

the same; their "Impot Unique" is the Single Tax. Professor Russell's idea of the Single Tax must have been gained by a fleeting audience with a soap box orator; it certainly could not have been obtained by a reading of Henry George, for nowhere in all literature can be found a purer call for liberty, letting equality develop as it may, than in the works of Henry George.

Professor Russell tells us that our only hope is to "provide that curb on selfishness and greed which only a good education can provide" and that "we must continue to feel and fumble as we have for a hundred and fifty years," implying that in those years we have learned something. It must be apparent that in matters of taxation, which is the very core of every economic question, we are in a worse mess than at any time in our history—the National Government, the State Governments and every other taxing unit with their hodge-podge of income taxes, sales taxes, excess profits tax, taxes on use, taxes according to ability to pay, taxes and license fees upon everything without any knowledge of what the effect will be beyond the collection of a fund. The "incidence of taxation" is never considered. No principle is recognized. Such a condition is the inevitable outcome of a policy of "feel and fumble" which makes the plea of one group as effective as that of another; and in obtaining revenue with the least irritation of Mr. Voter, the opportunist who says "Let's try this" will oftentimes win in opposition to the one who says "Let's try that," and by the time the error is discovered they are ready to advocate another trial. It may be truly said that this only shows the inability of the average voter to conduct the affairs of his government sensibly. This may be true but it does not excuse our leaders of thought for seeking to rationalize such a system and for promoting a belief that there is no better way. If we must feel and fumble, let us do so with an intelligent desire to find a principle to guide us or a bedrock on which to build, instead of trusting to the shifting sands of political expediency or commercial and blind selfishness.

It may be pertinent to inquire why it is that the nation "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" has achieved no more of these ideals. Can it be that in the feel and fumble, the rough and tumble of a hundred and fifty years they have killed each other? It is more likely that the reason for this failure is that from the beginning the emphasis has been placed on political liberty and political equality, with little thought or no understanding of economic liberty or equality. It was thought that by abolishing the rule of kings and prohibiting titles of nobility, liberty of action could be achieved, equality before the law and equality of opportunity maintained. The fact was overlooked that by keeping the economic system of the Old World they were keeping the foundation for an aristocracy of wealth instead of birth. They did not see that the owner

of a large part of Manhattan Island would have as much power and would levy as much tribute as if he were called "Duke of Manhattan"; that such conditions prevailing over this continent would restrict life, interfere with liberty and put as many obstacles to the pursuit of happiness as any titled class could.

The method of trial and error reminds one of the medieval polypharmacy when the Theriac was prescribed in the treatment of disease in the belief that some of the three score or more ingredients would surely effect a cure! As the Theriac was superseded by methods in which the forces of nature were recognized and reinforced in the cure and prevention of disease, so it would seem to be reasonable to place less reliance on trial and error and seek to bring about a wider recognition of natural law in social relations, with more effort to bring those relations into harmony with natural forces. The greatest advances the world has ever made have been by learning to utilize the forces of nature, varying as much in efficiency as the heliograph and the radio. The man or nation that works in harmony with the laws of nature enlists the aid of a force that works with him and achieves the highest possible results.

Had Colonel Gorgas been satisfied to "feel and fumble" instead of using acquired knowledge, the Panama Canal could not have been built at that time. When he undertook the task of making the Canal Zone safe from the ravages of yellow fever, the knowledge of the disease gained by the work and sacrifices of Walter Reed and associates was available to anyone capable of accepting a new truth, but the attitude of the Canal authorities was another instance of the "unintelligence of the educated." Colonel Gorgas knew what measures to adopt for achieving his purpose but his superiors in office, insisting on old time-honored methods, almost nullified his efforts and possibly would have done so had he not been able to enlist the active support of the President.

Of course, we must expect to have agnostics in economics and dilettantes in social theory as in other phases of life. Some minds would hesitate to accept the validity of a chemical formula on the ground that the atom has not as yet been divided; that if and when the atom is divided the formula may have to be rewritten!

* * *

Dr. James Truslow Adams in an article in the *New York Times* entitled "Parties and Panics, What Link?" tells us that the cycles of boom and depression are psychological in origin and will change only as human nature changes, that they are the "by-products of the workings of human nature" in its desire for speculation. Would it not be reasonable to say that the desire for speculation is the by-product of a system of law and custom which makes speculation profitable? Such "workings of human nature" are but the inevitable response to the oppor-

tunity to get "easy money"—reflex action in social affairs. The psychology which did not become adapted to such a system is unthinkable. From earliest colonial times there has been continual, oftentimes feverish, speculation in land. Of this early period one historian says, "The whole colonial country was land-mad. To the people of that time land was like stocks and bonds in the United States in the years 1926 to 1929." The same opportunity and the same response have operated all through our history with many manifestations unsavory and disastrous—the Yazoo Land Company, the Teapot Dome Scandal, the Florida Boom—and in every growing city. Land speculation has always been the lure to "easy money." It has always led to a period of depression. It has always involved the collapse of banking institutions, with all their attendant evils and miseries.

Dr. Adams also says, "Human beings are immensely adaptable." Therefore, is it not reasonable to expect that by removing the opportunity, one might say incentive, for such speculation there could be effected a change in psychology relating to this field of human behavior? This may be achieved without resorting to the "complete strait-jacket of governmental control" of which Dr. Adams speaks. It can be done in conformity with the best traditions of American life. Instead of more strait-jackets, it would remove some that now harass and restrict productive enterprise. If the distinction between productive enterprise and non-productive speculation were kept clearly in mind, much confusion would be avoided. Granted that some supplementary rules may be required to protect the lambs from the wolves in the stock market, there would still remain ample opportunity for indulgence in games of chance but by no stretch of the imagination could they bring a whole nation to the low point of the "business cycle."

When we learned the cause of epidemics we did not wait for any change in human nature, any advance in psychology, to ensure the public health. Sanitary regulations were promulgated and enforced. Such measures have within the memory of people now living brought about a change in habits of thought, a psychological change, in matters relating to the maintenance of health.

Surely the development of America affords ample opportunity for the study of those forces which are responsible for the chaotic condition of society today—the movements of population, the production and distribution of wealth, the play of ambition, and the part that honest industry and special privilege have taken in the history of the continent. The history of the United States, of its many recurrent periods of prosperity and depression, its waves of expansion and migration, of the growth of every industry based upon the exploitation of natural resources, the growth of any city of importance, all provide guides for the student of economics as definite and valid as the body of fact which led to the establish-

ment of many of the laws of physics and chemistry or of those that helped Jenner or Pasteur in their early work.

The fog which the Prophets of the Insoluble spread over the subject is not the worst feature of it, but the attitude of corrosive indifference and apathetic complacency which is promoted by their pronouncements. After a draught of such learning, one can see Mr. Average Man when confronted by a social problem wearily placing it on one of the unused shelves of his mind, saying, with a resigned shrug, "Oh, well, we must wait for human nature to change. There is nothing we can do about it."

Interpretation of facts involving the human equation requires a fine blend of sympathy and intelligence as well as emotional appeal. Quoting John Dewey, "The emphasis that has been put upon intelligence should not mislead anyone. Intelligence, as distinct from the older conception of reason, is inherently involved in action; moreover there is no opposition between it and emotion. There is such a thing as passionate intelligence, as ardor in behalf of light shining in the murky places of social existence, and as zeal for its refreshing and purifying effect. The whole story of man shows that there are no objects that may not deeply stir engrossing emotion. One of the few experiments in the attachment of emotion to ends that mankind has not tried is that of devotion, so intense as to be religious, to intelligence as a force in social action."

Our civilization is not the "Jungle" that some would have us believe. In the early part of the Nineteenth Century a great highway was surveyed by David Ricardo but through ignorance and neglect it has become overgrown with error. Ricardo's Law of Rent is essential in any rational consideration of human activities growing out of the use of land. In other words, production and distribution of wealth cannot be intelligently considered without taking into consideration this Law of Rent. This law is as true today as when promulgated. It is as true in urban population as in agriculture. It is as true in the complex, mechanized civilization as in the primitive. It has been accepted by leading economists the world over. An ever growing number of thoughtful observers and students of economics have come to believe that this law permeates and influences all our social relations—not only the direct and throbbing arteries of labor and industry but the more remote, but vital, capillaries of commerce and the ductless glands of social position. They claim, with a force of reasoning not yet successfully refuted, that a recognition and application of this law would assure to every element of our people its just share in the benefits of our civilization; that it would remove much of the confusion and uncertainty now prevailing and make other adjustments possible without resorting to the artificial interferences now advocated.

A just consideration of this Law of Rent in all its mani-

stations would do much to eliminate the Cult of the Insoluble and its "feel and fumble" and "change in human nature" philosophy.

It may require another hundred and fifty years to remove the blight of former error, but with a highway built on a foundation of justice, illuminated by the knowledge of those laws which are both natural and divine, the journey upward will be safer and brighter, ultimately leading to that time when the rhapsodies of the Prophets and the "American Dream" may become living realities and mankind may truly practice that simplest and shortest of the creeds: "To do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."

Tower of Babel

By T. E. McMILLAN

THERE is no keeping up with the flood of foolish ideas that gush forth once men fall away from the solid earth and the moral values. Mephistopheles tells Faust that the private appropriation of the land rent, the social wage, has nothing immoral about it; the shrewd ones get after the rent quite naturally, that being their way of satisfying their desires with the least exertion, quite in accordance with the first dictum of economics. In keeping, it must also be quite permissible, in terms of economic science as taught by some, to sandbag a man in the head and rifle his pockets—so long as you are not found out.

Faust falls for the seductive sophistry of Mephistopheles and blames his religious upbringing for having been blind so many years to the scientific fact that his "rent racket" is no racket at all, but merely scientific economics. Poor Faust, he has long been, if not blind, at least afflicted with a decided squint on moral issues. He holds that morality is merely a matter of conduct between individuals, but just how he distinguishes between Smith's conduct toward Jones, and toward the two thousand millions of others who inhabit this globe is a mystery known only to himself. The fact is that Natural Moral Law is our sole infallible guide to just relations of all kinds between man and his wife, his child, and every other person on earth, and all of them together. All of man's conduct and activity is properly referable to Natural Law alone, and Natural Law is the only law, all else being merely human rules and regulations, not law at all, and it is laid down by the most eminent jurists that the closer these human rules copy Natural Law the better and more just they are. Bear in mind that nature has her laws for all our states of existence; that if we choose to live the jungle life, nature has her laws of the jungle; that as we develop to higher and higher states, so we find loftier laws suited to our advancing condition. Cooperation is the law of progress.

One of the greatest of Americans, Abraham Lincoln, scornfully refused to acquire sections that would rise in

value, and thereby reap where he had not sown. But then Lincoln, poor man, was a sheer nincompoop—according to ultra scientific economics!

The fundamental facts of the matter are these. There runs right throughout nature two forces, those of production, and of parasitism, respectively. The development of parasites, or parasitic proclivities, actual or potential, seems to be nature's way of punishing the creatures who become slothful, and fail to exert their powers adequately. The private appropriation of land rent is the first fruit of the blasphemous assumption that the earth can be "owned" by man, either individually or collectively, for what can really be "owned" collectively can be sold to private persons, it being then human "property." The moral failure to maintain the earth as the property of the Creator—"The land is Mine"—is primarily responsible for the permitting of that form of parasitism under which the social wage, the value "attaching" to land, is stolen from the people. The receivers of the rent are parasites, thieving, battenng leeches; the masses are the victimized hosts, and when they undergo a moral and spiritual regeneration, they will arise in their wrath and sweep the whole fundamental iniquity away. And those who spurn the moral issue will also be swept away, dispersed like those other would-be builders who wanted to get too far off the earth; already their language is confounded, and they speak divers tongues. Such men are dangerous, beware of them, for they but build a modern Tower of Babel.

Semper Fidelis

UNDER date of June 7 we have just received from Australia a letter directed to Joseph Dana Miller. It is from a most devoted friend, an adherent and worker for the cause and a reader of LAND AND FREEDOM. At that date he did not know of Mr. Miller's death but expressed deep concern over his illness.

We quote parts of this unusual letter. Referring to the coming Henry George Congress and hoping it will be a power for good he said, "If the good friends from all over the world will each bring a fire stick and put them all together I am sure the good Lord will blow upon them and there will be a great blaze of enthusiasm *which will not go out when they go home.*" (italics are ours)

We further quote, "I was reading LAND AND FREEDOM with my daughter yesterday. She remarked, 'LAND AND FREEDOM, that is a good slogan, the best of any of your Single Tax papers.'"

In enclosing a money order to pay for an extra copy of LAND AND FREEDOM, which he had just received, he added this postscript:

"Since writing the above, I took a two mile walk on a cold night along a dark road to see if I could get a year's subscription, using my spare copy of LAND AND FREEDOM. I failed to get the subscription although I sold the spare copy."