

we are hedged about with restrictions and limitations over which we have no control. We believe we have demonstrated the essentials of our philosophy and that the principle is applicable anywhere and at any time.

The success of Arden must be judged by the extent of its public and private improvements, the beauty of its homes and gardens, the prosperity of its workers and the minimum of friction involved in the administration of its public affairs, all of which show a decided advance.

EDWIN S. ROSS.

## Gerrit Johnson Writes to the Governor of Michigan

IN resigning the office of member of the State Institute Commission of Michigan, Gerrit Johnson has addressed a letter to the governor. In it Mr. Johnson says in part:

When I accepted this position I really thought something could be done for "The Least of These," but after "getting under the surface" I soon realized that any attempt to do anything worth while was a waste of time. Then I visited other States to try to learn what they were doing with public charity institutions. To my amazement I found them about on a par with our own. In talking with people experienced in this line of work I found this state of mind: That public charity institutions are only intended to be charitable on the surface. And the reason that we preach and cannot practice charity is because State charitable institutions as bad as they are, feed and house their inmates better than probably fifty per cent. of our citizens who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

Just so long as there are some who eat food they do not earn, there must be others who earn food they do not eat. In some heathen lands, chiefs do not eat until they are assured that every member of their tribe has something to eat. In our own civilized country we have rich Roman Catholics and Protestants who are perfectly contented to sit down to well-filled tables knowing that this very day there are millions of other Roman Catholics and Protestants without work and many with nothing to eat. So why pretend charity when we seem to be on such strange terms with charity! When Jesus said, "Who is My mother and who are My brethren" I wonder if He did not mean that all who had social consciousness were His kin!

Today there are more men than jobs. That is the cause of our present agitation for new prisons and asylums. When there are more jobs than men, we do not crowd our charity and penal institutions.

I am going to work for the Anti-Poverty movement, whose sole aim is to remove the cause of poverty. When our government opened up land to homesteaders it did not only make jobs in that new territory but it took the surplus labor from the surrounding territories. The Anti-Poverty Society would open up every State in the Union and give every man and woman the right to settle on vacant lots

and idle lands. This can be done by simply taking all taxes off our homes, buildings and other improvements and instead, tax the vacant lots and idle land just the same as the lots and land in use.

In the last fifteen years the land values created by people moving into Detroit amount to more than all the wages paid by Ford and other automobile manufacturers in Detroit during that time. If the untold millions of dollars worth of land values, created by all the people, had been received by all the people instead of a few, there would not now be a business depression. Michigan pays good money year after year to its University to study political economy, and the only remedy as yet is rummage sales, bread lines and charity institutions.

## An American Peasantry

SENSITIVE ears have been surprised and somewhat shocked of late by the phrase "an American peasantry." The Secretary of Agriculture warns of it as a perilous possibility. From Chicago came two months ago a proposal for the importation of coolies from China to furnish cheap farm labor. "Company" farming has appeared not merely in the far West, but as well in the older States of the East. A student of American problems suggested in conversation some years ago that the solution of the race problem in the South might be found in the creation of a negro peasantry.

Through all this talk has run the conception, not of a land-owning peasantry such as France has, but of peasant-hired laborers cultivating the land of others, corporations or individuals. Wholesale production at low cost would be the hope of those looking to the full fruition of such a system. The result, of course, could the thing be worked out to its logical conclusion, would be the expropriation of the small holder by ruthless competition, his reduction to the state of a peasant laborer, or his immigration to the cities in such numbers as to create an urban "proletariat" fed by means of the "corn dole," and howling for "bread and circuses." All that smacks of Rome, 22 B. C. rather than America, 1922, A. D., yet there are perhaps some persons in the United States who would hardly find the idea shocking, though possibly no one so hardy as to believe it realizable.

When the slaves were freed the cry was "forty acres and a mule," the American equivalent of "three acres and a cow." Now "forty acres and a mule" connotes the so-called "smoke house system" of cotton culture, which prevails today in parts of the South, notably in the Yazoo Delta of Mississippi, a survival of slavery. In simplest terms this system involves the division of a large plantation into areas of from forty to one-hundred-and-twenty acres, upon each of which areas is settled a negro family, large or small. The owner supplies tools, stock, seeds, and from the smoke-house staple food and some other things, and the negro family "makes" the crop. The owner sells the product, and if the charges against the head of the negro

family for supplies are not too great, he gets an agreed share of the proceeds. The cry of "forty acres and a mule" meant to the freedman the hope that he be set up as a land owning farmer with the chance to "make" his own crop, sell it, and take the proceeds for himself. In other words, the freedmen, or those of them that could think in elementary fashion, realized that to be economically free a man must own or have the opportunity to own land. The same idea was perceived by British South Africa landowners, who, finding it impossible to get native labor at their own price, suggested to the government, not the shocking policy of enslaving the blacks, but merely the seizure of their lands. Cut the land from beneath a man's feet and you may have him at your own price.

Free natural opportunities create a natural minimum wage unaided of statute law, a far more effective system, indeed, than any statute can provide. This principle is illustrated along many thousand miles of American coast, and its tidal rivers, and in the region bordering the Great Lakes, for in all such regions the free natural opportunities of the waters regulate the wages of unskilled labor. Clam digging on Cape Cod, free to all comers, helps to establish a minimum wage. The principle is of universal application, and it is illustrated elsewhere than along our tidal waters and in the region of the Great Lakes. Wages in the Adirondack wilds are appreciably affected by the free access of the natives to the vast plains on which grow blueberries harvested by the thousand bushels in July, August, and early September.

Many years ago a New Yorker was occupied in blasting the face of the Palisades to make paving blocks for the city. He discovered, however, that he could not have labor at his own price, though not as yet were labor unions highly organized. Just above the face of the Palisades was a large area of waste land where outcropped rock like that which he cut and marketed. When his price for labor was unsatisfactory to his workmen, they quit him, saying, "Good, then we'll go over the hill!" So saying they took their simple tools of that day, and their blasting powder, and dug for themselves on top of the Palisades until he came to terms. Doubtless other local instances of the position in which the principle works could be furnished by intelligent readers.

An American peasantry can be created only by the exclusion of men from land through large holdings by the few, and the neglect of the taxing authorities to take for public revenue the annual value attaching to land from the presence of a community or of a market. If the present tendency toward tenant farming is checked by the application of site value taxation to land, so that owners, corporations or individuals, cannot buy farm labor at their own price, we shall not create an American peasantry. Those who think such an institution desirable, and who groan at the thought of well paid laborers, should oppose all legislation looking toward the diversion of economic rent from the pockets of the few to the public treasury.

E. N. VALLANDINGHAM.

## From a Once Popular Novelist

THE troops belonging to Fort Inge . . . were surprised on getting back to their cantonment to discover that they had been riding in the wrong direction for an encounter with the Indians! Some of them were half mad with disappointment; for there were several . . . who had not yet run their swords through a red-skin, though keenly desirous of doing so!

No doubt there is inhumanity in the idea. But it must be remembered that these ruthless savages have given the white man peculiar provocation by a thousand repetitions of three diabolical crimes—rape, rapine and murder.

To talk of their being the aborigines of the country—the real, but dispossessed, owners of the soil—is simple nonsense. This sophism, of the most spurious kind, has too long held dominion over the minds of men. The whole human race has an inherent right to the whole surface of the earth; and if any infinitesimal fraction of the former by chance finds itself idly roaming over an extended portion of the latter, their exclusive claim to it is almost too absurd for argument—even with the narrowest-minded disciple of an aborigines society.

Admit it—give the hunter his half-dozen square miles—if he will require that much to maintain him—leave him in undisputed possession to all eternity—and millions of fertile acres must remain untilled, to accommodate this whimsical theory of national right. Nay, I will go further, and risk reproach, by asserting that not only the savage, so called, but civilized people should be unreservedly dispossessed—whenever they show themselves incapable of turning to a good account the resources which Nature has placed within their limits.

The exploitation of Earth's treasures is a question not confined to nations. It concerns the whole family of mankind.

But, alas! we must now be a little cautious about calling names. Our own story of Jamaica—by heaven! the blackest that has blotted the pages of history—has whitewashed these border filibusteros to the seeming purity of snow!

"The Headless Horseman," by CAPT. MAYNE REID.

## LAND VALUE TAXATION IN THE GERMAN CONSTITUTION

Single Tax advocates will not be slow to note that the German constitution ordains that "an increase of the value of land arising without the application of labor or capital to the property (unearned increment, we call it) shall inure to the benefit of the community as a whole." Since here the word "shall" is used, this principle appears less optional than that of socialization.

*N. Y. Times.*

"I AM a great admirer of the doctrine of Henry George."  
—DR. SUN YAT SEN, first president of the Chinese Republic.