

orously this repugnant red concretion of primordial matter, that yet symbolizes the indispensable service of placenta in the birth of creation's nobler forms!

ELIOT WHITE.

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## SLAVERY AND LAND VALUES.

For The Public.

In histories of the United States we are told that slavery was originally introduced in the Seventeenth century into all parts of the country. But proving unprofitable, after long trial, in the North, it was there gradually abolished, beginning with Vermont, in 1777, and ending with New Jersey in 1804. In certain portions of the South, however, the system was so commercially successful that young and able-bodied slaves often sold for more than \$1000.

The market price of a slave, like that of a working horse, depended upon what he could produce for his owner beyond the cost of his keep. A speculative element was also introduced in this price from the uncertainty of human life and the future possibility of valuable offspring. If a slave had no actual or potential earning power beyond his cost of maintenance, he was worthless. It is evident that youth, health, strength and industrial skill all tended to increase the surplus product and market value of slaves who possessed them; while old, crippled or sick slaves were not accepted as gifts except by the charitable.

The land of the hill districts of the North was of so barren a nature as to give only a frugal living even to industrious white freemen; and the attempt to work it with African slaves, whom it was impractical to watch, was foredoomed to failure. In the richer valleys, especially those of the Central West, a surplus might have been obtained from slave-labor worked in gangs under overseers. But the cold climate was unfavorable to their health, and, before the bottom lands were sufficiently cleared and provided with transportation facilities for the profitable export of slave-raised products, a moral sentiment had arisen against slavery itself.

In the South there were practically no slaves in the mountain districts, which were left to the cultivation of the poor whites who were satisfied with the frugal living to be gained from land "on the margin of cultivation." But the rich Southern lowlands were so well adapted for raising rice, sugar, corn, and especially cotton, by slave labor, that the plantation owners enjoyed large incomes and vied in ostentation with the aristocracy of Europe. Had none of the Southern lands yielded more produce than was necessary to supply the subsistence of their tillers, it is safe to say that there would have been no slave question in our history.

The effect of the abolition of slavery on land values was obscured in the South by the general

industrial ruin left by the Civil War, but in the British West Indies it was clearly exhibited. Many philosophers, guided more by sentimental than scientific reasoning, had predicted that the planters would enjoy larger incomes with free than with slave labor, but the change caused results that differed with varying land conditions.

In Jamaica, where only a third of the land was cultivated under slavery, the freed Negroes were (unfortunately for land values) allowed to settle freely on the wild lands, where they easily raised enough for their simple wants, and only hired out at high wages, if at all, to their former owners. This higher labor-cost greatly reduced the land-owners' gains from the Jamaican estates, and, coupled with the decline in sugar prices (owing to the abolition of preferential duties for her colonies by England), caused the abandoning of 146 plantations between 1832 and 1848.

On the other hand, in islands like Barbados and Trinidad, where all the land was under private ownership, the freed Negroes had no other recourse than to work for their old masters. Production increased, owing to the superiority of starvation to the overseer's lash as an incentive to diligence, and wages were kept at about the level of slave subsistence by the importation of coolie labor from the Madeira islands and from Hindustan. The planters had no longer to risk their funds on the lives of sickly laborers, and the large sums received from the English government, as compensation for manumission, were available for the clearing of more land or the purchase of improved machinery. The net result of these various factors was an increase in the net as well as in the gross product of the estates, and a marked rise in land values in consequence.

These West Indian examples well illustrate the close economic analogy between chattel and land slavery. It was only in Jamaica, with plenty of available free land, that the Negro was able to increase his income after emancipation. In the privately monopolized islands the freeman received no better wages than had the slave.

R. B. BRINSMADE.

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## THE THREE GRACES AND JUSTICE.

For The Public.

Once upon a Time the Three Graces made a Poor Man the Object of their Solitude.

Faith thought that the Main Trouble was with his Soul, and preached to him.

Hope opined that he was afflicted with Acute Pessimism, and sought to relieve his Condition by presenting to him the Bright Side of Things.

Charity put a Patch on his Pants, and, congratulating him, said this would keep the Cold out for a While, anyway.

These well-intentioned Ministrations were re-

peated from Time to Time, until the Poor Man was well-nigh stark naked and about all in. Whereupon a Sense of Delicacy and a Feeling of Utter Helplessness prompted the Three Old Ladies to retire.

Just then Justice appeared on the Landscape. He saw the Awful Predicament of the Poor Man, and, without any Ado, took an Acre of Land from an Agent who was holding it for speculation, put the Poor Man on it and told him to scratch. And behold! in a Season's Time the Poor Man was strutting about in the Pride of Self-Respect and a new Suit of Clothes.

"You are an Anarchist!" cried the Speculative Land Agent. "You have confiscated the Property of my Client."

"Oh piffles!" replied Justice. "Wake up! Come to! Go to! The Title was vitiated when the first Man was separated from his Inheritance of a Place to live, move and have his being."\*

"Why didn't you do it long ago?" said the On-looker.

"Well," said Justice, irreverently, "that Bunch of Fussy Old Women wouldn't give me a chance."

HERMAN TIEDJENS.

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### LAWSON PURDY.

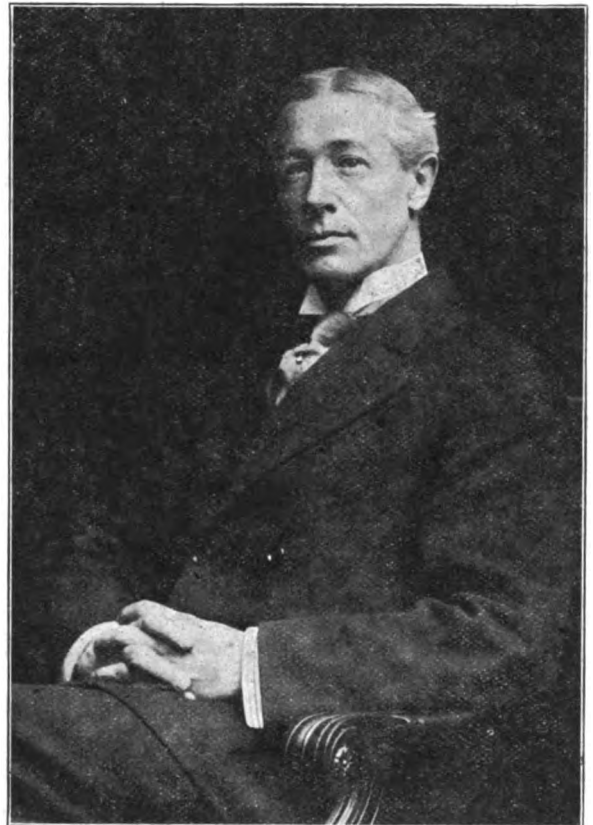
Among all the officials of the United States whose careers have been directed and their efficiency promoted by the influence upon them of Henry George's teachings, none has served better or achieved a wider and firmer reputation than Lawson Purdy. Under reappointment by Mayor Gaynor, he fills the office of president of the Department of Taxes of the city of New York, to which he was originally appointed four years ago by Mayor McClellan.

Mr. Purdy was born in Dutchess county, New York, September 13, 1863. He prepared for college at St. Paul's school, Concord, N. H., and graduated from Trinity College, Hartford, Conn. In 1885, the year following his graduation, he married Mary J. McCrackan, sister of William D. McCrackan, the author of "The Swiss Republic." Down into the early nineties Mr. Purdy was in business as treasurer of the New York Bank Note Company; but he left this connection to study law. He devoted himself at the same time to the management as secretary of the New York Tax Reform Association, a position he continued to hold after beginning the practice of the law and until his appointment as the head of the tax department.

Meanwhile he had perfected himself as a lego-economic expert in taxation. It was his superior qualifications in this respect that led to his appointment by Mayor McClellan, and, he having

\*"Of course, whilst another man has no land, my title to mine, your title to yours, is at once, vitiated."—Emerson.

made his administration of the tax department conspicuously successful, to his reappointment by Mayor Gaynor. He has well earned his right to be regarded as an expert, not only by his present official service but also by the fiscal monographs he has written, and by his service on the New York Advisory Commission on Taxation and Finance in 1905, and on the Special State Tax Commission in 1906. Both the legislature of Minnesota and the constitutional convention of Michigan have had him before them as an expert adviser on fiscal principles and policies; and he commands the



highest degree of public confidence in his own city and State.

It was through Mr. Purdy's leadership that the law was secured from the New York legislature under which land valuations and improvement valuations in New York City are distinguished for purposes of taxation and the results officially published in detail. This law has appropriately fallen to him more than to any other one official for execution, and the annual reports of the tax department of which he is at the head testify convincingly to the excellence of the work. One of its impressive revelations is the fact that the privately owned site of New York city is worth about twice as much as the privately owned buildings and other improvements within its boundaries.