

sand could have done otherwise. Henry came home, worked in the garden, went to night-school, studied under Sarah's guidance, found where he belonged, got in a machine-shop at last, struck his gait, and held it.

Mr. Day heard of all this, watched Henry's progress, saw that he was offered a junior partnership five years later. Then he met Sarah on the street one afternoon and made an explanation: "Perhaps you think it odd that I urged Brown to take your brother into the firm and guaranteed him. Well, I certainly owe it to you and to him. I found out afterwards why your brother went wrong. My head clerk, a much older man, made a lot of him, taught him expensive tastes, let him into the whole thing; that man injured a dozen young fellows and I fired him good and quick. You knew this?"

"Yes, sir," she replied.

"Then why not have told me?"

She looked at him, this little woman, so loved at home and in her school-room. "You know, Mr. Day, that I could not inculcate any other person at such a time. But I do think that all business men ought to study the character, the habits, and the associates of every one of their people. It isn't so hard to keep in touch with young men. Build them up, physically, mentally, morally. It pays!"

"Just what can I do in this matter?"

"Perhaps you, and more men like you, can help the mothers, sisters, teachers in their efforts to transform hobble-de-hoys into reliable young men fit to carry the world along. Be more interested in them than just to give them orders and pay them wages."

"You are right!" he said. "I can look back at my own boyhood and see just what you mean. My wife and I will take hold of this and cultivate our young men a little better in the future." Then he went off and Sarah, smiling to herself, climbed the steps of the High School building to her classroom.

CHARLES H. SHINN.



## AN ECONOMIC MONTROSIY.

For The Public.

The other evening I attended a Chamber of Commerce banquet in a town of about five thousand population. The President, a good, solid merchant, read his report. The toastmaster was introduced, and there was the usual grind of toasts—"Our City," "Our Resources," "Good Roads," and the like—and the interurban promoter, inevitably fat, made his rousing appeal to the little community to do its part in the great work of constructing an interurban from X to Y, picturing in glowing terms the benefits that would accrue in the form of increased business, rise in land values, and so on.

Before the middle of the program was reached, I began to notice that every local speaker, no matter what the title of his toast, would, before he closed, work around to a subject that was evidently near to the heart of the community and intensely interesting to the members of the organization, as was apparent from their ready applause. The subject might be stated concretely as follows: "The Decline in the Business of the Town Due to Increase in the Size of Farms and the Importation of Low-class Foreign Tenants." There was a disposition on the part of the older speakers to hark back to fifty years ago when land was cheap, and was held in fifty and one hundred-acre tracts by American families who, with the help perhaps of an American hired-hand, farmed it themselves. It seems that the American farmer owning fifty or a hundred acres, his family and his hired-hand, made ideal customers in that day for the village merchant. Their standard of living was high, the goods they demanded were of the first class, the pay sure, and the profit legitimate. Besides, these small independent American farmers with their schools and churches helped the tone of the citizenship.

However, the good old days are gone. All these small holdings have gradually become consolidated, and now the farms range in size from one thousand to five thousand acres. All up and down the fertile, beautiful valley, instead of the neat, comfortable cottage of the American farmer, you now find the dirty, lop-sided shack of the Mexican peon. It is only a hundred miles from the Mexican border, and the Republican Party, during its long period of power, carelessly overlooked putting a prohibitive import duty on peons. Consequently, large landholders have found it profitable to import them, because that benevolent despot, Diaz, has taught these poor people to be satisfied with less; their scale of living is lower, they are willing to work longer hours than is the American, and they buy their merchandize uncomplainingly from the commissary, and in other and further ways are preferable, from the landlord's standpoint, to the American tenant. So when the landlord acquired the farm from the small American farmers, he didn't turn around and rent the land to them, but he imported peon families from Mexico, moved the American cottages to town to rent to American laborers, built a few shacks for his imported tenants, and began the profitable industry of manufacturing raw cotton and corn in the ear, with cheap foreign labor.

All of this came out in the discussion. I could see the transformation occur before my eyes just as plainly as if I had lived there for fifty years. I saw the prosperous little town of twenty years ago decline, the worm of landlordism gnawing at its root. But do not think that the word "landlordism" once occurred in the speeches that were made. The curse of large farms and peon tenants

was referred to constantly, but no "ism" was applied to this condition. The feeling was bitter, and the large landholders came near being openly denounced once or twice, and an entirely personal matter made of it. Evidently, none was present—it was a meeting composed chiefly of men engaged in some form of business in the town. They yearned for the old times to come once again. They had a bitter personal feeling against the large landholders. They were fired with community spirit; they wanted to boost their town, make it grow, and bring more people into its corporate limits. They wanted bank deposits to increase, the interurban built, factories located there, and more educational institutions established. It was the policy of the organization to advertise the town widely and attract desirable immigration. And with these announced planks in their platform of progress, it would appear that the landlords would be liberal in their support. Not so. No single large landholder was present or even a member of the organization.

But how were all the activities of the Chamber of Commerce to solve the primary difficulty? Here is the proposed solution. Here is the Economic Monstrosity that slowly stuck its slimy head above the deadly dull surface of the discussion. If I could draw a ring around it, carry it with me over the country, exhibiting it as Barnum would a pair of Siamese twins, there are enough Singletaxers in the world who would want to see it at ten cents apiece to make me rich. Gaze while I slowly draw the curtain: According to the collective intelligence of X—, the influx of population, due to the activities of the chamber of commerce would make farms simply too valuable to be held in large tracts and worked with peon labor. When land becomes worth \$500 per acre, we were told, the big landholder simply can't afford to own it. His taxes will be too high, and the same money invested in something else will bring greater return. The more imaginative speakers saw the landholders selling out their high-priced lands to independent farmers in small tracts, and with the money so derived, building factories in the town of X—.

Do you get the point? The way to overcome landlordism is to make the land of the landlords so valuable that they will be moved to sell out the land and invest the money in something beneficial to the community. Here is John Jones, for example, owning five thousand acres of land near our beautiful little city. He bought it for twenty-five and could sell it now for a hundred dollars per acre. At \$100 per acre, it will yield about four per cent on the investment, net; but bring about conditions which will make that land sell for \$500 per acre, compute the increased taxes, deduct from the gross earning, and see the microscopic amount of interest such an investment will yield! No man can afford to hold

land that yields so little on the investment; ergo, he will sell it and invest the money in factories—and the commercial future of X— is assured. The landlord was simply to be exterminated with an excess of riches.

No carping questioner arose to ask how it was that this consolidation of small farms occurred while land was rising in value all the time, pointing out that it was while land was ridiculously cheap that it was held in small tracts by independent farmers. No village historian arose to cite the example of England where vast deer-parks yield nothing whatever upon the investment, and yet the land is not for sale at any price; nor did any traveler point out that the highest-priced agricultural land in California and on the Pacific coast generally, is not that held in small tracts by independent American farmers, but on the contrary is that held in large tracts and farmed by the cheapest labor. And no economist declared judicially that cheap land is an inevitable concomitant of dear labor, and high-priced land is just as invariably the companion of cheap labor.

And yet X— is an educational center. Her people are of ordinary intelligence. It just happens that it is one of the many communities into which the philosophy of Henry George has apparently never penetrated. But the seed-bed is in prime condition in this community for the planting of Singletax doctrine, as it is in thousands of other communities over the United States. The soil is ready for the Singletax propagandist, and the season is spring.

R. BEDICHEK.



### MY CITY.

For The Public.

City of porphyry and amber,  
Stained by the dying sun,  
Canyoned and vaulted and mighty,  
What is the race that you run?  
Fair as the tower of Heaven,  
Under the flaming sky,  
Reaching your spired arms aloft,  
Bearing your soul on high!

Beautiful, rare and holy,  
Just for a sunset's breath,—  
Then back to your festering caves of pain,  
Back to your tunnelled death!  
Year upon year ye broaden,  
Flinging your heights to the stars,  
Year upon year the hordes go down,  
Cursing your prison bars.

City of porphyry and amber—  
City of nameless shame,  
Rearing your fluted beautiful walls,  
In greed's remorseless name,  
Under your massive girders,  
Grinding the souls of men,  
Narrowing, blighting and blinding,  
Again and forever again!