

In Eighteen Ninety-Three, says this voracious handbook, a terrible blight struck the country, to-wit, the election of Cleveland. And statistics follow to prove it.

The wheat crop of '91 was six hundred million bushels; the wheat crop of '92, five hundred and some odd millions. The farmers in '93 put in the same quota of seed on nearly as many acres, but they didn't know in their blindness that the tariff of '94 was going to ruin their crop; they stupidly failed to realize that this tariff, which was not passed, would shrivel and wither the kernels; the result was they reaped, because of this far reaching tariff, less than four hundred millions. The Handbook has figures to prove it.

Of cotton in '92 the crop was nine million bales. The trusting planters made ready for a like crop in '93. But the tariff of '94 got in ahead of the pickers for they raised but six million bales in the season of '93, because of this terrible tariff that sent out its baleful influence a year ahead of its passage.

More wonderful still, we find the effect on railroads preceding the cause by two years. For in 1891 some two thousand miles of railroads went into hands of receivers, which was about the normal amount. But it jumped to 10,000 miles in the year 1892— We quote the same Handbook's figures— because of the terrible tariff that was to be passed in two years. Even so far in advance the interest ate up the earnings. The next year, the year of the panic, almost thirty thousand miles went by default because of impending changes in tariffs, notwithstanding their earnings were only beginning to feel the effect of the shrinkage of crops. They foresaw the tariff amendments and slumped like a lot of lame ducks.

Look at the other picture. The effect of McKinley's election was not felt till '97. Then nature smiled again— wheat half a billion bushels on acres the same as before; and the year after that six hundred and some odd million bushels, on account of McKinley's election. Cotton production rose first to eight million bales and then to eleven million. Oh, it was wonderful what an affect on crops McKinley's election had.

One thing they don't explain— the panic of '73 came in Republican times, no Democrat anywhere round— unless perhaps it was caused by Tilden's election in Eighteen Seventy-Six. —Goodhue Co. News, of Red Wing, Minn.

THE HEART OF THE LABOR QUESTION.

This picturesquely rugged and very able exposition of the labor question is the work of Warren A. Reed, a typical son of New England, who has for years earned his living sometimes as a day laborer on Western railroads but mostly as a Western farm hand, and who has evidently found that hard laboring is not necessarily incompatible with clear thinking. Mr. Reed delivered his address before the Peoria (Ill.) Sunday Lyceum, which meets in the Council Chamber of the City Hall every Sunday afternoon at half past two. We reproduce it from the Peoria Star of March 3, 1904.

Any man who will look around him will notice this fact, that as a rule the people who do the hardest and the most disagreeable and the most necessary work in the world are the people who get the least to eat and the least to wear and live in the poorest houses. Now, when we take the fact into account that labor produces all wealth, it must be evident to anyone who has a decent heart and even a thimbleful of brains that there must be something radically wrong with an industrial system that would produce such a state of things. A great many people seem to think that when a final solution of this problem is found we shall have a sort of patchwork affair. They say that it will be found that no one faction or school of thought has got all of the truth.

Now, I take an entirely different view of this problem. I became convinced a good many years ago that everything in this universe was governed by fixed and unchanging law. I am, of course, referring to the laws of nature and not to the statute laws enacted by man. And, of course, I then became satisfied that political economy was no exception to the rule. It seems to me it ought to be evident to any man who possesses a logical mind that when we have discovered the true philosophy that it must be one where the different parts of it would fit together and mutually bound each other; that there would be nothing lacking or nothing left over, for truth cannot be discordant. The truth is, this problem is similar to a problem in mathematics. We can prove addition by subtraction and multiplication by division.

I put in two months' time studying George's book, "Progress and Poverty," and the point I was most particular about was to discover whether there was any part that failed to correlate with the other parts. And I claim for the single tax philosophy that we have the whole truth and that it will not be necessary to borrow anything from any other school of thought in order to

make a complete thing of it. Of course, in an article of this length it is impossible to cover the whole ground.

I will now state some of the economic laws that our philosophy is based on:

The law in regard to labor is that men "Seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion." If you find a man who is an exception to this rule, you want to look for him in some insane asylum and you want to look in the ward that is reserved for incurables.

The law in regard to wages is what a man can make off land that is below the no-rent line, on the theory that no man will consent to work for any other man for less than he could make by working for himself.

The law in regard to the value of land is "The superiority of any piece of land over land that can be had for nothing."

The law in regard to commodities is the well understood law of supply and demand, although I once heard of a populist who said that when his party got into power they would repeal that law.

Now these laws are all-compelling, and it would not strengthen them one bit if Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Bryan would consent to sign their names to them, neither would it weaken them a particle if the devil himself would attach his name to them. Now, what we want to do is to make our statute laws in conformity with them.

There are three factors to the production of wealth. They are land, labor and capital; land and labor being the primary ones; capital being the offspring of the other two. Now, of these three factors that I have mentioned, the laborer provides the labor, the capitalist furnishes the capital and God or Nature contributes the land. Now what the single taxer would like to know is, where does the land owner come in? The truth is, he is an entirely useless animal. Sometimes we are asked what we intend to do with him after we have deprived him of his power to live off of the labor of other people. This is a matter that we have not fully decided upon as yet, but we would, however, throw out merely a suggestion that he might try going to work.

In regard to the distribution of wealth, the portion that goes to land is called rent. The part that goes to capital is interest. The amount that goes to labor is wages. This being a vital point, I will state them again briefly: the three factors are land, labor and capital. The products are rent, interest and wages. As I have said before,

this is really a problem in mathematics and will have to be settled on that basis and not on a sentimental one.

We will not talk about dollars at present, but we will consider it as an example in proportion. I suppose all of you understand about the rules of proportion taught in the arithmetic. I never had the benefit of anything but a common school education, but I was very much interested when I was a boy in the rule of proportion, and it has been a great advantage to me since I became a man and have taken an interest in economics. After we get this all figured out, I find that the share that goes to the active factor—namely, the laborer—in the production of wealth is something magnificent. That is one of the reasons why a man like myself who performs common labor for a living can generally be found every morning riding to work in an automobile. But I will come back again to the main question.

I suppose every man understands arithmetic (even the most stupid) well enough to know that 100 per cent. is all there is of anything. If Tom, Dick and Harry are in partnership and Tom's share keeps getting larger and larger, it is evident to anyone that the shares of one or both of the others must grow less and less. Now, if any one will look around him in this country of ours, either in the city or the rural districts, he will notice that the landlord's share keeps rising all the time. This is caused by the increase in population and improvements and, in short, everything that goes to make up civilization; and as the landlord is of no use to anyone, but is simply a parasite, I believe it would be best to make some different arrangements than the system we are living under at present. I know what I am talking about, for I have worked a portion of my time in those parts. At least two-thirds of the farmers in the best portion of this State are renters, and not land owners. The men who own that land are living in the towns and enjoying all the advantages of civilization, but a more useless lot of people never cumbered the earth. And if we consider it in the city it is still worse, because in the rural districts no ordinary man is likely to make enough off of the increase of land values to make him a millionaire, while any amount of men in the cities have succeeded in doing it. And in the mining districts, it is as bad or worse; in fact, we are making this fight against landlordism of every descrip-

tion. I did think when the Anthracite Coal Miners' strike was on perhaps it would knock a little sense into the heads of the people. I noticed that a great many of the newspapers at the time made considerable sport of Mr. Baer because he claimed to be in partnership with the Almighty, but I always thought it was a harmless delusion on his part. What I considered the serious thing about it was that the laws of our country had decided that those mines should be private property, but I will say that there is no more reason for denying the right of private property in coal fields than there is any other kind of land.

Now, this shows where the fruit of the laboring man's toil is going to. Under our present economic system we are compelled to support a lot of good for nothing drones and the fact is we are powerless to help ourselves as individuals; but we could easily do it at the ballot box collectively, if laboring men, speaking of them as a whole, had sufficient intelligence to do it; but when I look around me and consider what a wonderfully intelligent man the average laboring man is, I ask myself the question, "Have I got to wait until I can get a majority of these lunkheads before I can get what I desire?"

But let us take a view from the moral side of the question in regard to private property in land. If what we contend for is wrong from a moral standpoint, we ought not to succeed, no matter how desirable it might be, for some reasons. According to the single tax philosophy, in order for anything to be rightfully private property the title must emanate from the original producer. Of course this would include all the products of labor, but would not include land of any description.

I have felt much encouraged since the socialist movement started up, not that I take any stock in their doctrines, for their ideas and ours never could be blended, but because it gives the single taxer the advantage of position as between them and the people who would uphold the present system. There is something amusing to me about the situation, for if any man tries to put up a fight against socialism, he is compelled to take the same position that the single taxer does. One reason why socialism has made such progress as it has is because the present system is such a wretchedly immoral one that no matter how preposterous the claims of the socialist might be they could not possibly be

any worse than the present system as far as injustice is concerned. The fact is, it seems to me, that the man who would stand up before an audience and defend our present system of private property in land would sell his mother's grave-stone or pasture her grave if there was any profit in it. I believe he would have to possess the heart of a snake and the conscience of a hyena.

In regard to the power that the ownership of land gives a man, let us suppose a small number of men were on an island from which there was no escape, and suppose one of their number owned the land of that island. Now, we claim that he would have as much power over the rest of them as he would have if they were his chattel slaves, for he would have the power to demand of them in rent for the use of the land all but enough for a bare subsistence, and if they were his slaves he would be compelled to allow them that much for his own advantage. In this case the men's necessities would take the place of the slave drivers' whip.

Some people seem to think that the private ownership of land must be right because it is quite an old institution. Chattel slavery, polygamy and several other abominable institutions have been pretty old, but they never were right. The truth is the private ownership of land is nothing more or less than a system of legalized robbery, causing one man to get without producing and another man to produce without getting. There are some things that belong to you, some things that belong to me and some things belong to all of us. The value of land is one of those things that belong to all of us. Why? Because in the first place it was a free gift from God or Nature presumably to all of us and not to a few. For the next reason, because the value that attaches to land is a creation of the community as a whole and not of the individual who has possession of the land. On the other hand the products of labor are rightfully private property because they are not the gift of nature but are the fruits of man's labor. Of course when we say that labor produces wealth, we mean that man by his labor transforms matter that has been in existence for all eternity, for all we know to the contrary, into various shapes by moulding, combining, dividing, and so on. As far as actually creating a particle of matter, we are well aware of the fact that if he labored for all

eternity he could not create the tiniest mote that floats.

In regard to the trusts, the way to make them harmless is to take the special privileges that they enjoy from them. Those special privileges consist of the private ownership of land and a protective tariff. To take away the tariff and leave the land system as it is would do but very little good, for some of them are not buttressed by a protective tariff at all. No matter how great a combination of capital we might have it could do no harm if the land monopoly element was absent. We contend their feet must rest, "Antaeus like," on the ground for them to be able to do any harm; for instance, suppose a number of capitalists owned all the steel mills in the country and then suppose your humble servant owned all the coal and iron mines available. Who do you suppose would be the master of the situation? The truth is that factories can be multiplied indefinitely, but it would be a pretty big contract for a man to undertake to multiply coal and iron mines, would it not? The truth is, there is no comparison between property in land and property in the products of labor, and when these people write their essays on the struggle between capital and labor and either ignore the land altogether or else classify it with capital, treating both factors as capital, it is of no more benefit than a refrigerator would be at the North Pole. If we attempt to solve any problem, we must take all factors into consideration and we must keep them in their proper order.

In regard to our practical proposition, we propose to leave the land in the hands of its present owners, but they will be required to pay the yearly rental value of the land over to the government. I have had some men intimate to me that they would not care to own quite all of God's creation under such a system.

In regard to the opinions of laboring men generally on these questions, I often think on Labor Day, when I see the hosts of labor marching, if you could only use your brains as well as you can your legs how easy this problem would be of solution. I often wish I could have been present when the first man sold another man a piece of land. Certainly the one who sold the land must have seen something green in the other man's eye, or he would not have made such a proposition to him. I should have thought he would then have offered to sell him the right to breathe the air and enjoy the

sunlight. It certainly would have been no greater outrage on natural rights. The vision of some people is obscured in regard to the truth on account of the division of labor, and so many occupations in a highly developed state seem to have no direct connection with the land, but first principles have never been changed or abrogated.

The same thing is true of the industrial structure that is true of a very tall building, that no matter how high the super-structure may be reared, the foundation must rest on the ground; for it is as true to-day, as it was in primitive times, that in the last analysis all wealth is produced by the application of human labor to natural resources. We harbor no delusions; again and again will the truth be overborne, but, although the friends of privilege may turn back the hands on the dial, they cannot stay the sun in its course, and, in spite of all discouragements, we keep bravely hoping for the dawning of the day when the right of all God's children to the use of the earth will be no longer the mere dream of the enthusiast, but the realized and accomplished fact.

SOCIAL PROGRESS.

Speech of Louis F. Post in a symposium on "Social Progress" at the commencement exercises at Ruskin College, Glen Ellyn, Ill., Monday, June 27, 1904.

Men who are in the whirlpool of social disturbance at any time in the world's history, cannot know whether the world is at that time progressing or not. Living generations never know whether their social disturbances are carrying them forward or turning them backward. All they are positively aware of is the disturbance. They cannot be sure of its tendency; they can only infer.

And their inferences are not always rational. When social motion lifts one's own interests to the top, he naturally fancies that the disturbance implies social progress. But if the social motion jostles him "out of the swim," he as naturally fancies that it implies social decadence. It is the same with one's pet reforms. If our own theories of reform happen to be tossed up into popularity, we think the world is progressing because our cause seems to be winning. But if our theories happen to be submerged, our cause seems to be losing and we think there is no God in Israel.

Let us not be deceived by appearances. A sailing yacht is none the less truly moving forward though it turns from its course to beat against the

wind. Driftwood floating down the Mississippi is just as surely on its way to the great southern gulf when it follows the river's current around a bend and toward the north as when it turns another bend and floats toward the south. The piston rod of a locomotive drives the iron horse forward as truly by its backward as by its forward stroke. And so with social phenomena. We must never be swift to infer from any backward social motion that the social movement is backward. Rational inferences depend upon further circumstances, upon wider observation, upon clearer thought.

Considered simply in themselves, most of the social phenomena of our day discourage inferences of social progress. Do you doubt it? Bear with me then while I sketch in broad outline a picture of our social life. Don't be quick to exclaim "Pessimist!" if the picture irritates you. He is not the dangerous pessimist who reminds you of bad social conditions in order to urge you to change them. The dangerous pessimist is he who falsely tells you there are no such conditions or that they are passing away. And it will make little difference to you in the end, whether he tells you this because he is a lighthearted fool who doesn't know any better, or because he is a designing confidence man to whom those conditions are useful as a trap. I am no pessimist. What I am about to describe, disheartening as it may seem, makes my heart throb with optimistic pulsations; for I see in it something of that reactionary social motion from which I think experience justifies us in inferring a forward social movement.

I cannot better indicate social conditions than by recalling a curious novel which I read several years ago. I do not remember its name and I have forgotten its story. All I recall about it is its picture of reaction in this country from a condition of virtual equality of rights and opportunity to one in which a few were masters and the many had to serve or be shot.

This picture as I remember it portrayed a gradual spread of involuntary poverty, and a concurrent acquisition of power by a few designing men. These tendencies grew until the whole country had been divided into great dukedoms whose owners ruled the inhabitants with arbitrary will and a rod of iron.

Yet our political institutions had not been overthrown. There were still