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JUSTICE—NOT CHARITY.

AN APPEAL TO WOMEN.

By Eliza Stowe Twitchell.

Just before the advent of man upon the earth, in some mysterious manner, appeared the flowering plants, with their gifts of beauty, fruit and seed.

Think of the earth at that time, whirling through space, loaded with material sufficient to supply the needs of all mankind. Think of its vast beds of coal, iron, copper, silver, gold, phosphate; its timber, its fruit, its vast plains, with a soil so rich and varied that fields of wheat, cotton, corn, sugar-cane and the like can be made to nod at each other in glad, luxuriant growth for hundreds of successive Summers, bountifully responding to the efforts of man to give forth its increase, by its never failing energy.

These are what political economists term land, or natural resources. Not the waving wheat or cotton, but the soil capable of producing these; not the soil only, but the mines beneath the soil; the lakes of oil, chambers of natural gas, even the waterfall with its power to turn a wheel.

All these are the gifts of God to man; not to one man, nor to one thousand men, but to all men for all generations.

Place one man, alone, upon this teeming sphere, amid all these vast resources, yet how poor is he:

He has no house to cover him; no fire to warm him; no clothing to protect him; not even food to satisfy his hunger until he perform some labor to obtain it.

Scatter a thousand, or one hundred thousand men upon it; could they not obtain all the necessities of life and some of its comforts without the use of capital? Yet we are told that capital employs labor. There is a half truth in this. Capital so assists labor as to make it ten, one hundred, or even a thousand times more effective.

It is, as it were, an Aladdin's lamp, weaving, transforming, trans-

porting; only the lamp of Aladdin could create palaces out of nothing, and transport them without the aid of labor. Capital, even assisted by labor, cannot do this, for both must have access to land, or they can do nothing.

Take, for example, the things in the room in which I write; examine them, and see how everything comes from Mother Earth, as she is so truly called.

The stove was first dug from the ore bed, and then fashioned by labor and skill; yet skill is but another form of labor. The machinery by which it was melted, moulded and shaped, is what we call capital, but that also was built by labor and skill, from land. The same is true of the table upon which I write; the carpet, the piano, the pictures—all were produced from land by labor, assisted, perhaps, by capital, but labor also produced the capital from land.

Now if land, labor and capital have produced all wealth, let us see how it is distributed. To land is paid rent, to labor wages, to capital interest.

Let the amount produced be represented by the figure 9. If distributed equally between the three producing factors, rent would have three, wages three, and interest three. This distribution would not satisfy the demands of justice, because it is arbitrary; for, in a new country, where land had little or no value, rent could claim only one, or perhaps nothing, leaving all to be divided between interest and wages; while in a large city rent would take more than three, thus leaving less than six for interest and wages. Hence we find in a new country wages and interest always high, while in a city the higher the price of land the greater the number working for a mere pittance or upon the verge of starvation.

Socialists would, perhaps, solve this question by giving all to labor, irrespective of the importance of the three factors, or of the individual workman. This plan also fails to satisfy the demands of justice.

“There is in human affairs one order which is best. That order is not always the one that exists, but it is the order which should exist for the greatest good of humanity. God knows it and wills it; man’s duty it is to discover and establish it.”

Carrol D. Wright states that “labor produces eleven times more wealth in a day now than it did forty years ago;” yet, when the wealth is distributed, labor fails to receive its share of the increase.

Surely there is something wrong in the present order of distribution. This fact has led some to question if labor-saving machines were a blessing or a curse to the masses. That they should be a blessing, no one doubts; but because we disobey some of the august laws of God, they have become, to far too many, a curse, compelling men, women and children to incessant, monotonous, grinding toil, till the brain and hand lose their skill, and they become mere machines, like the inanimate things they tend.

Now look at the second factor, capital, and in doing so it must not be confounded with land; one is made by men, the other created

by God. Looking at capital closely, we find that it, too, fails to receive its full share in the increase of the wealth it helps to create. Business men say, that except in some monopoly, rents are so high and competition so fierce, they cannot afford to pay higher wages, that they barely earn good wages for themselves, and fair interest on their capital. One proof of the truth of this statement is, that interest—which is the measure of capital—is no higher, if as high, to-day, as it was forty years ago.

Now, compare the price of land with what it was forty years ago. In all our great cities its value has increased enormously, some lots in New York City selling as high as at the rate of fourteen million dollars per acre. Some farming lands have fallen in value, but the price of land generally is vastly higher than it was forty years ago. Here, then, is to be found that wealth, which, had it been justly distributed, would have gone to labor and capital. Ask any merchant, doctor, or farmer what constitutes the larger proportion of his yearly expenses, and he will answer rent. For if a man own his own lot or farm, he pays rent, in that he has so much of his capital locked up in them as equis their market value. This capital, otherwise employed, would bring him interest; this possible interest is now rent. Rent, of course, refers only to land. That part which is paid for the use of houses or improvements is interest on capital.

Is land so much more important than the other two factors as to deserve this larger share? We have seen that man had no wealth until he performed some labor to obtain it. Labor, then, is the most important, because it is the active factor; while capital and land are passive. What, then, is it that has given rent such a power over the other two?

If a map of the earth were drawn, on which the highest mountain peaks represented land having the greatest value; elevated table lands, valuable farms; and low valleys, land having no commercial value; these elevations and depressions would be found to correspond exactly with the unequal distributions of wealth; not only proving that that wealth which has been produced by labor and capital has been absorbed by land or rent, but finding these always thus associated, we know they are to each other as cause and effect. Moreover, corresponding with these unequal distributions of wealth is, usually, unequal distribution of population; and also, wherever the people are the most densely congregated, there governmental expenses are greatest; and least in the more thinly settled districts, and so on, as the value of land disappears. This ground rent, which so keeps step with the needs of society, and is caused by the growth of society, should be appropriated to its uses. It has been already shown that labor and capital receive all they produce, minus rent. By taking rent for public purposes, it would be distributed equally for public benefits. As these land values are greatest, where the needs of government are greatest, they appear to be regulated by a natural law; by conforming our customs to this law, labor and capital would receive their full reward.

This remedy is so radical that it must be proven to be both necessary and just before it will meet public approbation.

No one can doubt the need of some radical change who is at all familiar with the condition of the poor in our great cities.

We are so proud of these lofty peaks of civilization, with their long avenues of beautiful dwellings, stately churches, galleries of art, their one thousand millionaires, public parks, immense stores, etc., that while looking at these we forget the other side of the picture, the submerged tenth. But "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," "Darkest England," and similar books, have given us such a glimpse into Misery's heart that we are startled into thinking. The revelation of these awful facts, and that there are already over three million paupers in our own land of plenty, liberty and equality, is enough to make one pale at the thought. Many seeing these things and unable to reconcile them with the goodness of God, are questioning His very existence and the blessed hope of immortality. Others more unselfish and devout, agonized at the sufferings about them, band together and work heroically for the intemperate, the orphans, the destitute; so we have societies without number of good women working and praying to remove mountains, while pained and saddened that their efforts accomplished so little.

Shall they cease their labor? By no means. The burdens they lighten only Divine wisdom can judge and reward. But sometimes, by intuition, their deep, womanly hearts catch a glimpse of the utter futility of their efforts to stop the incoming tide by placing themselves with all their strength, means and self-sacrifice, against it. So they settle the question by saying "once a pauper, always a pauper." Take from a man his hope, courage and self-respect, compel him to work fourteen hours a day, for low wages, then take from his dinner-pot a good per cent. of the food in taxation; put a tax upon the clothing he must buy for himself and family; deny him his equal right to a share with humanity upon the planet where God has placed him, and then cant about the "common Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," and wonder that "once a pauper, always a pauper." The wise crow in Ramayana declared that "the keenest pain possible is inflicted by extreme poverty."

The heroic work for temperance would long ago have raised a whole class, morally and socially, had not the only two doors to progress been shut to them, viz., society and mental improvement. For these they have neither time, strength nor means. Small wonder if they sink in the social scale, till they seem to belong to another race, while their children are bred in an atmosphere too impure and ignorance too dense for our public schools to enlighten. "It is to be remembered," says Hon. David A. Wells, "that the material needs of man must first and always be fairly satisfied before morality, certainly in any high degree, is likely to exist among the masses; and furthermore, that something of material abundance or wealth

must be earned and saved before leisure for study can be obtained." But if less than two per cent. of the population now own seven-tenths of the wealth, it may well be questioned what will become of the middle class when this small number own nine-tenths. In a government of and by the people it is the very rich and the very poor that are the dangerous classes. But Liberty will not forsake us. The remedy is in our own hands if we will but use it, but affairs are too serious to be relieved by strikes or charity; even governmental charity, giving whole banks of paper money to relieve one class of its citizens, would not avail, for it would raise these mountains of inequality higher, *unless the cause be first removed*.

Surely, with needs so great, something radical is demanded. This remedy must now be shown to be just.

It is possible to stand too near these mountains of inequality to see clearly the *cause* that has produced them. If we take one and watch its growth we will see how it is possible for one man or class of men to reap the fruits of another's toil.

There is land in the heart of Africa so productive that one can hardly cut his way through its rank vegetation. Yet it has no value. Plant a community upon this rich soil, with railroads, steamboats, schools and churches, and long before it reaches large growth the land will have value, the most valuable part lying in the centre of the town, owned, it may be, by one who has never stepped foot upon its soil. Why should this value, which has been created by all, be given to the landowners, and that, too, so unequally, those in the centre receiving so much more than those at the circumference? One man has undoubtedly done more for the place, commercially, than another, but, if so, his superior efforts and talents have been rewarded by possessing now the largest business establishment. Another has done more for education; another for art, health or morals. But the varying talents of its founders have each received their proportional reward by the natural law of supply and demand—or *would have* had not this same law given the highest value to the land in greatest demand, and the men owning this spot have reaped a reward or enjoyed an advantage possessed by none of the others, even at their expense.

The greater the growth of the place the greater these privileges, until there is established a privileged class. De Tocqueville says: "Land is the basis of an aristocracy which clings to the soil which supports it."

Some idea of the worth of these privileges may be gained by recalling the high price of land in New York City, or its rapid growth of land values. The rental value of a piece of land on Eighth street, New York City, was, in 1887, \$1,956. Owing to improvements along the street, the same property rented in 1890 for \$5,700. In other words, the labor of other men had in three years increased this person's yearly income \$3,744.

Or, take an illustration from another form of land values. Our laws give a man who first discovers a mine of gold as much right

to it as if he had created it, while to the men who go down in the darkness, dig it out and lift it to the surface they say: "Hands off! Go find another, if you can, but not near here, for all this belongs, by the gracious favor of Almighty God to me and my heirs forever!" "In all revolutions," says M. Blanqui, "there are but two parties confronting each other—that of the people who wish to live by their own labor and that of those who wish to live by the labor of others."

We have exchanged the coarser customs of frontier life for the legal one of special privilege, oppressive taxation, and all for the sake of the victims.

Herbert Spencer says: "If *one* portion of the earth's surface may justly become the possession of an individual, then *other* portions may be so held, and eventually the whole of the earth's surface may lapse into private hands—hence all who are not land-owners are trespassers." Again, "It can never be pretended that existing titles to such property are legitimate. Violence, fraud, force, superior cunning—these are the sources to which their titles may be traced." "How long," he asks, "does it take for a wrong to make right?" "You may turn over the soil as often as you like, but you fail to make that yours which was not yours to begin with." "Men having got themselves into a dilemma by disobedience to the law must get out of it with as little injury to the landed class as may be. Meanwhile we shall do well to recollect that there are others beside the landed class to be considered. Let us remember that the injustice thus inflicted on the mass of mankind is an injustice of the gravest nature. The fact that it is not so regarded proves nothing. It was once also universally supposed that slavery was a natural and quite legitimate institution." He suggests the nationalization of lands.

But the Single Tax method is much more simple; by it no titles are disturbed, no new machinery of government created.

If brought about gradually it could "hurt no one but landowners, and them only in so far as they were neither laborers nor capitalists." "The landowner, as such, is of no use to the community."

The gain to humanity would be almost incalculable, both in universal prosperity, happiness and morals, for every nation is prosperous only in so far as its common people are prosperous.

If labor and capital, assisted by land, can now pay annually millions of dollars in direct taxation, millions more for national, or indirect taxation; still more for collecting the same; and yet millions to support paupers and criminals; while millions of men are idle; and then have enough left to pay rent, buy food and clothing, and add millions to the annual increase of wealth, what could labor and capital not do if this heavy load of taxation were lifted from them, and placed in one Single Tax—not upon land—but upon these mountains of land value? And how quickly would these inequalities begin to disappear; for if this Single Tax took all, or nearly all, of rent for public purposes, and distributed it equally in public bene-

sits, labor and capital would receive all that they produce. "It is not sufficient," says M. Blanqui, "that wealth be created, but it must be equitably distributed. In this view, men are really equal before the law, as before the Eternal."

One glance at our map would quiet the frightened farmer, lest all this weary weight should fall upon him.

But it may be asked: "All this may give to labor and capital their share collectively, but how will it raise the wages and profits of the individual?" As long as I must work for capital or starve, I must take such wages as he will give; but destroy land monopoly—the basis of all monopoly—and it will so set the wheels of industry in motion that there will be more places for work than there are men to fill them. The expense of selling merchandise to-day consumes much time, labor and capital, which might be employed in making more goods were there a quicker market. If wealth did not flow in such small rills of wages and profits toward the laborer and farmer those would be purchasers—and flow from them in such numberless streams of taxation, the wheels of commerce would not be clogged. Reverse this order of distribution, and every article of use or beauty would find a ready buyer. How shall it be done? By relieving industry of all forms of taxation, and by making it unprofitable to hold land out of use.

We are soon to celebrate the discovery of this land by Columbus. Apply the Single Tax, and there will be discovered a new continent in our midst. Even within our city limits will be found land enough to give each a home. The cities would spread out into the country, carrying refinements and luxuries now scarcely dreamed of, "till the circle of guests at the legitimate enjoyments of life" would embrace all willing to work. Then by means of still greater subdivisions of labor, and the subtile forces of nature, the hours of toil would be both shortened and lightened, till all slavery, white and black, the slavery of the farmer, and that worst of all slavery—the slavery of women—would be abolished.

"The idea that the earth is the common heritage of all is as old as society;" but the idea that man should not be taxed according to his wealth—because that is putting a tax upon industry and economy—but rather that he should be taxed according to the special privileges he enjoys above the least-privileged man in the community, is the new gospel of equal rights, equal privileges and equal burdens. It makes our Declaration of Independence, says Prof. Hamlin Garland, "that immortal old parchment, blaze with light." Equality of opportunity! When we write our laws in the fear of the Lord, and each has learned fully to respect the rights of others, then it will be easier to bring our lives in harmony with the teachings of Him who bade us love our neighbor as ourselves.

Anyone wishing to know more of this great cause, the people engaged in it, their plans for promoting it, will find such information fully described and reported in the pages of THE STANDARD,

Should anyone feel convinced of the truths, which in this paper could only be glanced at, and desire to assist, however slightly, in a reform which seems to underlie all others, will he or she kindly send his or her name to Miss S. M. Gay, secretary of Committee on Enrollment and Distribution of Literature, West New Brighton, Staten Island, N. Y.

"In union there is strength."

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