

# LAND & LIBERTY

(Incorporating "LAND VALUES.")

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## THE CURE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

What is the problem we have to solve?

Wherever there are men and women willing to work, and able to work, who are out of work simply because they cannot find jobs, there we have the Unemployed Problem. There are not jobs enough to go round. The only effective cure for this state of things is to make the number of jobs at least equal to the number of would-be workers. There are only two conceivable ways of doing this; either by reducing the number of workers, or by increasing the number of available jobs.

We can only find jobs of useful, productive work by going to the fountain from which all such jobs flow—the great Storehouse and Workshop provided by Nature—the Land.

(1) Great classes of workers go direct to this storehouse for their employment. The farmer and his labourers, the market gardener, the allotment holder "produce" (*i.e.*, "draw forth") from the land food for man and beast—cereals, straw, grasses, roots, pulses, vegetables, fruits: some of them grow cotton or flax, or they breed and keep stock for the production of meat, milk, butter, cheese, eggs, hides, horn, wool, hair, bristles, feathers, etc. The miner and quarryman, also going directly to the land, "draw forth" coal, iron ore, tin, lead, copper, spelter, gold, silver, granite, marble and buildstones, chalk, flint, slate, gravel, sand, brick-clay, china-clay, fire-clay, slate, potash, nitrates, fuller's earth, mineral oil, etc., etc. The "lumberman" goes upon the land, and cuts down natural or cultivated timber. The fisherman goes upon the sea, lake or river—which economically are land—and literally "draws forth" fish for food.

It is impossible to enumerate the multitudinous good and useful things which these workers in the *primary* or *extractive industries* draw forth from the bountiful storehouse of Nature. These industries are vital and fundamental, for without the food which they produce the workers could not exist, and without the raw material which they extract the secondary industries could not be carried on. It is perfectly clear that if employment in these vital industries is to be increased, we must have access to more land, or make better use of the land to which we already have access, or both. There is no other way.

(2) The food and raw materials, which are drawn from the land, are not, as a rule, adapted for immedi-

ate use. The corn, which is the finished product of the farmer, becomes the raw material of the miller, who grinds it into flour and offals; and the flour in its turn is the raw material for the bakers' industry, which, with the aid of coal, makes it into bread. Iron ore, as it leaves the mine, is of little or no immediate use. But, with the aid of coal, the iron is separated from its impurities and, again with the aid of coal, is melted and cast, or softened and hammered, into an infinite variety of useful articles, and may finally appear as boilers, or steel rails, or iron girders, or stoves, saucepans, cutlery, nails, watch springs or needles, in the making of which multitudes of men have found useful employment. The hide of the farm beast is tanned into leather, and the leather is made into boots, gloves, harness, trunks, belting for machinery, covers for books, or wrist-straps for watches.

Thus the raw material drawn from land is changed in form and worked up into new combinations by the *manufacturing industries*. Large as these industries loom in the economic life of this country, they are, economically, only secondary. They depend for their very existence upon land-products, and for their prosperity upon a cheap and abundant supply of those products. There is a very true sense in which the workers on or in the land are the real employers, or work-givers, of the workers in manufacture. The food-growers find work for the millers, bakers, jam-makers, fish-curers, preparers and packers of tinned meats and fruits, thatchers, and many other trades, many of which need coal also. The growers of flax, cotton and wool "make work" for linen and cotton operatives, weavers, wool-sorters, dyers, calico-printers, tailors, shirt-makers, and so on through the whole gamut of trades engaged in the supply of wearing apparel. The miners, quarrymen and tree-fellers furnish the raw material without which the iron and steel industries, the building and furnishing trades, the ship-building yards, the construction of railways, the making of watches, and thousands of other trades, large and small, could not be carried on.

We cannot even fall back upon gas or electricity, for industrial power, in the absence of coal. Electricity, as now generated, is almost as truly distilled from coal as gas is.\* We have had time enough, and reason enough, during a long stoppage of the coal-mines, to learn, if we did not realize it before, how dependent manufacturing industry is upon the produce of mineral lands. "We are members one of another": even the most respectable and professional of us. If the primary workers ceased to produce the raw materials of the building trades, architect and quantity surveyors would be out of work, no less than brickmakers, sawyers, bricklayers, plasterers, carpenters, tilers and glaziers. The potter, the glass-worker, the paper-maker, the printer, the bookbinder, the brush-maker have nothing to work upon till the land-worker has produced the raw material for them. Employment in all the manufacturing industries depends, therefore, just as truly and only a little less directly, upon access to land than does the employment of the farmer or miner.

\* (The making of gas yields as bye-products a multitude of other things, as widely different as tar, dyes, disinfectants and explosives: and this sets another chain of industries going.)

Nor is this all. For the manufacturing industries also depend very largely upon direct and immediate access to land for the sites of their factories, mills, warehouses, and offices; and part of their manufacturing is due to the demand of the land workers (including the miners) for machinery, tools, buildings, clothes, furniture, etc.

(3) The raw materials, and the partly or wholly manufactured goods, can only be moved by human agency, and this fact opens up a new vista of useful and productive, though again secondary, employment. Corn in the farmer's stockyard and coal at the pit-head are not yet "produced" for me if I want toast for breakfast. Not only must the miller grind the corn, and the baker turn the flour into loaves, but, in order to bring this about, the carter must take the grist to the mill and the railwayman must bring the sacks of flour to the baker and the baker's boy must come with his hand-barrow or basket to my door; railwaymen must bring the coal to the London merchant and the coal-porter with his waggon deliver it to the baker and to me. Thus we have the third great group of industries in this triple industrial alliance—those, viz., engaged in the distribution and exchange of the goods produced by the other two groups. By means of *transport and "shop-keeping"* the raw material passes from its first producer on the land to the manufacturer (or series of manufacturers) who work it up into desired forms, and so on to the places where, and the people by whom, it is wanted for consumption. So that all the persons who are engaged in the final stage of production—the distribution and exchange of the goods, produced directly or indirectly from land—are no less concerned in the question of access to land than are those who till the fields or win the coal. Our sailors, railwaymen, all workers in road-transport (whether by horsed vehicles or by motor-lorries), dockers, lightermen, stablemen, warehousemen, packers, porters, shopkeepers, shop-assistants, would soon learn their dependence upon the land if the earth refused to give her increase, or if the landlords used their monopoly-power altogether to prevent access to land. All coal-porters, and most railwaymen and many sailors must have learnt lately that their employment is, as it were, a by-product of the industry of the miners. But exactly the same is true of the black-coated workers—bankers, accountants, auctioneers, manufacturers' agents, commercial travellers, merchants, clerks, book-keepers, house-agents, etc., etc., so long as they are dealing in real values of material things.

While the material to be transported or exchanged is thus derived, directly or indirectly, from land, the machinery of transport is largely dependent upon coal. Even if we electrify our railways, electricity is, as it were, fluid coal. We replace the steam-engine by the internal combustion engine driven by petrol. Petrol, like coal, comes from land. We try to dodge the landlord by generating electric current by water-power, and we find that all the river banks, and many of the rivers, are "private property," and that our electric mains for the distribution of current must pass under or over land, and pay for the privilege. Fall back on horses, and you must get their feed from land.

We want access to the whole of Nature's store-houses. We can equalize the natural inequalities of English land, and the unequal needs of English

citizens for direct access to land, by taxing land values into the national and municipal exchequers.

FREDK. VERINDER.

(From a paper read by Mr. Verinder last month to the Council of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values, to be published shortly by the League, as a pamphlet, with the title, "Is there a Cure for Unemployment?")