

tribes north of Rome left good rich land, to subdue the Romans for revenge, conquest, or other such motive. Their lands never were exhausted, and are not today. Neither Malthus nor Quick can cite war as a weapon of Demon Nature, used to postpone the final starvation of the whole race, any more than the socialist can logically cite "capitalism" as a natural phase of evolution, the miseries of which it is as impossible to escape as it is impossible for a boy to avoid being fifteen years old if he lives long enough. Just observe that even on this theory, Nature does a foolish thing in employing war. Without war people could eat, drink and be merry, and never want, as long as the potash holds out; for George proved increasing, not diminishing returns. When the potash, etc., runs out, then all would die together, their joy and misery ended; but war merely postpones the final starvation and makes miserable the whole journey which otherwise might be pleasant. It kills off a few, produces monopoly, which starves more, and causes all kinds of unnecessary terror. Evidently the world does not need war, disease and famine, any more than a child needs chicken pox for its development. They are avoidable evils, like poverty, and all may be cured by free land.

The wastes going on continually are surprising. Coal is wasted in smoke; yet some people tell us the air carries it back to feed vegetation. 610,000,000 cubic yards of soil are "wasting off into the oceans" each year, says Mr. Quick, which if dumped from wagons would make a string of teams 76 times around the earth. Maybe it is not wasted. Mr. Quick tells of a sea plant from which potash can be extracted. He mentions a bacteria which puts nitrogen in the soil. Fishes collect phosphorus and the birds give it back in the shape of guano. Perhaps we can devise a way to catch fish and use them for fertilizers. Perhaps the elements washed into the sea ferment somehow, or feed vegetation and animals, and are not lost at all. When we worry about the future we assume that man in the future can learn no more about these elements than is now known. Let us leave something for posterity to discover.

Then there are various perils: The Yellow peril, the Black peril, the Mahometan peril, etc. If we are the superior race, we must increase in numbers, by making land free, then those "perils" will keep away. We learned from Henry George that war, famine, and all the evils of poverty, are not natural factors of evolution, but that they can be avoided by making land free to labor.—C. F. HUNT, Chicago, Ill.

PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

In your last issue Mr. C. B. Fillebrown, of Boston, writing as one claiming to speak with authority, and, may I presume, as a Single Taxer, expresses his views on the above question. As one who has worked almost incessantly for Single Tax during the past twenty-eight years, and who has not "long since outgrown the error" (if it be an error) to which he refers, I should like to say a few words in reply. Henry George's position on the question of private property in land is sufficiently revealed in the two quotations which follow from his "Progress and Poverty,"* and the position there taken is, I believe, still adhered to by the majority of his followers, at all events by all those with whom I have had the privilege of becoming acquainted. Mr. George never said and never claimed that his remedy was the "sole" remedy; what he claimed and what we, his followers still claim is that it is the most simple, most effective, and most constitutional remedy—the remedy most in accord with "the axiom of statesmanship" that "great changes can best be brought about under old forms." True it is, as Mr. Fillebrown points out, that "a great reform should rest upon good morals and good economics." And if it be admitted that private ownership of land as we know it today, with its claim to the private appropriation, or confiscation, of its rental value, is just and

* Further light on the evolution of Henry George's views on this question may be gained from "The Life of Henry George," Memorial Edition, Pp. 232-233.

expedient, then, to my mind, the moral justification for the Taxation of land values at once disappears. True it is, however, that the first quotation to which he objects is so loosely worded as to be almost misleading. The author would, I think, have better expressed his meaning if he had written that—"The purpose of the Single Tax is to change the present system of taxation with the view of once and for all remedying the social evils which otherwise inevitably follow the recognition of the private ownership of land." And the second quotation might have been more convincing had it run—"We Single Taxers hold that in accordance with the teachings of the American Declaration of Independence, and the American Constitution, all citizens have equal claims, or equal rights, to the use of land, to share in the bounties and blessings of Nature, and in the first fruits of the presence, needs and activities of all as revealed in the unimproved value of the land." Still, even though college presidents may be irritated by the fact, the recognition that "private property in land is a bold, bare enormous wrong, like that of chattel slavery," seems to me to be the preliminary essential to the understanding of the Single Tax philosophy.

Following are the two quotations from "Progress and Poverty" to which I have referred:

"The truth is, and from this truth there can be no escape, that there is and can be no just title to an exclusive possession of the soil, and that private property in land is a bold, bare enormous wrong, like that of chattel slavery. . . . It is impossible for any one to think at all upon the production and distribution of wealth, without seeing that property in land differs essentially from property in things of human production, and that it has no warrant in abstract justice. . . . The examination through which we have passed has proved conclusively that private property in land cannot be justified on the grounds of utility Expediency, therefore, joins justice in demanding that we abolish it. When expediency thus joins justice in demanding that we abolish an institution that has no broader base or stronger

ground than a mere municipal regulation, what reason can there be for hesitation?"—Henry George, "Progress and Poverty," Book VII, Ch. 3.

"It is an axiom of statesmanship, which the successful founders of tyranny have understood and acted upon—that great changes can best be brought about under old forms. We, who would free men, should heed the same truth. It is the natural method. When nature would make a higher type, she takes a lower one and developes it. This also is the law of social growth.

"I do not propose either to purchase or to confiscate private property in land. The first would be unjust; the second needless. Let the individuals who now hold it still retain it if they want to, possession of what they are pleased to call *their* land. Let them continue to call it *their* land. Let them buy and sell, and bequeath and devise it. We may safely leave them the shell, if we take the kernel. *It is not necessary to confiscate land; it is only necessary to confiscate rent. . . .* What I, therefore, propose, as the simple yet sovereign remedy, which will raise wages, increase the earnings of capital, extirpate pauperism, abolish poverty, give remunerative employment to whoever wishes it, afford free scope to human powers, lessen crime, elevate morals, and taste, and intelligence, purify government, and carry civilization to yet nobler heights, is—to *appropriate rent by taxation. . . .* Now, inasmuch as the taxation of rent, of land values, must necessarily be increased just as we abolish other taxes, we may put the proposition into practical form by proposing—*To abolish all taxation save that upon land values.*"—HENRY GEORGE, Progress and Poverty, Book VIII. Ch. II.—LEWIS H. BERENS, London, Eng.

"LAND is the basis of an aristocracy which clings to the soil that supports it; for it is not by privileges alone, nor by birth, but by landed property handed down from generation to generation that an aristocracy is constituted."—DE TOQUEVILLE.