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More about American Landlordism

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## MORE ABOUT AMERICAN LANDLORDISM.

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IN the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW for March, Mr. Henry Strong and Prof. David Bennett King attempt to show that the American people have no reason to concern themselves about the growth of landlordism, arguing that the tendency in this country is to the diffusion instead of the concentration of land ownership, and that, in the absence of special privileges and laws of primogeniture and entail, there can be no such landlordism here as in countries where its evil effects are admitted.

The assertion that the tendency is to the greater diffusion of land ownership, is, by Mr. Strong, based upon the census reports and his own experience in selling railroad lands and loaning money on mortgage, and, by Prof. King, upon general report and the cutting up of bonanza farms, cattle ranges and railroad grants.

As to the census reports, they do indeed, as cited by Mr. Strong, assert a reduction in the average size of farms from 153 acres in 1870 to 134 acres in 1880. This statement is, however, as I showed in a controversy with Prof. Walker, in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, in May, 1883, utterly inconsistent with the returns for 1860, 1870 and 1880 of the number of farms by classes of specified area, tabulated together in the Census Compendium. Those tables showed, for the decade ending in 1880, a regular progression toward farms of larger size, ranging from a decrease of 37 per cent. in the smallest class (under three acres), to an increase of 668 per cent. in the largest class (over 1,000 acres). Professor Walker then seemed incapable of explaining his own figures or throwing any light on the discrepancy, but since that time the third volume of the full Census Reports has been published, and in it the classification of farms by specified areas for 1870 is stated to be according to *improved* area, while the classification for 1880 is stated to be by *total* area. This makes it as impossible to institute any comparison between the two sets of returns as it is to

understand why such a classification should be made on one basis for one census and on another for the next.

I refer to this matter as explaining how it is that opposing writers are able, from the same Census Report, to quote figures which indicate opposite tendencies. But leaving the curiosities of the census to those who have time to dig them out, and accepting as the best we can now get the figures which show a decrease in the average area of American farms from 153 acres in 1870 to 134 acres in 1880, let us see what such a decrease may mean.

It certainly does not mean, as Mr. Strong implies, anything inconsistent with the statement of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW that the proportion of tenant farmers is increasing, and in nowise shows any tendency to the diffusion of land ownership. These returns, it must be noted, are not returns of landholding, but of cultivated farms. They do not, as Mr. Strong seems to suppose, include the vast amount of land held by speculators, railroad companies and syndicates, the great stretches of timber and mineral land which have passed into the possession of individuals or companies; they do not even include the cattle ranches and stock ranges, as is readily seen by a reference to the tables showing the amount of live stock on the enumerated farms, to which is added in a note a computation of the cattle on stock ranges and ranches. It is probable that, under the instruction that "wherever there is a resident overseer or manager there a farm is to be reported," some of the great bonanza farms would be returned as several farms, and it is also probable that farms made up in whole or part of land obtained by dummy entries would, for some time at least, be returned as having separate owners and therefore as separate farms. On the other hand, orchards, nurseries and market gardens, which the growing concentration of population in cities must have proportionately much increased, are all returned as farms. Thus, the little patches cultivated by Chinese or Italians around San Francisco, or the small vineyards or orange groves which have been planted about Sonoma or Los Angeles, would each count as a farm, while such a "wheat factory" as that of the late Dr. Glenn might count as several farms, and the enormous ranches, and great tracts held on speculation, would not count at all. And, further than this, it is to be remarked that, with the exception of new sections like Dakota, into which the tide of agricultural immigration has been pouring, the largest in-

crease in the number of farms has been in the cotton States, and has for the most part meant no cutting up of ownership, but simply a change from the plantation system of cultivation to the small agricultural tenant system of Ireland.

But, more important still than all this, it must be remembered that it is only in a stationary community that decrease in the average size of holdings would indicate the greater diffusion of ownership. In a community advancing in population and the arts, the intenser uses to which land is put beget a general tendency to decrease in the size of holdings. As society develops, the stock range is succeeded by the farm; the farm of extensive culture by the farm of intensive culture; the grain field by the market garden; and the market garden, in its turn, is cut up into city lots. But while this division is going on, the ownership of land may be in reality concentrating and landlordism increasing, since what would be a very small stock range would be an enormous farm; what would be a very small farm would be an enormous market garden; what would be a small market garden would be a very large city lot. Take, for instance, the area occupied by the city of New York. As compared with the old Dutch days, the size of the holdings has enormously diminished, and where they were then measured by acres and hundreds of acres, they are now measured by feet and inches. But, where each family once owned its own home, the family that owns its own home is now the rare exception; where each house was once surrounded by garden and orchard, a lot of twenty feet front now carries family upon family, living, on top of each other, in tiers; where the ownership of acres once gave a man only the opportunity to earn a living from Mother Nature by the sweat of his brow, the ownership of square feet now enables him to live in luxurious idleness on the toil of his fellow-citizens. Thus, while, in New York, the average size of holdings has greatly decreased, the power of landlordism and the evils of landlordism have greatly increased. The ownership of a narrow lot on Wall Street or Broadway may give greater command over the labor of others than the ownership of a square league in New Mexico.

Now, what has gone on and is still going on in New York—what any American may see going on in the outskirts of any growing city, where farm land is being converted into market gardens or suburban villas, and market gardens and villa grounds are being converted into the sites of factories or divided into city lots—is pre-

cisely what is going on in the country as a whole. There is going on that cutting up of railroad grants and of great tracts held on speculation, to which Mr. Strong and Prof. King refer; the ranch is being subdivided into the farm, the plantation into the cotton patch or orange grove, and the farm of extensive culture is in some cases being turned into smaller farms of intensive culture. But all this does not prove that the ownership of land is not concentrating or that landlordism is not developing. For, simultaneously with this division, a re-formation is going on by which field is being added to field, and farm to farm, and lot to lot, and, though the average area may be smaller, the average value (in which and not in area is the true measurement of landlordism) may be far greater. Considering how rapidly the country has been developing during the decade; considering how the cutting up of Southern plantations into tenant holdings has increased the number of farms where there has been no division of ownership, and how, in the Northern and Western States farms which by the score and even the hundred have passed into the hands of single individuals or corporations, are yet returned as separate; and considering how the great aggregations, such as the twenty-eight ranges recently advertised by the Central Pacific Railroad Company for lease in the State of Nevada, of which the smallest is 30,000 acres and the largest 600,000 acres, the million acre estate in the Pan Handle of Texas just fenced in by a company of Chicago capitalists, the millions and millions of acres owned by the Distons and Elkinses and titled or untitled foreign capitalists, and the great stretches of appropriated iron and coal and timber lands,\* are all excluded from the enumeration—a decrease in the average total area of farms from 153 acres to 134 would be, in reality, negative indication of a strong tendency the other way.

Prof. King says, "One need but to go into any good farming community and inquire how the numbers and size of the existing farms compare with those of twenty-five years ago to be convinced" that "there has been a constant tendency pretty much everywhere to subdivide the land and disperse it among a larger and larger number of owners." As to this point, I have made a great deal of inquiry of well-informed men in various parts of the country, and save when social development has brought about a cutting up due

\* Three parties in Detroit are said to own ninety-nine hundredths of the timber land of Michigan.

to the putting of land to intenser uses (which is probably what Prof. King had in mind), I have found a general agreement that the size of farms is increasing and that property in land is concentrating into relatively fewer hands.

“It has become a postulate among farmers that in order to make a farm pay you must live on it yourself,” says Mr. Strong. He has evidently got hold of a copy of “Poor Richard’s Almanac,” and in his innocence has mistaken its date for 1886. It *used* to be a postulate that “he who by the plow would thrive, himself must either hold or drive;” but all that has been changed. If Mr. Strong will look, he will now find, from New York to California a growing class of farmers who live in cities and never touch the handles of a plow. I can show him, in Brooklyn, farmers who live 1,500 miles away from their farms. And such American farmers may doubtless be found in Paris or London.

But it is not worth while to rest anything on personal observation, even where, as in this case, it may be confidently invoked, since there are other things to which appeal may be made. We may admit the correctness of the census statement of a diminution in the average total area of farms during the last decade; but if we take for comparison the basis on which the classification by area for 1860 and 1870 is now said to have been made—that of the improved land in farms—a basis certainly better adapted to show the deeper and stronger tendencies, insomuch as in the long-run the division of land into farms will follow the tendencies of cultivation, we find a different result. Dividing the total area of improved land in farms for 1870 by the number of farms returned for that year, we get an average of 71.023 acres. Doing the same thing with the totals for 1880, we get an average of 71.034 acres. Thus, though the average total acreage of American farms has diminished, the average improved acreage has actually increased. The increase is in itself slight, but, under the conditions previously pointed out, is exceedingly significant. It shows that the tendency to a larger scale of cultivation has been strong enough to even more than counteract the reduction in average resulting from the growth of population and from such special causes as the conversion of Southern plantations into tenant farms.

But to satisfy ourselves of the existence of this tendency in American agriculture it is not necessary to apply to observation or to resort to the census tables. When, on a winter morning, one

sees the weather-cocks pointing south he does not have to go outside or to hang out a thermometer to tell that the weather is growing warmer. And from what may be seen in any city one may confidently infer that agriculture is tending to a larger scale. He has but to note the tendency in all other branches of production and observe the agricultural machines with which the stores of dealers in such articles are filled. The mechanical inventions which are revolutionizing agriculture *must* give rise to such concentrating tendencies in that industry as similar inventions have given rise to in other branches of production. The small farmer is disappearing by virtue of the same law under which the hand-loom weaver has disappeared. Whether this effect be good or bad, it is of the nature of modern progress. It is idle to ignore it, and, unless we are prepared to throttle invention and raise a Chinese wall against advancing civilization, it is useless to resist it.

Last summer we had accounts of the dreadful ravages of the cholera in Southern Europe, just as, during that first period of our national life, now fast drawing to a close, we have had accounts of the dreadful ravages of landlordism in countries where there was not, as with us, a virgin continent to overrun.

Let us carry ourselves forward in imagination to the coming summer, and imagine ourselves on board a trans-Atlantic steamer filled with returning tourists. Let us imagine that, on the second or third day out, a whisper runs among the passengers, as they emerge from their state-rooms, that the doctor has reported to the captain that one-fourth of the crew are down with cholera. Can we imagine one of these passengers as he sits down to breakfast nonchalantly remarking: "What a pity it is that we had no reports yesterday and the day before, so that we might be able to tell whether cholera has been increasing on board."

Or can we imagine another to chime in: "Cholera increasing! That is nonsense. Since only one-fourth of the crew are now down with it, three-fourths of the crew have evidently got well of it, and if the others go on getting well as rapidly, there will not be a sick man on board by the time we reach Sandy Hook."

We cannot imagine men under such conditions talking in this way. And yet this is precisely the way in which Mr. Strong and Prof. King meet the analogous fact that, by the last census, more than a fourth of American farmers were tenants.

The reason why, from the fact that one-fourth of the ship's company were down with cholera, no passenger would hesitate to infer that the disease had been increasing and was still tending to increase, is that the normal condition of ships' crews is not to be down with cholera, and, since the whole ship's company were presumably well when they left port, the fact that one-fourth were now ill, indicates progress from health to disease, not from disease to health.

So with tenancy. It is not the normal estate of man, and is so far from being the primary condition of American agriculture that we have been accustomed to look on the American farmer as necessarily the owner of the acres he tilled.

Mr. Strong would have us think, and Prof. King really seems to think, that tenant farming is, in the natural order of things, the intermediary stage through which "agricultural laborers" are enabled to pass into a condition of land owners, just as, in the older handicrafts, the condition of journeyman was the intermediary condition between that of apprentice, with which all craftsmen must begin, and that of master workman, to which all could aspire. The truth is just the reverse of this. Tenant-farming is the intermediary stage through which independent tillers of the soil have in other countries passed, and are in this country now beginning to pass, to the condition of agricultural laborers and chronic paupers.

But sufficiently startling as is the fact that in 1880 more than one-fourth of American farms were cultivated by tenants, this of itself does not fully indicate how largely our agricultural population have already been divorced from the soil. Tenancy is only the later form of the disease; the earlier form is the mortgage.

The idea of holding agricultural land for its rents, as is done in England and Ireland, has been foreign to the American land-grabber. His notion has been to sell it, and then to move forward in advance of settlement and get more land to sell again. In lieu of cash he has been ready to sell on mortgage, which gives a security transferable to investors who do not wish the risk of speculation nor the trouble of tenants. And on the other hand, the purchase of land on mortgage has conformed better than tenancy to American ideas and to the hopefulness general in a new country.



What the proportion of mortgaged farms is, it is of course impossible to say, but considering the extent to which mortgaging prevails in the older sections of the country, and the fact that in the newer sections the great majority of the smaller farmers begin with a mortgage, I am disposed to think that fifty per cent. may not be too high an estimate. Taking the country all through, mortgaging is certainly more common than renting. Yet if the number of farmers under mortgage merely equals the number of renters, the farmers who really own the land they till are already in a minority in the United States !

But it needs no reference to census tables or special facts to prove that under present conditions the small American freeholder is doomed. Here are certain broad facts of common knowledge : Our population is increasing. We have now practically reached the limit of our public domain. In agriculture, as in all other branches of industry, the march of invention and the improvement of the processes of production and exchange tend steadily to the requirement of more capital. The value of land is rising. The rate of interest is falling.

Given these conditions, and wherever land is treated as private property, whether in the Eastern Hemisphere or in the Western, in the first century or in the twentieth ; on the earth or on the moon, it necessarily follows that the ownership of land must tend to concentrate, and an increasing proportion of the people to become tributary to the rest.

For when land has all passed into private possession, new comers, whether they arrive from other countries or through the gates of birth, can get land only by donation, heritage or purchase. Few can get land by donation or heritage (already the large majority of the children born in the United States do not inherit land) and, since as land increases in value it becomes harder to get it by purchase, the landless, as compared with the landed, must steadily increase.

Further than this, the land-owning class must absolutely diminish. Not only do the accidents and misadventures of life constantly operate to shake individuals from the landed to the landless class (and while descent is easy ascent is difficult), but to those who do not have an abundance of capital it becomes more profitable to rent land than to own it. For land, being the species of property least liable to accidents and most certain to augment in value by

social growth, those who wish to make long and secure investments can afford to give more for it than it is worth to those who must put to personal use such capital as they can get.

Here is a farmer, the owner of his own farm, who needs more capital, or, what is the same thing, believes he can put more capital to a profitable use. He can borrow on his farm to one-half its selling value at six per cent. But he can sell it outright for its full value, and then get the use of it as a tenant for a rent amounting to not more than four or even three per cent. Obviously, therefore, he can get the use of the largest capital at the lowest rate by selling his land. Or if he finds that he can profitably use more land, the cheapest way for him to get it and the capital to cultivate it, is to sell what he has and rent a larger area. He may in this be abandoning a certainty for an uncertainty, and contingencies he did not foresee and chances on which he did not calculate will tell against the class, if they do not in all cases tell against the individual. But this disposition to take chances—to abandon the bird in the hand in the hope of seizing two in the bush—is characteristic of our race as it was of the Romans, and it is especially characteristic of our time. We make of life a gamble, and our institutions, our education, our literature, our ideals and even our religion all foster the spirit. What, practically, is the lesson of Sunday-school and Church? Is it not “Be good, that you may die rich and *leave* a lot of money?” Who are our envied men? Are they not those who by desperate chances and lucky hits, if not by deeds which differ from those of highwaymen only in degree, have amassed wealth? To how many of the boys and girls now growing up does life seem to offer anything comparable to the hope of becoming rich? The rich man who heeding Christ’s injunction, should sell all he had and give to the poor, would with us be in danger of being sent to an insane asylum or of having a guardian appointed at the request of his relatives. The man whom we deem sane is the man who, like an English clergyman of the last century, *leaves* 687 pairs of boots, 980 pairs of pantaloons and other things in proportion, provided he *leaves* them in the potential form of “gilt-edged” securities or well-selected real estate.

“Peasant proprietary” or “occupying ownership,” which are the names European economists give to that system of ownership which we have regarded as typically American, may exist for a long while among a population whose natural increase is restrained,

where emigration is not thought of, where son follows father in the old ways and labor-saving machinery is little used, and where local attachments are strong. It may exist for a long while among such a people as the rural population of parts of France. But among a people such as ours, restless, aspiring, used to emigration, almost without local attachments, accustomed to welcome the new rather than to venerate the old—a population increasing in numbers, grasping for wealth, among whom invention succeeds invention and labor-saving machine displaces labor-saving machine—the economic tendencies that make for change to work upon plastic material.

This economic advantage to the farmer of small capital in renting instead of owning land where it has become very valuable, and a class having large means to invest has grown up, has been the great agency which *in spite of* the difficulties imposed upon the transfer of land has so concentrated ownership in Great Britain. At the accession of James II., England was hardly as far advanced on the road to landlordism as the United States is now. For not only, as stated by Macaulay, were the majority of English farmers owners of their farms, but there still remained large areas of commons, and much of the land for which rent was paid was held on customary rents, instead of rack-rents as with us. But by the beginning of this century the small occupying owner—the prototype of our typical American farmer—had almost entirely disappeared. He had not been violently dispossessed; he had simply yielded to economic conditions which gave him promise of greater advantages in selling than in holding. Of the representatives of this class some had emigrated, some had become tenant farmers on a larger scale, some had joined the increasing population of the cities or had gone abroad to fight the battles of the British oligarchy or to assist in holding down and governing British colonies and conquests, and some had sunk to the condition of agricultural laborers, with whom, until within the last few years the breath of a new life has begun to stir among the British masses, there was as little thought and as little hope of ever owning the land they tilled as there was of owning the moon.

And this economic cause was undoubtedly the main agency which in ancient Italy converted the little independent patrimonies of Roman husbandmen into slave-worked *latifundia* and tenant farms. In reading history we must remember the fore-

shortening effect which time produces. The hill-tops are grouped together, and the great valleys and table-lands that lie between are lost to the eye. What we read of is the *extraordinary* things—the wars, the tumults, the crimes; but the ordinary life of the people passes unobserved, and the most potent of the agencies that produce change are least noticed simply because their influence is widest and most constant.

That our own “land-grabbers” had their antetypes in ancient Rome is true, and that fraud, violence, and legal chicanery were used to convert “the corn-land that was of public right” into private domains and make the small cultivator willing to leave what answered to the “quarter-section” of the American settler, is doubtless as true as with us. But the vicissitudes of life and the influence of the money-lender must have been still more potent.

“There is very little of useful practical comparison in anything Roman with anything American,” says Mr. Strong. This is the true spirit of “spread eagleism”—the spirit of the “What have we to do with Abroad?” of a Republican senator. Perhaps it is as useless to argue with those who think this way as it is to point out the wrecks made by dissipation to the young fellow, who, rejoicing in the spring of his strength, thinks that dissipation doesn’t hurt *him*, and that he can carouse all night and be “as fresh as ever” in the morning. But if, on his part, Professor King will look, he may see that the causes he thinks peculiar to Rome, and to which he attributes the disappearance of the small Roman cultivator, are in operation here. What is the competition of slave-labor to the competition of machinery, to the power of getting special rates from railroads, and to the advantages that the larger capitalist has in our speculative markets? If in ancient Italy the wealthy “discriminated most unfairly against the poorer farmers in regard to taxes and the use of the public lands,” is it not also true that the small farmer here is taxed far more highly than the rich land-holder, and that the herdsmen of the great stock-raiser and the barbed wire of domestic and foreign companies drive American citizens off the public domain? If the legislative, executive and judicial powers of the Roman government were “almost entirely in the hands of the wealthy land-owners and money-lenders,” what has been the case in the United States? That the ultimate power of making laws and changing constitutions is

in the hands of the masses of the American people is true. But was not this in reality true, for a long time at least, of the Roman people? And what is the use of power to those who will not use it?

Human nature is not changed by the crossing of an ocean, and social laws do not vary with meridians of longitude; nor yet are they suspended by written constitutions. What went on in Rome and what went on in Great Britain has also begun here, and must go on all the faster that our life is quicker and the obstacles to industrial change are weaker.

How far we have gone toward landlordism is shown by the fact that rent in our new States is not unusually one-half the crop. When three per cent. bonds bear a premium, and money can be had at one per cent. on call, it requires no prophet to foresee that those whose anxiety is to obtain good investments will soon turn to landed "estates" of the English type, and, as soon as the movement fairly begins, the same social distinction which in England has attached to the ownership of land will begin to attach to it here, and will hurry on the movement.

As for the "foreign landlords" (of whom, despite Mr. Strong, we have many), who are already beginning to establish here "estates" of the English type, the prejudice against them is vulgar and irrational. If I must pay tribute to any one for the privilege of living in my native country, what difference does it make to me whether he lives three miles or three thousand miles away? And that Landlord Scully, of Tipperary, compels his Illinois tenants to doff their hats when they enter his "estate office" to pay the rack-rents from which he is said to draw \$400,000 per annum to support him in London, no more fills me with indignation than does the fact that our own countryman, my fellow-missionary to Scotland, Mr. Ross Winans, will not let a native Scotsman, nor a native Scotsman's pet lamb, enter that great deer park of his that stretches across Scotland from sea to sea. Mr. Winans did not make the laws of Scotland nor Mr. Scully those of Illinois. Scotchmen have no right to complain of the one nor Americans of the other. If men will put saddles on their backs and bridles in their mouths, they must expect the booted and spurred to ride.

As for American landlordism, if it differs in anything from the worst Irish landlordism, that is solely due to the fact that our press-

ure of population is not yet so great. All the powers that the worst Irish landlord ever exercised are inherent in the absolute ownership of land recognized by American law. These powers were not, in Ireland or in any other country, given by special laws; they arise from the power of the owner to fix the terms on which another may use his property. Landlord Scully is as free to fix the terms on which American citizens may live on his Illinois estates as he ever was, (and far more free than he is now) to fix the terms on which Irishmen could live on his Tipperary estates. He may require that they shall make any improvements or conform to any rules, or wear any dress, or send their children to any school, or go to any church, just as readily as he can fix the rent on which he may choose to lease them his land. If they do not like his terms they are just as free as Irishmen have always been—to emigrate. And it is merely because the greater sparsity of population makes emigration easier that American citizens are not yet compelled to accept as hard terms as were ever imposed on Irish tenants. But emigration will not long be easier. We are on the verge of an event which is, in some respects, the most important that has occurred since Columbus sighted land—the “fencing in” of the last available quarter-section of the American domain.

As for any hope of checking the growth of landlordism by limiting the size of estates or any other half-way measures, that is idle.

In saying that Italy was ruined by great estates, Pliny undoubtedly took a superficial view—a view akin to that of those who rail against the great estates of British landlords, or denounce the land barons who are fencing in far greater estates in our own country. The great Roman estates, like the other things which Mr. Strong summarizes in the verdict “general corruption,” were an effect, not a cause. What, from a primitive condition of substantial equality and hardy virtue, developed the monstrous wealth of the Roman patrician and the equally monstrous poverty of the Roman proletarian; what produced a state of society, having at one extreme bestiality and at the other brutishness; what rotted out the heart of a world-conquering power and rendered civilization helpless before the assaults of barbarism, was private property in land—the ignoring of the essential distinction between the gifts of nature and the works of man; the extension to the element on which and from which all must live of the same rights of property

that justly attach only to the produce of labor. This is the primary evil from which "land-grabbing" and "landlordism" and exhausted fields and congested cities, and that unjust distribution of wealth which gives to some more than it is good for them to have and denies to others what is necessary to healthful life, must inevitably flow, with a rapidity proportioned to that of material progress. It is this that destroyed the Roman civilization, and it is this that must destroy our modern civilization, unless the axe be laid, not to the branches, but to the root of the tree.

Since man is a land animal that can only live on land and from land ; since land is to him the store-house of all material, the necessary basis of all production, the place and the thing on which alone his power to labor can be put to any use, wherever one part of the people are made owners of the land and another part of the people are denied all legal rights to its use save as they buy or rent it, a fundamental tendency to inequality is set up, which, as population increases and inventions are made and the arts develop, operates with increasing force. In the necessary relation between man and the planet ; in the simple truth, obvious to the veriest savage or the most unlettered child, that it is beyond man's power to make something out of nothing, and that men who are denied all right to the bounty of nature cannot avail themselves of their own power to labor, and hence must be forced into a cut-throat competition to sell their labor to those who alone can provide opportunity for its use, lies the explanation of all those social paradoxes that are so perplexing to men who search for explanations where they cannot be found. Why labor-saving invention is turning into a curse, and the opportunity to toil is considered a boon ; why, with millions of acres of virgin soil, our roads are filled with tramps ; why, with unsatisfied desires for wealth, thousands of willing workers stand idle ; why biting want and actual starvation co-exist with what is called "over-production ;" why, in the shadow of church and library and museum, are growing up those fiercer Huns and Vandals of whom Macaulay prophesied ; why great armies are marshalling in what is blindly termed "the conflict between labor and capital," and a war is in its incipient stages that may soon give cities to the flames—all this is clear to any one who will regard first principles. Given a world tenanted by human beings like ourselves, with its surface made the property of some of its inhabitants as we are making this continent, and

though invention went to the length of enabling all possible wealth to be produced without labor, it would only be to make paupers of those who owned nothing but their labor. Given such a world, and though wealth rained down from the heavens as manna did upon the ancient Israelites, it would all become the property of a class, and, amid mountainous "over-production," those who had no rights in the land which intercepted the gifts of heaven could only be saved from starvation by degrading charity.

At the root of all our social difficulties lies a social crime—the crime of denying to the children born among us their equal right to the use of the material universe into which their Creator brings them.

Mr. Strong asks, "What has America omitted to do?" The answer is simple. We have omitted to apply to the most important of all social adjustments—the most fundamental of all human relations—the principle enunciated in our Declaration of Independence; and, in our treatment of that natural element on which and by which all must live, we have ignored the self-evident truth "that all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain *unalienable* rights."

Until that truth is regarded, our Republic is a house built on the sand and our civilization must breed forces for its own destruction.

HENRY GEORGE.