enjoyment and sense of beauty as a right of the individual in society. But "rights" somehow seem to you as dealing with something hard and fast and therefore to be dismissed. Thus with the right of property. In your scheme which deals so largely with the immaterial and the intangible you sweep aside any ethical consideration respecting property. You build your ethereal social structure with new concepts, ignoring the old. Yet I respectfully submit that the old concept regarding property is the most indestructible of them all. It is so because it is true. You cannot afford to ignore this conviction of the right of property. You do so at the peril of all your nicely adjusted schemes of economic re-building.

On the rights of property has been built such civilization as we have. In spite of confusion as to what is property and what is not, men feel instinctively that what they produce is their own. The family life is largely built around this concept; the tender care lavished on loved ones; the saving for others when we depart; the sense of satisfaction in earning and keeping. Who would destroy this concept, or weaken it in any degree, are running up against a wall of stone.

THE SOURCE OF ALL OUR TROUBLES

And here is a point I have often tried to make clear to you, which is that we must build our new economic civilization on the rights of property, about which you are accustomed to speak lightly. All our troubles arise out of a confusion as to the rights of property. What is property? Anything that is really wealth. Not things that are called wealth, but what is really wealth—anything produced by human labor, which can be exchanged for other products of hand and brain. These objects are clearly not land nor slaves. Slaves are men and land is the universe. Things produced by human labor, and land, the reservoir from which they are extracted and to which access must be had before anything can be produced, cannot be included in the same category and called "property." The inequality in distribution that we see is wholly due to the mistaken identity in practice regarding these two things—wealth and the source of wealth.

I know how impatient you are with these distinctions, that you actually regard and term them as "fine spun."

Yet they are essential to a clear understanding of our whole economic structure. You should see that your plan of social reorganization without considering these important distinctions is far too easy. "Truth lies at the bottom of the well." Its discovery entails some hard thinking. Forgive me if I say that you have apparently no inclination to think but prefer to feel, and then only to feel as the artist feels, with a kind of intoxication in your imaginings. Out of it rises a Utopia in which fundamental things are ignored and true concepts of property disappear. It is all too shaky, unenduring, built of the insubstantial stuff that dreams are made of. It belongs to the glories of cloudland, very beautiful indeed, but lacking all the facts of human experience, all the elements that natural laws fuse into institutions. I know you love it because it is poetry. It is aspiration; not reason. It is not built upon laws discovered that can be rationalized about. And it runs counter to some very important instincts of the human race.

In my next letter I shall deal with the laws that make inevitable the breakdown of your social Utopia—which in our own time indeed have wrecked one or two well meant experiments of the kind.

JOSEPH DANA MILLER

The British Isles Not Overpopulated

REV. DAN FREEMAN BRADLEY, D. D., pastor of the Pilgrim Congregational Church, returned from Europe pronounces confidently on a number of highly disputed points. "England," he says, 'needs to send a large number of its citizens to its colonies; the colonies need them and England does not.' Well, admitting, for the sake of argument, that there are more people in the British Isles than can get a living, why send out the husky, young and willing workers, as the government is now doing? Is that good public policy? Why not as Henry George advised, compel the landlords to emigrate? They produce nothing and consume a great deal. But, as a matter of fact, the British Isles are not overpopulated in proportion to the means of subsistence. That has been demonstrated time and time again. Large areas of good fertile land are kept idle for speculation purposes and for the pleasure of the rich. Much building space in and near town and cities is held at prohibitive prices while people are crowded into cheap and costly quarters. Land from which building supplies are obtained is cornered. Pshaw! Give us the ownership of the land of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and we could make them appear crowded with only half the present population. As a matter of fact, the same complaint of overcrowding was heard years ago, when the population was much smaller than it is now. Dr. Bailey should think again!

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