

## ECONOMIC CAUSES OF DISEASE.

Speech of Surgeon General William C. Gorgas at the Dinner in His Honor, September 26, 1914, at the Business Men's Club, Cincinnati, Ohio.

I was invited by friends in Cincinnati to meet this evening a small body of Singletaxers, have a little dinner and talk upon the subject dear to us all. I am surprised at the gathering. I had no idea that Singletaxers were so numerous here. I presume that my friends consider this numerous body the few referred to, and that of the many thousands of Singletaxers in Cincinnati, only these could be accommodated by the size of the hall.

I have friends here this evening with whom I have been associated more or less for twenty years, and yet never heard them say a word concerning Singletax. It is a great pleasure, at least, to know that they are Singletaxers. I have met many tonight, the knowledge of whose views on this economic subject had come very nearly escaping me. It will give me very great pleasure in the future to broach this subject when I meet them.

Part of the promise for the evening has been fulfilled by my having a very pleasant time.

Sanitation in my mind has been very closely associated with Singletax. I am a Singletaxer, I think, because my life work has been that of sanitation. Sanitation is most needed by the class of people who would be most benefited by the Singletax. That poverty was the greatest single cause of bad sanitary conditions was very early impressed upon me. If I should again go into a community, such as Cuba, or Panama, and were allowed to select only one sanitary measure, but were at the same time given power to choose from all sanitary measures, I would select that of doubling wages. This, in my case, is not altogether theory. In our tropical possessions, in Cuba, Porto Rico, the Philippines, Panama, the result has always come about that we have largely increased wages; the result has also come about that in all these cases we have greatly improved sanitation. At Panama, the Commission found that in order to attract labor, and keep it on the Zone, they had to increase wages, and within a very few months double the wages of the manual laborer. It does not take more than a moment of thought to show to you how such a measure acts and reacts. Results take place in many directions, but particularly with regard to increasing the ability of the people to live well and get better food and better clothing. While dwelling upon thoughts such as these, I came across "Progress and Poverty." I was greatly impressed by the theory and was soon convinced that the Singletax would be the means of bringing about the sanitary conditions I so much desired, and was striving for. It

was impressed upon me in a concrete form everywhere, in the United States, in the Tropics and particularly in Panama, the great benefit that some such scheme of taxation would confer upon sanitation.

In a city, such as Panama or Havana, the vacant lots and unimproved neighborhood were the localities which always gave us most sanitary trouble. I was soon convinced that if any scheme were brought about whereby it would be disadvantageous for speculators to hold vacant places out of use, this scheme would be of the greatest value for sanitation. It was not possible to effect this change in method of taxation in the cities referred to. I discussed this method of taxation a good deal with the officials of Panama, urging upon them the desirability of a tax levy of this kind to cover expenditures brought about by the sanitary work. I finally got the Panama authorities around to the point of seeing the justice and advisability of such methods, but the organic law would have to be changed and this always takes time. I hope that something of the kind may yet come about in Panama.

The real scope of tropical sanitation which has been almost entirely developed within the last fifteen or twenty years, I believe, will extend far beyond our work at Panama. Everywhere in the Tropics, to which the United States has gone in the past fifteen years, it has been shown that the white man can live and exist in good health. This has occurred in the Philippines, in Cuba and in Panama, but the demonstration has been most prominent and spectacular at Panama, and therefore has attracted there the greatest world-wide attention. Here among our large force of laborers we had for ten years some ten thousand Americans, men, women and children. Most of these American men did hard manual labor, exposed to the sun, rain and weather conditions day in and day out, yet during that time their health remained perfectly good, just as good as if they were working at home. The same remark as to health would apply to the four thousand women and children who lived at Panama with their husbands and fathers. Both the women and children remained in as good condition as they would have been had they lived in the United States. This construction at Panama, I think, will be generally received as a demonstration that the white man can live and thrive in the Tropics. The amount of wealth which can be produced in the Tropics for a given amount of labor is so much larger than that which can be produced in the Temperate Zone by the same amount of labor that the attraction for the white man to emigrate to the Tropics will be very great, when it is appreciated that he can be made safe as to his health conditions at a small expense. When the great Valley of the Amazon and of the Congo are occupied by a white population more food will be produced in

these regions than is now produced in all the rest of the inhabited world.

But unless we can so change our economic laws, that this wealth will be more fairly distributed than it is now by, the races occupying the Temperate Zone, mankind will not be greatly benefited. I hope and believe that 'ere this change in population comes about, the Singletax will have caused such changes in our economic condition that wealth will be fairly distributed. I mean by fair distribution that condition in which each man gets exactly what he produces—no more, no less. This is all we Singletaxers ask. We do not wish any man to have a dollar more wealth than he himself has produced, or to take from any other man a dollar of the wealth that this other man has produced. We look forward to this time as not being so very far off, and when such time arrives, we believe that poverty will be abolished from this world, except in so far as there will always be some lazy individuals who will not work and who do not care to produce. But this number will be so large as to affect the general principles just enunciated.

I have been invited this evening to meet a body of Singletax friends. My thoughts have naturally run on Singletax lines. I have spent the afternoon in going through your new municipal hospital. I have been greatly impressed and think I have seen about the best arranged hospital that I have ever before been shown. I was also told that the city of Cincinnati was to have control of and was to finance the medical school in connection with the hospital. This seemed to me most desirable and advantageous for all parties concerned. Thinking in Singletax lines, it occurred to me that when revenues were generally raised under Singletax principles, every municipality could afford to have just such a beautiful hospital as the one I was seeing. I could foresee something of the kind for Panama, even now Panama could afford such a hospital, if its revenues were raised by Singletax methods.



### FIGHT ON.

It's fun to fight when you know you are right and  
your heart is in it, too,  
Though the fray be long and the foe be strong and  
the comrades you have are few.  
Though the battle heat bring but defeat, and weariness  
makes you reel,  
There's a joy in life that can know such strife and  
the glory and thrill you feel!

When the wise ones pant that you simply can't, it's  
fun for a fighting man  
To laugh and try with a daring eye, and prove to  
the world that he can.  
And if you stick till your heart is sick, and lose  
when the game is done,

It's fun to know that the weary foe paid dearly for  
what they won.

It's fun to dare in the face of despair when the last  
lone chance seems gone,  
And to see hope rise in the angry skies like a promise  
of rosy dawn;  
For victory's sweet when it crowns defeat, and you  
learn this much is true;  
It's fun to fight when you know you're right, and  
your heart is in it, too!

—Berton Braley.

## BOOKS

### BRAND WHITLOCK'S STORY.

*Forty Years of It.* By Brand Whitlock. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York. 1914. Price, \$1.50 net.

The unusual pleasure of reading the recollections of an American publicist in the language of a literary artist makes Mayor Whitlock's book worth while to any one. True art tells the greater part of this story, as only noble artlessness could tell Tom Johnson's. For all lovers of Governor Altgeld, of Mayor Jones, of Tom L. Johnson the pleasure is doubled by what the author tells of his friendship with each of these statesmen, especially by his admirable interpretation of "Golden Rule" Jones. This appreciation of his own political leader and personal friend is by far the best portion of Mr. Whitlock's book. In its narrative and argument there is quick spiritual value and vital inspiration. He writes of his first meeting with Mayor Jones:

One day, suddenly, as I was working in my office, in he stepped with a startling, abrupt manner, wheeled a chair up to my desk and sat down. He was a big Welshman with a sandy complexion and great hands that had worked hard in their time, and he had an eye that looked right into the center of your skull. . . . Well, then . . . Jones said to me: "I want you to come out and speak." "On what subject?" I asked. "There's only one subject," he said—"Life." And his face was radiant with a really beautiful smile, warmed with his rich humor. . . . "What kind of crowd will be there?" "Oh, a good crowd!" he said. "But what kind of people?" "What kind of people?" he asked in a tone of great and genuine surprise. "What kind of people? Why, there's only one kind of people—just people, just folks." . . .

Men did not and do not see what Jones saw so much more clearly than any other reformer of his time, namely, that above all the laws men make with their political machines in their legislatures, there is a higher law, and that the Golden Rule is a rule of conduct deduced from that law. He saw that men, whether they knew it or not, liked it or not, or were conscious of it or not, had in all times been living, and must forever go on living, under the principle on which the Golden Rule is based. That