

Mr. McKinley mean? Did those who applauded understand him? Did he understand himself? What are we to expect, when the president declares that the war "must not stop until it embraces humanity?" Are we to go on fighting until we get everybody by the ears? or what? Has Mr. McKinley no scruples against embracing humanity with war? Couldn't he find something more kindly to embrace humanity with? Or was he in trouble for something to say that would sound great without meaning anything?

The American consul general to Sweden and Norway, who is home on a vacation, is enthusiastic about the great field these kingdoms offer for American trade. He should urge Mr. McKinley to annex them. This war with Spain ought not to stop until it embraces Sweden and Norway, along with the rest of humanity whom Mr. McKinley proposes to embrace with it. "Trade follows the flag," and if Sweden and Norway offer a territory for American trade, it is patriotism to demand that the flag be forthwith planted there.

President McKinley evinces no disposition to avail himself of the precedent set by his immediate predecessor, of invading a sovereign state without a requisition from its governor. It cannot be for lack of opportunity. Gov. Tanner, of Illinois, has thrown one opportunity wide open. If there was any legal justification for the sending of federal troops to Chicago in 1894, there certainly was a better one for sending them to Virden in 1898. At the same time, down in North Carolina, the propertied white classes are mobbing negroes so as to prevent them voting, and the state authorities seem unable to control the mobs. Yet McKinley ignores the handy precedent that Cleveland made. Rather than order federal troops into a sovereign state until requested by the governor, he allows the mobbing to go on without any manifestation of concern. In

this he is undoubtedly doing his constitutional duty. The president of the United States has no more constitutional right to use the army for the preservation of local peace in one of the states of the Union, except upon requisition from the governor, than Queen Victoria would have to do so with a body of red coats sent across the Canadian border. We hesitate, however, to commend the president very heartily for ignoring Mr. Cleveland's revolutionary precedent, because he is not under the severe temptation that confronted Cleveland. It was at the instigation of a powerful railroad ring that Cleveland acted.

When in our issue of October 1 we said that nobody has any difficulty in approximately determining the value of any given site of land, in a neighborhood in which he is acquainted, except when called upon to do so for the purpose of understanding the single tax, we had no intention of inviting a metaphysical controversy. But Mr. E. D. Stark, of Cleveland, proffers one. Mr. Stark asks:

How can you find the value of anything which is not property, and so is not the subject of bargain and sale at all? Value is unthinkable, as an incident of anything that is not property. I mean, of course, commercial value. That is what we mean when we talk of taxing land according to its value. You say correctly that we can easily find the value of a "site" (land) under present conditions, for the law and universal opinion regard land as property, over which the owner has the same right as he has over his horse or his plow. Difficulty arises when by the single tax scheme there is no individual ownership of land, and so no buying and selling of it.

You may say that in your scheme of economic philosophy "land value" means what one pays for use and occupation. Very well. Then why not call it "rent" and done with it. Rent is the payment for the privilege of use and occupation. The state or municipality then becomes the landlord. My difficulty remains, for you have no selling value to guide you as to the amount of your "tax" (rent). I can conceive of no way of making the rent charge fair and equal, only by an open market where there is competitive bidding.

Mr. Stark confuses the moral principle which justifies the exclusive taxation of land according to its value, with the practical method by which it is proposed to realize that principle approximately. The principle is that the incomes men receive from the advantages of their ownership of especially desirable land, differ morally from the incomes they receive from their industry. The latter they earn by serving their fellows; the former they derive from the community, without earning it. Single tax men therefore argue that the one kind of income should be sacred as private property, to the last cent; and that the other should by moral right go to the community to the last cent. The plan proposed for accomplishing this is to abolish all taxes except those on land in proportion to its value. But of course neither that plan nor any other plan could more than approximate its object. Nothing in this world can be done with theoretical exactness, not even the placing of a keystone. If the land value tax were high enough to take the entire ground rent, there would indeed be no capitalized value upon which to estimate a tax. But so long as the tax left a marketable margin of rent, there would be a market value and the tax could be readily estimated. For instance, if 90 per cent. of the rent were taken, there would still be ten per cent. for capitalization. To this Mr. Stark would doubtless agree. He in fact does so in advance. But then the other difficulty arises in his mind. If we leave ten per cent. of annual land value, or rent, with the owners, we do not abolish private ownership of land, and our moral principle is stultified by our method of realizing it. That metaphysical difficulty, however, need give us no concern. If we find that taxation is on the whole a better and fairer mode of taking ground rent for public use, than by a government leasing system, the ten per cent. more or less of public income left to private use would go to

the account of profit and loss as part of the expense of the better method. We should thereby approximate substantial justice, which is all that can be hoped for.

As to one most important kind of land, the single tax would completely abolish its private ownership, and make it, not government property, but free land—free as air. If even very much less than 90 per cent. of ground rent, potential as well as actual, were taken by the single tax, it would no longer pay to hold land vacant for a rise. Therefore, such vacant land as was really needed for use would come at once into use, while such as was not needed would be abandoned and become as common as the highway.

But the real point at the outset is not whether the single tax could or ought to take the entire ground rent of land. It is whether it could be, and if so, whether it ought to be, adopted, as the exclusive method of raising public revenues under existing conditions. That it could be, Mr. Stark admits. Upon this point he says:

My difficulty, you will observe, does not go to the scheme of state revenue which puts the entire burden on land according to its selling value, under conditions of private ownership and right to buy and sell sites in the open market. Such a scheme of taxation is coherent, workable, and—barring the evils of the transition period in old settled communities—might be beneficial.

Mr. Starks' only objection to this is that from the single tax man's point of view it would be inconsistent, as recognizing private ownership. That point we have already considered, and need say no more upon it than that the substantial right of ownership would be denied to the extent of the tax. The moral justification for this denial is the truth that, as Emerson puts it, every man's title to land is vitiated so long as any man is landless. The aim of government should be to secure peaceable possession of land for use, and security for improvements and other products. That done, the de-

mands of justice are substantially satisfied if all public needs be paid for out of ground rents, and vacant lands be free.

For the information of people who think that there is an abundance of good public land still left open to settlement, we beg to call attention to a recent statement prepared by the land office at Washington. According to that statement, the total amount of public land, outside of Alaska, now open to settlement, is 579,368,274 acres. Of this area 546,549.65 acres are in the desert-land states and territories, and 332,176,000 acres are estimated as desert. Thus the amount of public land reported by the land office as available for settlement is less than 250,000,000 acres in area. And much of that would appear to be unavailable if its distance from markets, its saturation with malaria, and its other objectionable qualities were made known. There is in truth but little land left in the United States which may be had for nothing; and such as there is, is just about worth its price—nothing.

Our peace-loving friends who have jumped at the czar's proposition for disarmament, mistaking that play for despotic position as an overture for universal peace, should note what the Russian government is at this moment doing in Finland. When the Finns accepted Russian rule, at the close of the Russo-Swedish war in 1809, it was upon condition that they should retain their constitution and all the rights and privileges they had enjoyed under Sweden. But now the czar has commanded the Finnish parliament to convene in extraordinary session and register the will of the czar respecting military service. This is in bold violation of the condition ratified by the Russian government when Finland came under its jurisdiction. It is a sample of what all may expect when the Russian policy of fastening the Russian empire and despotism upon the rest of the earth shall have been realized.

Disarmament would be a glorious thing; but disarmament at Russia's suggestion, while she gags the press so that military preparations might be carried on there in secret, would be imprudent to the degree of childishness. What the czar is now doing in Finland he would soon be doing everywhere if the rest of the world laid down its arms. Let those who want peace advocate the things that make for peace. When we have a free press and free trade the world over, arms will be abandoned without any equivocal suggestion from a despotic monarch.

To those philanthropists who, ignoring the influence of environment in producing criminals, search up and down the earth with statistical microscopes to find proof of its origin in heredity, and thereupon propose in more or less barbarous fashion to prohibit "the propagation by criminals of their species," we commend the substitute proposed by one David J. Smith, of St. Louis. Mr. Smith proposes that on the 1st of January in every year the worst man in each ward of St. Louis shall be hanged, the choice to be determined by popular vote. This proposition is not less barbarous than that of the heredity experts, nor is it any more lacking in rationality.

There was a great to-do in England last summer over revelations of the usurious rates of interest which a London money lender had been exacting from the scions of the nobility and others of their kidney. So important was the matter that it got into parliament, where an attempt was made to enact legislation to crush out this kind of money lending. Most drastic measures were proposed. We commented upon some of them at the time. But the great difficulty encountered, as may well be supposed, was to define money lending so as safely to prohibit it. This is now painfully apparent from the report of the parliamentary committee, which has defined money lending as "transactions with persons carrying on the