

kets of the world greater, far greater, than when she adopted free trade. To take taxes off of trade was well; to abolish taxes on production is better. Neither England's trade, nor the trade of any other country, will ever be really free until all taxes are removed from both production and exchange, and laid upon land values.

S. C.



TUBERCULOSIS A PRODUCT OF MONOPOLY.

In an eloquent letter published in the New York Evening Post of December 26, Dr. John B. Huber rightly attributes the cause of tuberculosis to bad economic conditions. "It is neither a hereditary nor a family disease," he declares, "but a house disease, contracted chiefly in unhealthful tenements and workshops. . . It is a disease of the poor, of the submerged; a disease developed in sunlessness, cold, starvation, misery; in the overworked, exhausted, anxious body; in the body devitalized by previous diseases, of which alcoholism is preëminent." And he urges "the rest of civilization" to assist the doctors in making the cure possible.

What are the obstacles in the way, he asks, and points to the tariff which has made a few millionaires while reducing the masses to a poverty which cannot hope for pure food as a bulwark against disease, the overworking of women and children in factories and sweat shops, the employment of men in dangerous trades under intolerable conditions which give to some industries a consumptive death-rate above 80%. He condemns also the faith healers and purveyors of patent medicine, and sees a "ghastly inhumanity" in gauging human labor by a law of supply and demand. He does not perceive that the law of supply and demand is as much a dispensation of Providence as the circulation of the blood and that the evil resides not in the natural law, but in the ignorance of those who attempt to thwart it. He fails to see that land monopoly acts on the body politic as a clot of blood in the arterial system; and so, while condemning private charity and philanthropy and admitting that the model tenement is beyond the reach of the very poor, he can foresee a solution of the problem only through the public charity of government action in reconstructing the slums and providing sanatoria.

It is encouraging to find a doctor who appreciates the significance of tariff monopoly, and we may believe that it will not be long before he sees monopoly in its most sinister form in laws which support the claim of landlords to private owner-

ship of natural opportunities and transform the right to work into a privilege graciously accorded by some men to their fellows.

F. W. GARRISON.



HIGH PRICES AND THE LAND.

An editorial in The New York Evening Post suggested that the present high prices of farm products make this an unusually favorable time for a movement to encourage immigrants to take up farming in this country. Mr. Raymond V. Ingersoll replied to the effect that the trouble was that farm land prices have gone up faster than farm product prices; that this "effectively checked what would otherwise be a normal redistribution of population." This brought from The Post an editorial in which it took issue with Mr. Ingersoll, but not violently. "Except for the question of degree," said The Post, "Mr. Ingersoll's point is perfectly well taken. A great rise in the value of farm lands . . . has been amply verified by statistics."

How much of the increase in the farmer's profits has been absorbed by the increase in land values appears to The Post "an extremely interesting question upon which we would not venture a judgment, but that a large part is left over by way of encouragement to the user of the soil, we feel very sure."

The editorial goes on to point out the increasing attractiveness of city life as a reason for the drift from the country. Next comes a paragraph from which the following extract is taken:

"There is a vast amount of land that can be bought or rented at low prices in such States as New York or Pennsylvania or Massachusetts which could be used for truck farming, raising chickens, and so forth, and evidently of the great advance in the price of eggs, poultry and garden truck only a small portion can be taken up by the cost of the land. Further the census figures which show that average values per acre for farm lands in such States as Illinois and Iowa rose between 1900 and 1910 more than one hundred per cent also show that in New York the rise was only 32 per cent, in Massachusetts only 33 per cent, and in Pennsylvania 14 per cent."

But The Post admits that a rise in land values has been caused by a rise in farm-product prices; points out that Henry George never imagined that his system would destroy economic rent; admits that his system would have some influence in lowering agricultural rents by forcing lands now unused into use; thinks that the effect would not be

great in such States as New York and Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, and that it would be "more than balanced by the destruction or impairment of the sense of ownership which is so great a factor in the farmer's life."

Result of the editorial, at least four letters, three from Singletaxers, one from an "anti." Result of the letters, another editorial in which The Post says:

"The Singletax idea is one that is not for a moment to be classed with greenbackism or with any other popular delusion. It has a solid foundation in economic theory and it is neither to be waved aside as a fallacy nor dismissed as a thing of no importance. The element of soundness that there is in it we have more than once taken occasion to recognize."

What Singletaxer, even though he be also a greenbacker, will be in a frame of mind to quarrel with The Post after that? even though it does say in the next sentence:

"On the other hand, we have insisted that as usually advocated, it is open to fatal objection from the standpoint of ethics and we have also pointed out that many of the economic claims made for it are extravagant and some of them fantastic."

The Post goes on to repeat its criticism of Mr. Ingersoll's views; to point out to Mr. F. W. Garrison that "under the full fledged Singletax. . . any rise in farm products would be absorbed by the rise of land values as completely as under the present system" and there would not be then, as now, "millions of farmers who benefit by the advance as land owners; points out to another correspondent that the Singletax plan applies to urban as well as farm land, and if, as Singletaxers claim, the scheme would improve the lot of the city dweller—"and so far as we can judge," says The Post, "his gain would be greater than that of the country dweller—what becomes of the Singletax as a sovereign remedy for the drift from the country to the city?"

Aside from the question of ethics, which ought to be the supreme consideration, the points of agreement between The Post and the Singletaxers are more important than the points of difference, and more important than the particular question under discussion, whether the Singletax would or would not check or reverse the drift from the country to the city.

Some of the special points which The Post makes can be admitted without damage to the Singletax theory. One is that under present con-

ditions there is an attraction in city life for the rural population. Also that if we improve rural conditions but improve urban conditions still more, the relative attraction of city life will be greater than it is now. But the more closely you examine this proposition the less discouraging it will look.

Another point is that a prospective advance in land values is an attraction to a prospective farmer. True. If a man can buy a farm for \$2,000 and thinks it will be worth \$5,000 in ten years so that he can get not only the results of his labor but \$3,000 profit he will be more likely to buy that farm on account of the expected profit. But he cannot get that advantage except by selling or renting and letting somebody else do the farming. The man who has the farm now has his own ideas about what it will be worth later on and that makes it harder for the man who wants to farm to get a chance at it now. It is the farmer whom we need to encourage, not the man who is about ready to drift to the city if he can sell out at a satisfactory figure. Quite recently The Post had some figures regarding the increase of farm tenancy. Probably the tenants would like to buy farms but the present system is not helping them to do so.



As to the relation between high prices for food and high prices for land, it is probable that the data available do not justify any positive conclusions. The people who buy food know that they have to pay high prices, but how much of what they pay does the farmer get?

Mr. Stewart Browne, the "anti" who writes to The Post, has something to say about this and he is merely repeating a complaint that comes from many quarters.

"Although the prices to the consumer of farm products have in twenty years doubled or, in some cases, trebled, most of the increase is eaten up by increased cost of production, transportation and distribution, not forgetting cold storage."

Assuming, however, that the farmer gets more money for what he sells than he did formerly, it must be remembered that he pays more for everything he buys. What is the net result to him of his work, not in money but in the things he needs? Is he drifting to the city in spite of unprecedented prosperity and comfort on the farm? Are we quite sure that we know the necessary facts?

Another point that merits some consideration is that low and even declining prices for commodities may accompany advancing land values. Indeed, up to the era of trusts and combinations,

or of the increase of the gold supply if you hold that responsible for the present troubles, the tendency seemed to be in the direction of a cheapening of production in nearly all lines, and land values were not declining. In those days even freight rates were going down—any railroad authority will give you convincing ton-mile, carload-mile and locomotive-mile figures—and yet railroad values were going up, sometimes getting within a stone's throw of the capitalization.

Even the figures of advances in land values should not lead us into hasty conclusions. If an owner of Pennsylvania land, for instance, can get only 14 per cent more than he could ten years ago he may be worse and not better situated than he was then; that is to say, he may be able to get less of the things he wants to buy with his money, as prices in general have advanced more than 14 per cent in ten years. But the Iowa and Illinois figures cannot be explained away in any such fashion, and the opinion that there has been, on the whole, an actual and a marked increase in land values is probably no delusion.



There is no such general agreement as to the prosperity of the farmers. The whole rural credit agitation, with the statements of fact on which it is based, especially so far as they relate to the need for short term loans and the explanations of the present high rates of interest paid for such accommodation, suggest conditions approaching distress. The figures as to increased farm tenancy do not indicate prosperity although they do indicate advancing farm values. The report of the New York State Food Investigating Commission (1912) has some passages which may help to explain the drift to the city:

"The methods of fixing prices to the producer need as careful thought as those of distribution. The producer seems to be receiving about 40 per cent of the retail price. Under the system of private treaty and commission sales still principally in use, the producers are growing restive and indignant and nearby sources of food supply are drying up."

And we are told of dairy farmers, going out of business in a period of advancing prices for dairy products.

But whatever may be the present situation, it seems clear enough what the effect of land value taxation would be. It would give to the farmer, as farmer, more of the results of his work and to the farmer, as landowner, a smaller income than he has now. It would encourage agricultural production and if applied to urban land, would, in

a similar way, lessen the income of the landlord and leave to the worker more of the results of his work and so encourage urban production. The relative advantages of rural and urban life would be weighed as they are now by those to whom both alternatives are open, but the advantages of either would be greater than they are now. Production in all lines would be encouraged and there would be a greater product to be exchanged between producers. The farmer might require a greater inducement to stay on the farm, but he would have a greater inducement in the greater proportion of his product he would be allowed to retain, and the increased urban production would give the farmer more satisfaction as the result of exchanges.



There remains the question of ethics. The Post does not go into particulars, but from experience in cases of conscience we may suppose that it is the vested rights question that is bothering it.

There is nothing new to be said on that point. We think that the present system takes from the producer and gives to the non-producer, and we think that is wrong. We do not see how you can compensate the people who benefit by the present system without taking the compensation out of the pockets of the others, and we think that would be wrong. If the New York Legislature had granted to Robert Fulton and his heirs and assigns forever the exclusive right to sail steamboats on the Hudson River, and if the mistake were only just being discovered, the vested interest would have some value. Nevertheless we believe that such a privilege could not justly be left to Fulton's heirs; nor could they be compensated except at the expense of those who have suffered by the mistake, which does not seem logical. And we think that the time to correct such mistakes is when they are discovered. Perhaps there are Singletaxers who will not agree to this; who think the remedy should be gradually applied. If so, they will have their way; there is no danger that anything that is right will be done in too much of a hurry.

WILLIAM E. MCKENNA.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

THE FARMER'S WELFARE.

Chicago, January 2.

The following query is one that the universally talked-of small-farmers of Denmark have proposed to themselves, and solved to their own entire satisfaction.

A farmer with wife and four children owns a farm