

goes. That entire increase, due solely to social progress, is private property! This three years' increase alone in the land values of New York is equal to more than \$100 for every man, woman and child of the population.

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## AN IDEAL CHICAGO, AND THE COST OF IT.

### I. Preliminary Observations.

In the sweltering summer time three months ago, the Commercial Club of Chicago put out plans and specifications for an ideal city, and the Chicago papers were full of the subject.

The plans exhibited a beautiful conception—beautiful even in the narrow sense of mere art-culture, but beautiful also in that larger sense of an exquisitely attractive adaptation of means to ends for great communal uses. Any one of discernment will say so after looking at the plans themselves, which are still on public exhibition at the Art Institute.

But the weather was too hot at the time to say much or to think much of this project after the first journalistic outburst; and not a great deal was said of it after that, nor perhaps much thinking done about it—not even by the Mayor, who, at his own request, was authorized by the City Council in July to appoint a commission of aldermen and private citizens to take the matter in charge.

In the cooler weather of autumn, however, one's thoughts may turn with freshness and steadiness to the merits and possibilities of so magnificent an undertaking.

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It is not a local matter merely.

The complete reconstruction of the second city of the Republic on lines of great common utility and transcendent beauty, is in itself a subject for national enthusiasm.

Simply as a spectacle it should be of universal interest, and it is to be more than a spectacle.

The utility of it, the beauty of it, the subtle art that unites the two, its constructively revolutionary character, the adaptability of the plans to other municipal sites, the financial problems it raises, the civic spirit it puts to the test of sincerity—these and kindred considerations give to the Commercial Club's movement for an Ideal Chicago, elements of human interest which cannot be confined within any one city's municipal boundary lines. It must appeal with peculiar intensity of interest to the best thought of every community in the land.

There is, it is true, something sinister in the trademark.

For civic purposes the Commercial Club of Chicago is not a name to conjure with. The highest ideal of too many of its influential members is of the "cent-per-cent" order. Of course this makes its patronage a strong recommendation to the "cent-per-cent" class, to whom the fattening of investments is the chief end of mortal existence; and to them its endorsement of the Ideal Chicago has carried an agreeable fragrance of real-estate profits. But wherever else the prestige of the Commercial Club penetrates, this agreeable fragrance turns to an offensive odor. The working masses of Chicago—and we by no means limit this description to persons eligible to labor union membership—have little use for the Commercial Club or any of its recommendations.

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Yet it would hardly be fair or wise to judge that club in this matter by its "cent-per-cent" membership. Even if a sordid group does happen to be the more influential, a large part of the membership is not of this class. Among the members who are promoting the movement for an Ideal Chicago, are many men of genuine civic spirit.

Even if that were not so, the project should be considered upon its merits, regardless of its label; and such is the consideration we purpose giving it in a series of articles to follow this one.

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## THE UNECONOMY OF CERTAIN GREAT BENEFACTIONS.

It may be that the world is growing better, as Mr. Andrew Carnegie says, and that in the practical application of the thought of brotherhood, or trusteeship,\* by the very rich the struggle of the masses for existence will be turned into something of a festival; but history and philosophy seem to show that the line of human society's best interests runs counter to charity and beneficence—and ease.

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From the world's beginning man has contended, in a slowly-decreasing measure, against nature.

Her harsh laws have encompassed him, and there has been none to show mercy; but that which

\*In Cooper Union, New York, at a meeting (1903) of the People's Institute, Mr. Carnegie said in the course of an address: "Whenever the rich act as trustees and provide out of their surplus wealth for the genuine permanent good of the poor, then will be solved—and not till then—the question of wealth and poverty."

could not be overcome has been, after long and bitter experience, made serviceable by the individual's adaptation.

Over the stepping stones of crude and slavish, though successively improving, social systems we have passed. They were found not to permit of personal conformings to economic laws, and hence inadequate to right development.

Will the suggested "brotherhood," of which the millionaire is to be the potent center—a sort of feudalism, up-to-date—appease the burning desire of the discriminating common people—not for a thinly-disguised charity, but for great equality of opportunity and for justice?

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It is a truistic statement that the genuine, substantial progress of any people is in the mass. They rise, as they fall—together.

Mr. Carnegie's "leader,"\* if he is a successful one, is after all but a centralized expression of the times.

Moreover, the advance is four-square, so to speak. The arts, for instance, march to the same music as do the crafts, and the resultant general character is full and rounded. No one faculty of the body politic has been forced in its development at the expense of the others.

But with the advent of the multi-millionaire possessed of a fad for some special beneficence, it may be seen that danger of hindering and disarranging the orderly and natural growth of human society is very great.

It does not matter, so far as the economic principle is concerned, that the philanthropy takes the virtuous form of libraries, as in the case of Mr. Carnegie. The transmuting of millions upon millions of dollars into free books and cozy reading rooms means an undue stimulus on one side of the average character; it means a proportional drawing away of the person's attention from other pastimes and duties, which are often, no doubt, frivolous and wasteful, but still experience-teaching, eliminative, evolutionary. It may mean, as well, a habit of superficial reading and little thinking; of the debasing thought that the poor are properly the wards of the rich. Still other evils are conceivable. Withal there will be a certain amount of "education," but it will be premature—ahead of the people's normal assimilative powers, and at the expense of divers essentials of well-

\*"It is not the million, it is the individual man or woman through whom the divine impulse comes that raises us, that leads us on the path which, under the beneficent law of evolution, mankind is to follow. With every advance made by man there is always a leader, and then come the million."—Mr. Carnegie at Cooper Union.

being. True progress will be retarded until—in the course of generations, it may be—the outraged principles of growth assert themselves and nature's equilibrium is thereby re-established.

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The citation of the practice of library-giving connotes other great modern benefactions; for instance, the General Education Fund of Mr. Rockefeller.

The same objection of hot-house stimulus, without the full selective, chastening and strengthening experience of the ordinary life struggle, applies here also.

And this criticism may be reinforced by the fact that these millions were amassed largely through the artificial process of protection: "immoral" is the uncompromising way the late English prime minister, Campbell-Bannerman, described the high-tariff policy. In brief, the people, unwittingly it may be, tax themselves to create a monopoly; and the monopolist, in turn, grown old and rich, diverts parts of the proceeds from many little natural channels into one big individual Purpose-in-life.

There is here a sequence of broken economic laws; and while even this is doubtless "all in the evolution of things," the regrettable feature is ever that mankind, by just the amount of time spent in recovery, is delayed in the true and enduring forward movement.

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But how shall a multi-millionaire escape what has been called the disgrace of dying rich? It is his privilege to give away his money. How may he do it and not violate any of the principles of healthy growth of the whole people?

Where protection has been a factor in the accumulation of the wealth, it would be doubly fitting that the perturbed millionaire turn his surplus money over to the government, with the understanding that it be used to lessen general taxation, thereby affecting all the people in a restitutional way and with relative uniformity, not disturbing natural social growth by an undue stimulation in one direction, and curtailing as far as possible the penalties which follow the breaking of an economic law.

True, there would be little or no glory in the suggested procedure; no stately buildings heralding the name of the "benefactor" in carved stone, and "fame" would not be held so surely in the hollow of the rich man's hand. Therefore will the present generation hardly see it done.

It will be pointed out, quite likely, that municipal free libraries and State-supported colleges must logically be condemned under the present argument; but this view is based on a misconception.

The voice of the self-governing people has spoken when public institutions are established: libraries and schools are here but a reflex of prevailing sentiment and desire; all is democratic, all is natural.

But in the case of the millionaire "benefactor" a powerful and seductive individuality, at variance with the world's true economy, warps the social structure. The evil is so ramified, so insidious, and may endure, with seeming naturalness, through such a long period of time, that the mind does not easily apprehend it.

After all is said, we will very properly continue to believe the homely prophecy that "all will come out right in the end."

But let optimism be tempered by the thought that social evolution is not a continuously natural and forward movement—that it involves retrogression; and that on account of certain great benefactions of today, proximate (not ultimate) posterity, if not we ourselves, must be robbed of the fullest measure of well being and content.

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**EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE**

**HENRY GEORGISM IN AUSTRALIA.**

Sydney, N. S. W., Australia, Aug. 1.

It is commonly asserted by opponents of land values taxation that the advocates of this reform do not own land, and that they are seeking to promote a change in the incidence of taxation from purely selfish motives. Fortunately, I am in a position to be able to prove conclusively that there is nothing in such criticism.

At the same time I do not for one moment agree with the view that the landless have no interest in the land values of the country, and consequently no right to say whether they should be taxed or not. If all those who own no land in New South Wales left the country it would be a bad day for the landowners. It would reduce land values by about seventeen shillings in the pound. The owners of land in this state today are indebted to the landless for seventeen shillings in the pound of the value of the land they own. The right therefore of the landless to a voice in saying how the land shall be taxed is beyond question.

But in practice it is not really necessary.

The New South Wales local government act of 1906 gives the local taxpayers the right to demand a poll as to the incidence of local taxes, except the general rate, and loan rates under some conditions. So far there have been twenty polls.

But only land owners can demand a poll, and record their votes. See how careful Parliament was to deal tenderly with the interests of land owners. It gave them power to please themselves as to how they should be taxed. I must admit that I viewed this concession to the land owners with some misgiving. But it has proved groundless.

Here are all the available particulars about all the polls taken to date, all demanded and decided by the land owners themselves and in favor of land value taxation. They were taken in localities where conditions in many ways are widely different, but in each case the majority came to the same conclusion, viz., that their homes, shops, factories, farms, orchards and other improvements should be free from taxation:

	Against land values taxation.	For land values taxation.	Land values taxation. majority.
Alexandria .....	50	221	171
Waverley .....	333	413	80
Woollahra .....	171	371	100
Mosman .....	84	388	304
Randwick .....	248	322	74
Liverpool .....	20	169	149
Broken Hill.....	266	421	155
Wickham .....	39	222	183
Blayney .....	17	30	13
Blayney .....	10	21	11
East Maitland .....	84	88	4
East Maitland.....	72	84	12
Casino .....	23	101	78
Singleton .....	14	54	40
Singleton .....	16	52	36
Portland .....	7	98	91
Grafton .....	51	90	39
Wollongong .....	17	131	114
Uralla .....	6	37	31
Gilgandra .....	8	11	3
Totals .....	1,536	3,224	1,683

At those twenty land owners' polls there was more than a two to one majority in favor of rating upon unimproved values. It was simply a case of land users outvoting land speculators.

If we consider the matter for a moment it will be clear that such results are perfectly logical. The majority own land for use, not for pleasure or speculation. It was to them a case of financial gain. There was no sentiment about it at all. It was sound business. No doubt some saw that true principles and financial gain were running in double harness, while others merely did what it paid them to do.

The land is owned by a minority of the population (the proportion of land owners to landless being about one in eight); but it is a minority of that minority that really profits from the injustice of the private ownership of land values.

If we decided to make the interests on the cost of railways and tramways a charge upon the value of the land it would operate in exactly the same way. The same may be said of the substitution of land value taxation for customs duties. The whole single tax policy could be introduced with positive advantage to a large majority not only of the people as a whole, but even of the land owners themselves as a class.

As the people make land values they have a right to direct that such values shall be taken as public revenue, and expended in the interests of all. Ex-