

remove, and which America, happily for herself, has never known. They are the true "surplus population"—ever consuming, nothing producing—fed, clothed, and sheltered at the expense of the nation, and returning to the nation nothing but hindrance to its welfare.

Such a system—a shilling a day to a labourer who *does* labour, and a thousand pounds a day to a lord who does *not* labour—such a system contains within itself either the elements of national decay, or the elements of national disaster. Either the nation must be sacrificed to the landed interest, or the landed interest (composed of thirty or thirty-five thousand families in Great Britain) must be sacrificed to the interests of the nation. Either the population will found or seek new countries where labour shall meet with a more equitable reward, or a war of classes will ultimately ensue, having for its theme, not *liberty*, as in former days, but *property*. If the population diminish—and it seems already to have that tendency—England must relatively decay, and, notwithstanding all her wealth, fall into the rear of those younger nations, where the spirit of man is esteemed of more importance than the mere wealth he can create. And if, on the contrary, the labourers of England go on increasing as heretofore—the wealth of the few standing out continually in stronger and stronger contrast with the poverty and degradation of the many—there must come a time when the classes will enter into a struggle of which none can foresee the results. It may be a peaceable struggle, but for the time it must be attended by those disasters which—like the fevers that cure a long course of constitutional derangement—bring many latent evils to the surface, disfigure the aspect of society, and for a time engender a tumultuous life of present suffering—although, it *may be*, of future health.

The great requisite, then, is to return to the laws of Nature, of Providence, of God—to let the skilful and industrious man be rich, and not to accord wealth to those who produce nothing for the welfare of mankind. If, as I have endeavoured to prove, the rents of the soil are the only common profits of the whole labours of the community, the rents of the soil are the only legitimate source of taxation—the only possible source from which the revenues of the nation can equitably be derived. To tax labour is to disunite society—it makes the nation only an aggregation of unassociated individuals. To tax the rents of the soil is to unite society—it makes the nation a community bound together by the ties of a common interest, and a common welfare. This is the true, and the only true, theory of a *Nation*—that the soil belongs to it in perpetuity, and never can be alienated from it; and that he who will give the greatest rent for the soil becomes its cultivator, and pays the rent to the nation for the benefit of the whole community. Then, but not till then, will labour reap its natural reward—the reward appointed by Providence in the divine constitution of the terrestrial economy. Then will the welfare of one be the welfare of all—then will men be banded together by a true citizenship—and then will the first great step be taken towards that mighty brotherhood which springs from our common parentage, and which is at once the promise and the prophecy of the Christian faith:—

"And man to man the world o'er
Shall brothers be, an' a' that."

[This remarkably clear statement by Patrick Edward Dove on the nature and function of rent is probably not so familiar to our readers as other extracts from his writings, and the belief that it has not been noticed in any land reform literature of recent years is our excuse for printing it in full. The *ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE* was published in 1854, four years after the better-known *THEORY OF HUMAN PROGRESSION*, recently popularised in a cheap edition, abridged by the late Miss Julia A. Kellogg, of Orange, New Jersey. But the later book is of equal historic value and worthy of the same attention.

The above passage is open to little comment by way of criticism, except that Dove does not show how the rent of land should be allocated to the nation, nor is it clear whether he would have obliged landholders to pay not only the rents they were actually receiving but also the rents they might receive, whether their land was used or not. He does not indicate that his policy would directly raise wages, in addition to procuring for the labourer the indirect advantage of an equal share of the rents collected by the State. In fact, the political and economic field was not fully cultivated by Dove or by any of the other precursors of Henry George, whose contribution in this connection was that he correlated the law of rent and the law of wages, and so solved the economic problem. And as a practical reformer he formulated the easy and rational plan whereby existing taxing machinery might be employed for appropriating rent by the taxation of land values and abolishing all other taxes, without involving a needless shock to present customs and habits of thought or a needless extension of governmental machinery. While the rent so appropriated would be devoted to public purposes, just as the proceeds of the present (unjust) taxes are employed, the effect would be at the same time to liberate industry, to cause all land to be put to its best use, to reduce rent to a just level, and *necessarily* to increase wages.

We cannot blame the feudal system for our present ills, nor is America any better for not having experienced that system. It is the lesson of *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* that, given the right of individuals to appropriate rent, any country will suffer the "fatal heritage" of more and more unequal distribution of wealth caused by the natural increase in rent and by the speculation in land which the expectation of future increase engenders. Dove evidently regarded America as a country free from landed privileges, but it never was. Conditions in America and in all civilised countries to-day prove that the law of rent knows no geographical boundaries.—Editor, *LAND VALUES*.]

The basic evil in the economic condition to-day in our own and in other countries is that, while valuable land is all "taken up," there are vast quantities that are not in use, but merely held for speculation. This is the natural result of the present taxation system which fosters speculation at the expense of trade, building, manufacturing and agriculture. The taxation of land values would incline things the other way. It would foster useful trade and industry at the expense of speculation.

To be more specific, I believe that the land-values tax, by correcting this radically wrong condition, would make it easier to own and keep a home with some ground around it; easier to own and run a well-kept and developing farm; easier to establish and operate a manufacturing, mercantile, transportation or other useful business; to diminish the overcrowding of cities and to do away with slums; to make preventive medicine effective; to reduce rents, lower the cost of living and raise wages; and besides all this would tend to increase the comforts and security of life for all who usefully participate in the work of the world, whether by hand, brain, or capital—whether in city or country. It should make us a nation of landowners and home-owners. There is land enough.

As an initial step in this fundamental solution of the tax problem and the business problem, I would suggest changing the laws so as to permit cities and towns by local option to vote as fast as they wish to do so, to stop taxing personal property and improvements on or in land, or to tax them at lower rates than site or location values. The experience thus gained can be depended upon to point the way to subsequent steps.

PROF. LEWIS J. JOHNSON (Harvard University).