

of a land owning city of Hungary. The name of the city is Szeged. In its immediate neighborhood, wrote Dr. Dorsey—

the city itself is the greatest landlord; it owns 92,000 acres of land, of which about 16,000 acres is pasture and 9,000 acres is forest. The city as landlord rents its land from time to time to the highest bidder, some of the land in small plots on short term leases to gardeners, larger plots to farmers for longer periods, some of it for twenty-five years. Much of the garden truck land is leased to Servians or Bulgarians; for this \$20 or more a year is paid. For land which is best suited for the growing of peppers for paprika \$30 a year is paid; this is the highest priced land. Land about here varies in price from \$150 for sandy soil, and from \$300 to \$400 for vineyard land. Land suitable for truck farming near the city is worth as much as \$1,500 an acre. The property of the city of Szeged is worth about \$10,000,000; of this \$2,000,000 is in agricultural land, which is available for outright sale to the peasants; this, it is hoped, will help to prevent emigration. The income of the city from rent on lands, etc., is about \$1,000,000 a year; of this a certain sum is expended each year on the poor; these pensioners number about 13,000, and receive from \$1 to \$2 a month.

This is not the best way, surely, of realizing for the people the wealth that belongs to them; but how much better it is than our way of selling public lands, and thereby frittering away the values of the future which social growth develops. In this case the city is, as Dr. Dorsey describes it, a landlord, and his brief account shows how much better it is for all the people of a city to be a landlord than for some of them to be landlords and most of them to be tenants. Better than either would it be, however, if the city as a whole were, not the landlord of a piece of outlying land, however valuable, but the almoner for all its inhabitants of the growing values of its own site.

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#### Postal Subsidies and Postal Favors.

It is to be presumed that the postal department of the United States deals fairly with publications in the distribution of what our servants there are pleased to call a "subsidy," meaning the right of any periodical to pass through the mails on the same terms as other periodicals. But the fact remains that whereas the Twentieth Century had its "subsidy" withheld without explanation for five or six months after first publication, being required meanwhile to deposit large sums of money, the American City got its "subsidy" promptly. It is possibly "irrelevant, immaterial and impertinent," but one might beg to state that whereas B. O. Flower, the editor of the Twentieth Century, is a well known advocate of public ownership of public utilities, the editor of the American City,

Arthur H. Grant, won his distinction as editor of a publication which by its principal title implied that it stood for municipal ownership, but which actually stood for private monopoly, and was probably an organ of the monopoly interests.

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#### Progress Among Farmers.

A fact of much concern to the farming interests of the United States—the farmers who farm farmers as well as those who farm farms, but in different ways—is the adoption by the State Grange of Washington, at its session in Ellensburg last summer, and by unanimous vote, of a memorial to the voters of the State on the subject of taxation. Nothing yet done by any other farmers' organization has been so hopefully significant. This memorial advocates the adoption of a Constitutional amendment providing for—

1. An assessment, once in five years, of the "community-made" value of all lands within the State.
2. An assessment of all other "community-made" values in private ownership.
3. The collection of an annual rental or tax of 6 per cent on all future increases of "community-made" value.

Not the least significant feature of this farmers' memorial is its recognition of the essential difference between incomes due to what it happily names "community-made" values, and what may in contradistinction be appropriately called "individual-made" values. If this proposed amendment is adopted, and improvements are exempted from taxation, as seems to be contemplated, Washington will prosper as no State has ever prospered yet. Not only will the State grow in wealth, but so also will her people. The day will then have passed when a State's prosperity means inordinate wealth for a few at the top, a struggle for bare existence by the many at the bottom, and a banded and battered middle class between.

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#### Personal Property Taxation and Homes.

The Hearst papers have editorially announced their opposition to the New York movement for abolishing personal property taxation. Several objections are raised. For one thing, Mr. Hearst's editorial asserts that the abolition of personal property taxation "means that the city's taxes are all to be paid upon real estate," which "means that the expense of running the city is to be paid by those that pay rent or buy homes." But this is not what the abolition of personal property taxation does mean. The increased taxes that would fall upon valuable sites, occupied or vacant—vastly

the larger proportion—would not be borne by renters nor by “home owners”; and so much of the slightly increased real estate tax as might fall upon rent payers and home owners would be less than they now pay in personal taxes, if they pay the personal taxes the law prescribes. Another of Mr. Hearst’s editorial objections to abolishing personal property taxation is that “there isn’t any single tax feature in this business.” As if his papers as now edited would support it if there were! But in truth there is a single tax feature in the abolition of personal property taxation. It is the first step (the abolition of taxes on improvements being the second) toward the placing of all revenue taxes where they belong—on that distinctly social property which is commonly called “land value.” Mr. Hearst’s third editorial objection to abolishing personal property taxation seems to be that Mayor Gaynor favors it. These objections are expressed in the editorial in question, but there is a fourth, which must be looked for in other editorials of the Hearst papers—those that urge investments in real estate as a safe method of getting easy money.

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But let no one overlook the good in the particular Hearst editorial under consideration, because it happens to be in bad company. One of its recommendations is excellent. This urges the exemption absolutely from taxation of “the home in which a man is bringing up his family,” meaning “the house that he pays for slowly with his daily labor, the house in which he uses up all of his income to take care of his children.” Here is an exemption that ought indeed to be made, and some persons in New York and some newspapers there have for several years been trying to have it made. We allude to the movement in New York for exempting from taxation all houses used as homes (vol. ix, p. 10) up to the capital value of \$3,000. Neither Mr. Hearst nor his papers have yet gained prominence in this movement, but it is by no means too late. Nor is it too late for those who oppose personal property taxation to include homes of \$3,000 or less in their proposed exemption law. They would thereby strengthen their own position against demagogic attack, while making a further fiscal advance in the interest of all persons who eat bread in the sweat of their own faces.

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### Governmental Coddling.

A critic thinks that “the government which protects its citizens from the effects of poverty” is to be viewed with alarm. He argues that “the

fear of absolute destitution, dying children, a sickened wife, are the only things that will keep some men from squandering their salary in a saloon or raising enormous families when unable financially to do so, or being otherwise imprudent.” To remove “starvation and other effects of lack of foresight,” he regards as “removing Nature’s one means of calling attention to error,” it being “like removing the pain of a cancer without healing the cancer itself.” Strange as it may at first blush appear, this is good abstract reasoning. What makes it abhorrent is the critic’s upside down application of it. His sense of the fitness of things is offended because he has dropped into the procession with those who protest against movements for protecting the workers of the world from legalized property-sucking by the parasites of the world. To use the argument he does against abolishing conditions that make us think of workmen and poor men as the same, is folly; and when these conditions have produced the cruel results that every settlement worker can testify to, the person guilty of such folly is to be pitied for his inhumanity. Doubtless it is true that the government which protects its competent citizens from the natural effects of voluntarily invited poverty, is to be viewed with alarm. Doubtless deprivation is Nature’s method of punishing idleness and unthrift. But granting it all, and whom does the application fit? Whom do governments protect from the effects of poverty? Is it the impoverished workers, who get less than they earn because they are forced by monopoly laws to bid for work in a glutted labor market? Or is it the rich beneficiaries of special privilege, who get more than they earn, and often get without earning at all, because they are allowed by monopoly laws to take, though they neither plant nor reap? By all means, let government withhold its hand from protecting its citizens from the natural effects of idleness and unthrift. By all means let governments allow starvation to stand out in bold relief as the natural penalty. But let governments begin this obedience to natural law by divesting the idle and thriftless rich of their special privileges, and not by relegating the wives and children of the working poor to keener suffering and deeper degradation than governmental interference with natural economic law has already sunk them to. The critic’s argument is good, but let us apply it somewhat to dukes before applying it any further to peasants; let us apply it to grabbing and grinding plutocrats, in degree at least, before applying it in its totality to their serfs.