

THE
PREMISES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY;

BEING A

RE-EXAMINATION OF CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

OF

ECONOMIC SCIENCE.

BY

SIMON N. PATTEN, PH.D. (HALLE).

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CHAPTER IV.

THE RELATION OF RENT TO WAGES.

THE produce of a country is divided into three parts, rent, profits, and wages; these being the terms used to denote the reward received by the landlords, capitalists, and laborers for the assistance rendered by each to production. If this be correct, to know what the share of any one factor is, it would seem necessary to know what the shares of both the other factors are. To know what the amount of wages is, it must be known what is the amount of both rent and profits, or to determine what profits are, we must know the amount of rent and wages. The current theory of wages and profits does not recognize this relation, but proceeds to determine wages and profits without any reference to rent. Wages, we are told, depend upon profits, rising as profits fall, and falling as profits rise. John Stuart Mill, in his discussion of profits, puts the case as follows :

“It thus appears that the two elements on which, and which alone, the gains of capitalists depend, are,

first, the magnitude of the produce; in other words, the productive power of labor; and, secondly, the proportion of that produce obtained by the laborers themselves; the ratio which the remuneration of the laborers bears to the amount they produce. These two things form the data for determining the gross amount divided as profit among all the capitalists of the country; but the rate of profit, the percentage on the capital, depends only on the second of the two elements, the laborer's proportional share, and not on the amount to be shared. If the produce of labor were doubled, and the laborers obtained the same proportional share as before,—that is, if their remuneration was also doubled,—the capitalists, it is true, would gain twice as much; but as they would have had to advance twice as much, the rate of their profit would be only the same as before.”

If whatever of the ultimate produce of industry is not profit is wages, from what source do the landlords receive their share? Certainly from some source they obtain a large revenue, and where could they get it if all the produce of labor goes to increase wages and profits? The importance of this question is not overlooked by Mill, but he claims that no practical error is produced by disregarding rent, and promises to show this in a subsequent chapter on rent to which he refers. To this explanation I wish to call especial attention,

because the correctness of Mill's position is of the greatest importance both in the discussion of wages and also of free-trade.

As is well known, these subjects were elucidated by Adam Smith before the law of rent was known. All his demonstrations rest on the supposition that produce is divided into two shares only, wages and profits, whatever is not resolvable into one of these elements being resolvable into the other. When the law of rent was discovered by Ricardo, it being evident that produce was divided into three shares instead of two, the greater part of Political Economy was worked over and rent put in its proper place. This, however, was not done in the discussion of wages or of free-trade. These subjects still continue to be discussed as though there were only two factors among whom the produce of industry is to be divided, and rent is either ignored or eliminated from the discussion. The latter is the method employed by Mill, and if the reasoning by which he accomplishes this is unsubstantial, all his discussion of wages, as well as free-trade, is defective. The element of rent must be introduced and the course of reasoning modified to meet the altered conditions before correct results can be obtained.

I quote in full Mill's explanation, given at the close of his chapter on rent, of the reason that no practical error arises in disregarding rent and supposing that all

the advances of the capitalists consist in the wages of the laborers.

“After this view of the nature and causes of rent, let us turn back to the subject of profits, and bring up for reconsideration one of the propositions laid down in the last chapter. We there stated that the advances of the capitalist, or in other words, the expenses of production, consist solely in wages of labor, that whatever portion of the outlay is not wages is previous profit, and whatever is not previous profit is wages. Rent, however, being an element which it is impossible to resolve into either wages or profit, we were obliged for the moment to assume that the capitalist is not required to pay rent,—to give an equivalent for the use of an appropriated natural agent,—and I undertook to show in the proper place that this is an allowable supposition, and that rent does not really form any part of the expenses of production, or of the advances of the capitalist. The grounds on which this assertion were made are now apparent. It is true that all tenant farmers and many other classes of producers pay rent. But we have now seen that whoever cultivates land paying a rent for it, gets in return for his rent an instrument of superior power to other instruments of the same kind for which no rent is paid. The superiority of the instrument is in exact proportion to the rent paid for it. If a few persons had steam-engines of

superior power to all others in existence, but limited by physical laws to a number short of the demand, the rent which a manufacturer would be willing to pay for one of these steam-engines could not be looked upon as an addition to his outlay, because by the use of it he would save in his other expenses the equivalent of what it cost him; without it he could not do the same quantity of work unless at an additional expense equal to the rent. The same thing is true of land. The real expenses of production are those incurred on the worst land, or by the capital employed in the least favorable circumstances. This land or capital pays, as we have seen, no rent, but the expenses to which it is subject cause all other land or agricultural capital to be subjected to an equivalent expense in the form of rent. Whoever does pay rent gets back its full value in extra advantages, and the rent which he pays does not place him in a worse position than, but only in the same position as, his fellow-producer who pays no rent, but whose instrument is one of inferior efficiency."

Notice the difference between what Mill starts out to prove and what he finally succeeds in showing: "The advances of the capitalist consist solely in wages of labor, and whatever portion of the outlay is not wages is previous profit." This is what he was to show, but the proposition which he does prove is very different from this: "Whoever does pay rent gets back its full

value in extra advantages, and the rent which he has to pay does not place him in a worse position than, but only in the same position as, his fellow-producer who pays no rent."

What Mill succeeds in proving is merely that it makes no difference to the capitalist whether he pays rent or wages. Whether wages go down and rent goes up, or wages rise and rent falls, is all the same to the capitalist. His profits and advances are not affected by a change which causes the shares of one factor to be diminished if at the same time the other proportionally increases.

A few examples will illustrate clearly the insufficiency of Mill's argument. Let us suppose two sections of a country having an equal amount of agricultural produce, and in one of them the land is of unequal fertility, the rent being equal to one-quarter of the produce, while in the other all the land has the same fertility of the poorest land in the first section, and hence no rent is paid. In this case the advances of the capitalists in the first section would be three-quarters to the laborers and one-quarter to the landlords, while in the second all the advances would go to the laborers. The amount advanced in each case would be the same, as the amount of the produce is the same. The recipients, however, are different, and for each seventy-five laborers employed in the first section one hundred

laborers would be employed in the second. Mill is right in saying that it is all the same to the capitalist whether he hires seventy-five laborers and pays an amount equal to the wages of twenty-five laborers to landlords or employs one hundred laborers and pays no rent. Yet this does not show that all the advances of the capitalist in the first case consist in wages of the laborers. The landlord coming in the place of twenty-five laborers gets their wages, and the result to the capitalist is just the same as if these laborers had been employed and no rent paid. The landlord is a nominal laborer, who, doing no work, receives his share of the produce along with the real laborers who do the work. Of course it is the amount of the advances, and not who gets them, that interests the capitalist; but Mill promised to prove an entirely different proposition, namely, that all the advances of the capitalists went to the laborers. This proposition, which is necessary to maintain his position on the wages question, he did not prove; he merely stated it and then passed to the discussion of another point.

The error involved in disregarding rent becomes evident when we consider the nature of the doctrine established by disregarding it. Mill wishes to establish the fact that wages fall as profits rise, and rise as profits fall. By these terms are meant not the absolute, but the proportional share received by each. The rate of

profit, we are told, depends upon the laborer's proportional share, and not on the amount to be shared. A proportional share of the produce certainly goes to rent even if no rent is paid on some part of the produce. If thirty per cent. of one-fourth of the produce is rent, twenty per cent. of the second fourth, ten per cent. of the third, and none of the fourth, then fifteen per cent. of the whole produce is rent, just as much as if fifteen per cent. of every part of the produce is rent. The advances of the capitalists would be the same in one instance as in the other, and hence it is evident that the rate of profit cannot be determined by knowing the proportional share of the laborer alone, but only when the proportional shares of both laborers and landlords are known.

There is still another method of showing that Mill's position is incorrect. He asserts that if the produce of industry were doubled and the laborers obtained the same proportional share as before, the rate of profit would also remain the same, not being increased at all. Let us suppose that, the land of two grades being cultivated, each grade producing a half of the food-supply, there was difference enough in their productivity to give ten per cent. of the whole produce of industry to the owners of the better land as rent, and that of the remaining produce the laborers received seventy per cent., leaving twenty per cent. as profit. If the

produce of industry were doubled the better grade of land would now produce enough to supply the whole demand for food, and rents would fall to zero. The laborers receiving the same proportional share as before (seventy per cent.), profits would be raised from twenty to thirty per cent. I have taken this simple case to make the falsity of Mill's argument more evident, yet the same result would follow in more complex cases. To be sure, if the produce of land were doubled all rent would not disappear, still no one can doubt that such an increase of produce would reduce rent. Even if it were not reduced in amount, its proportional share would be less, since if ten per cent. were rent before the doubling of the produce, the landlords receiving none of the additional produce, rent would now be but five per cent. of the whole return for labor, and, the laborers receiving seventy per cent. as before, profits would be raised to twenty-five per cent., a gain of five per cent.

In his chapter on ultimate analysis of the cost of production, Mill again endeavors to prove the dependence of wages on profits by showing that the value of any commodity is determined not by wages, but solely by the quantity of labor which it costs to produce that commodity and bring it to market.

“The value of one thing,” he says, “must always be understood relatively to some other thing, or to

things in general. Now, the relation of one thing to another cannot be altered by any cause which affects them both alike. A rise or fall of general wages is a fact which affects all commodities in the same manner, and therefore affords no reason why they should exchange for each other in one rather than in another proportion. To suppose that high wages make high values is to suppose that there can be no such thing as general high values. But this is a contradiction in terms, the high value of some things is synonymous with the low value of others."

The fallacy in this argument arises from the use of the term commodity with two meanings. With one meaning it denotes everything bought or sold, while with the other its use is restricted to those articles capable of indefinite increase, whose values are determined by the quantity of labor necessary to produce them. If all commodities could be made in any quantity desired without an increase of cost, a rise of wages affecting all commodities alike could not influence values. There are, however, many commodities, of which the articles of food are the most important, whose values are not determined by the quantity of labor necessary to produce them. If one-third of the labor of a country is devoted to agriculture and two-thirds to other commodities, one-half of these commodities will not usually have as great a value as the agricultural pro-

duce, yet they are the produce of an equal amount of labor. Indeed, it might easily happen that the value of the agricultural produce might exceed the whole value of all the other labor.

There being two classes of commodities, the value of one depending, the value of the other not depending, on the quantity of labor required to produce them, the value of one class can increase at the expense of the other. Such a change not affecting all commodities in a like manner, a rise in the rate of wages would increase the value of those commodities whose cost depends on the quantity of labor necessary to produce them, and decrease the value of the other class of commodities, composed of food and the like. It is easy to illustrate how these changes are brought about. There being no rent in a new colony, when the best land only is cultivated, all commodities, including food, will exchange in proportion to the labor needed to produce them. When, however, the increased demand for food requires the cultivation of inferior land, the agricultural produce will not exchange with other commodities in the same ratio as before. A bushel of wheat will exchange for more cloth, cutlery, or other like articles than when no rent was paid. As rent is raised through the resort to inferior lands to supply the increasing demand for food, a bushel of wheat will gradually exchange for more and more cloth, and the greater the

value of the wheat the less will be the value of the cloth and other commodities whose values depend solely on the quantity of labor needed for their production. On the value of these latter commodities depends the rate of wages, and it will fall as the value of agricultural produce rises and rent absorbs a greater part of the whole produce of industry. Supposing one hundred yards of cloth to be the result of one week's labor, and the same work to be necessary to produce ten bushels of wheat on the best land, so long as no rent is paid they will have an equal value, and a week's wages will be equal in value to ten bushels of wheat. When inferior land is brought into cultivation, producing but nine bushels of wheat for the same labor that will give a return of ten bushels on the best land, one hundred yards of cloth will exchange for nine bushels, and the wages of all workmen per week will be nine bushels, this being the amount for which the produce of a week's labor (one hundred yards of cloth) will exchange. The cultivation of still poorer lands being required, on which the labor of one week will produce but eight or seven or a still less number of bushels, wages will decline to a like amount.

The produce of industry and the rate of interest remaining unaltered, a rise of wages would reduce the value of food, and raise in a like degree the value of other commodities. A rise of wages would, to use a term

of Mill and his school, throw out of cultivation the poorer lands and raise the margin of cultivation, and in this way the value of food would fall and that of other commodities would rise. The effect, then, of a fall of both wages and interest, or a fall of either one, the other remaining unchanged, is to increase the value of food and other raw material, and to decrease the value of other commodities; in other words, to cause an approximation of the value of food and other raw material to the value of those commodities produced by their consumption. If five bushels of wheat and ten pounds of cotton are consumed in the production of one hundred yards of cloth, wages and interest will depend on the value of wheat and cotton. While twenty yards of cloth will exchange for the above amount of wheat and cotton, eighty yards will remain to be distributed as wages and interest, but as the value of wheat and cotton increases so that first thirty, then forty or more, of the hundred yards of cloth must be given in exchange for them, the return for labor and capital is reduced by a like amount. It is, then, the margin between the value of what is consumed in production and what is produced, on which wages and interest depend, and they increase as the margin is enlarged. In other words, the return for labor and capital depends on the approximation of the value of food and raw material to that of finished commodities. As both wages and interest

fall, or as one of them falls, the other being unaffected, the margin will be less and the approximation be greater, while the margin will be increased and the approximation decreased by a rise of either wages or interest, or of both of them. This is the effect of a change of wages on values, and a rise of wages not affecting all commodities in a like manner, all those propositions which affirm that the rate of profit depends on wages are incorrect, and Mill's attempts to save the propositions of the older economists, who elucidated the theory of distribution as if there were but two factors,—wages and profits,—are failures. He only succeeds in giving a false coloring to many economic truths, which, while confusing his own views and those of the reader, renders the true laws and relations of distribution clouded and invisible.

If we are to obtain a correct statement of the laws of wages, it can only be done by placing rent in its proper place as one of the factors of distribution, investigating not only the relations of wages and profits, but also of wages and rent. In other words, it must be determined what are the conditions according to which wages can rise at the expense of either profits or rent, or when to their benefit wages will fall.

So long as the number of laborers is so small that all can be employed on lands of the best quality, the rate of wages depends upon profits, but when popula-

tion increases, so that the supply of food is no longer obtained at the lowest cost, from any limitation to the field of employment, rent arises. Now there being three factors in the distribution of produce, the possibility of raising wages no longer is limited to the questionable possibility of reducing profits; for wages under these circumstances can rise as well by a reduction of rent as of profits.

I have in the previous chapters discussed the nature of rent and the effect that a change of the demand for commodities has on rent, and the fallacies of the current view on this subject. I now wish to show the effect which a change in the demand for commodities has on the possibility of a rise of wages at the expense of rent. If, as the price of food becomes higher, poor lands are converted into good lands, and there is not, as is commonly asserted, an inexhaustible supply of poorer and poorer lands that can be brought into cultivation as the price of food increases, then, as the community progresses, the proportion of good lands to the poor lands increases, and the greater part of the produce is obtained from good lands.

Let us suppose two nations having an equal supply of food, in one of which one-half the food is produced on land that yields no rent, while on the other only one-tenth of the produce is furnished by such lands. It is plain that in these cases there would be a great differ-

ence in the power of the laborers to reduce rent by economizing food. It would doubtless be impossible in the first case for the laborers to accomplish anything. So great a reduction as one-half in the consumption of food would doubtless be beyond their powers. If, however, only one-tenth of the food was produced on lands yielding no rent, this reduction could be easily accomplished, and their wages increased by the fall of rent.

The ratio of good lands to the poor is, then, the all-important factor in determining the possibility of an increase of wages. If all the lands are good and yield rent, as they do in most old countries, then there is the possibility of a much higher rate of wages, if the laborers will consent to the proper method to obtain the increase. That as the price of food declines the supply decreases but little, is manifest from the results of American competition on English agriculture. No land has been thrown out of cultivation in England by the fall of prices, nor has the quantity of food produced been reduced. The same fact was plainly shown by the small effect of the late hard times in reducing the food-supply, while the fact that the laborers did not suffer seriously for want of food shows that they can, if they really desire, reduce their consumption of food to such a degree as to produce a low price of food. As low a price can at any time again be obtained by a

reduction of their consumption, either through a better economy of what they eat or a reduction in the amount wasted in drink; all alcoholic drinks being made from food-stuffs, and requiring much more land to be cultivated than would otherwise be necessary. If it requires a million acres to produce the food consumed in the manufacture of liquor, then if its consumption ceased either a million acres of poor land could be thrown out of cultivation, if there be poor lands in cultivation, or if not, these acres could be used to produce food. On either supposition there would be a marked reduction in the price of food. The same objection holds to the use of tobacco as to the use of liquor. The land used for this purpose either contracts the area used for the production of food, or requires the cultivation of a much poorer class of lands. In either case a rise of rent and a reduction of wages follow.

Laborers are continually trying, usually with ill success, to increase their wages, but no endeavor is made to reduce the price of those articles which they wish to purchase with their wages, although here they have a field where they could produce great effects if they would use the same energy which they display in their contests with capital. If they succeed in obtaining higher wages, it is questionable whether their real wages are increased. They always endeavor to obtain food and drink with their increased wages, and the

rise in price of these articles so much reduces the value of their wages that little or none of the increase is left. This is clearly shown by the rise in the price of food accompanying the rise of wages at the end of the crisis of 1873. Every advance of wages was accompanied by a like advance of rent in its various forms, so that now the laborers are little or no better off than before. No better plan for the benefit of landlords could be devised than to have wages increased, since the laborers always adopt a course of action that only ends in transferring their wages to the landlords.

It is remarkable that laborers do not stop their discussion of wages long enough to consider what must be the inevitable result, whatever their wages may be, so long as they expend their money in the present manner. How much more food does each family obtain now than before the late rise of wages, and how much less house-room does each family now have than they had when a few years ago rents were one-half their present rate? If these and other similar questions were asked and discussed, it would show how little the supply of food and houses is enlarged by the rise in the price of food and in the rent of houses. The increased price of these alters the distribution of wealth, but has little influence on its production in as far as it affects articles demanded by the laborers. The laborers are attempting to do an impossible thing, since while the mass of

the wealth produced is the result of their labor, they all want only the produce of the labor of but a small portion of their number. Two-thirds of them are employed in other pursuits than agriculture, and still most laborers refuse to consume anything else than agricultural produce. While this is the case they will get the result of only one-third of their labor, no matter what their nominal wages be. Their determination to get food and drink for all their wages will cause the value of food to rise, so that all their wages will purchase only the necessary food and what they drink.

The laborers have also other resources besides this for raising wages at the expense of rent. They can change their consumption of food from articles which nature produces scantily to those produced more abundantly, or they can consume more of articles produced in climates of which the best lands are as yet not wholly occupied, and consume less freely of articles from places where the demand for their produce is so great as to cause much rent to be paid. This problem has already been discussed in the chapter on the social causes producing a high price for food, and hence a single example is needed to show its bearings on the rate of wages.

A demand for whiskey or beer is a demand for a class of lands already in use and on which high rent is paid, and this rent will be further increased by the

demand for whiskey or beer, since these drinks are made from the common cereals used for food. On the other hand, a demand for coffee is a demand for another class of lands of which but a small portion is in use. A change of demand from whiskey and beer to coffee would much reduce the rent of lands on which the common cereals are grown, while much more coffee could be produced without a material increase in price. Hence the whole gain in the reduction of rent on the grain-producing lands would come to the laborers as increased wages. The use of liquor, and other means by which the food-supply is wasted, is not merely a destruction of capital, which only interests the consumers, their families and friends. If the demand for food when no liquor was drunk would cause the price of wheat to be one dollar per bushel, while the increased demand caused by the use of strong drink raise the price to one dollar and twenty-five cents, by compelling a resort to poorer lands, then all persons, even those who do not drink, lose twenty-five cents on every bushel they consume, since they are forced to pay that much more for their food than they would otherwise have to do.

In saying that the demand should be changed from articles like wheat to those like corn, potatoes, or rice, of which much more can be produced on the same ground, I do not mean to infer that the use of wheat

should cease. The demand for wheat is so great that the supply cannot be obtained from the land for which it is best adapted ; and when land better fitted for other crops is sown to wheat, the price of wheat rises to such a point that the cultivation of poorer land is profitable. This, of course, causes all the better wheat lands to pay higher rent, while if a less amount of wheat were demanded, its price would fall and wages rise. Climatic conditions fix the number of good acres for wheat, corn, rice, and all other articles, and when each acre is devoted to what it is best fitted, the price of all kinds of food is low and wages are high. Nature will not change to suit our notions ; we must conform to her laws. So long as the food of a people is composed of a few articles, like wheat and beef, wages must be low, since a demand for them alone causes such a waste of the productive forces of nature that but little is produced, and from that little much is taken as rent.

The tendencies of our present civilization having as an effect the concentration of all industry in a few places to which all others are tributary, the question necessarily arises whether this concentration has any effect upon the rate of wages. If we suppose, as is often the case, that on account of the close proximity of coal and iron some one point has a real advantage over every other place in a country for producing iron, and so much advantage that it is the interest of every

other place that their iron be produced at this point, what would be the effect on the distribution of wealth as place after place were induced to obtain their iron here in exchange for their products? A little consideration will make it plain that wages must fall. Those places that were nearest would have the greatest advantage in the exchange, and while trade was carried on with them only, wages would be high, as at every point there is a like efficiency of labor, and of rent there would be none. When, however, more distant points began to trade in the place, wages must fall enough to equal the cost of transportation. The whole labor used to produce the iron and carry it to these more distant points and bring back their products would be less efficient than that employed in making exchanges with the nearer points. There cannot be two rates of wages in the same market, and hence the wages of all must sink to the lower rate. If a ton of iron would exchange on the home market for thirty bushels of wheat, and it cost five bushels of wheat to transport it to a more distant point and bring back wheat in exchange, as soon as this trade begins the ton of iron must exchange for twenty-five bushels of wheat at the home market. As still more distant points made their exchanges at this place, the price of iron must still further decline, and that of wheat go up, which is the same as a reduction of wages. If wages did not

go down the exchange could not be made, and wages must continue to decline as long as more and more distant points continue to be brought into commercial relations.

The decline of wages is the condition on which such a trade can be carried on, no matter what be the aggregate gain to the nation at large. To illustrate more generally, let us suppose a city to be formed in a fertile plain, from which population extended out on all sides, the conditions of trade being such that it were advantageous to manufacture and trade in this one place, what was lost in cost of transportation being made up by more efficient production by manufacturing on a large scale. As production extended farther and farther from the city the cost of transportation would be greater at each extension of cultivation, and the price of food would rise and that of other commodities fall, and by so much would wages be reduced. While according to our supposition the gross produce is in proportion to the number of laborers employed, and as great as ever, still wages must decline, since some portions of that labor are less efficient than others, and with free competition no laborer can obtain more than those least productively occupied.

The gains of any of the laborers from the advantages of production on a large scale and of foreign trade cannot be greater than those of the laborers who

are least benefited, and this is the same as saying that they obtain no benefit, the most disadvantageously located having but nominal gains in the exchange.

If the commerce and industry settles in two or more cities, the difference in the efficiency of labor is less, and wages will be higher than if all industry were congregated at one city. The larger the number of the cities and the better the distribution of the population, the greater will be the rate of wages, the difference in the efficiency of labor being less; and the smaller this difference (the gross product of labor being the same) the greater will be the wages and the less will be the rent. The landlords as a class are interested in having the population congregated in as few places as possible; the welfare of the laborers, on the other hand, is furthered by anything which causes a better distribution of population and brings them nearer the producers of food.

If the laborers ever advance far enough to investigate the causes which determine the prices of the articles which they consume, they will see how much more powerful a lever for increasing real wages they have in combining to influence the price of food than in combining to increase money wages. The increase of money wages is at best but small, for it reduces the profit of capital. To economize the food-supply, to cause a better distribution of population, and to change

the demand of food so as to reduce rent, not only raise wages but also profits, and enable capital so to increase as to employ more labor, not only increasing, therefore, the wages of labor but also the demand for labor.

Production is limited by the field of employment, and every change by which food is saved and used, not for pleasure but only to preserve health, or by which the products of the whole world are more fully demanded, increases the field of employment and enables more capital and labor to be employed and raises both wages and profits.

There is one other point of importance in determining wages to which it is necessary to refer, namely, the condition of the agricultural population. So long as they are in a miserable condition, and through defective laws are deprived of the protection needed for the prosecution of their industry, the amount of produce will be small compared with what it should be. Thus the field of employment and production is limited, and wages fall both through the limit to production and through the influx to the cities of country labor seeking employment. It is not probable that the laborers of the cities if left to themselves would increase in numbers faster than the food-supply should, but when the country population is ignorant or deprived of their natural rights, the result cannot but be disastrous to the

laborers of the cities, who not only must compete with the surplus country population, but must also, from the ignorance prevailing in the country, have their food-supply lessened. Laborers who wish high wages must be careful to do all in their power to place the lands of the country in the hands of those who will produce the most, to aid the spread of education among the country population, and to change the laws of the nation so that those who improve lands shall have proper protection. Only by these and like means can the increase of the food-supply be made rapid enough to supply the demands of an increasing population without an increase of rent. Every true reform must begin with measures relieving the agricultural classes of their burdens. A rise of wages cannot precede, but must follow the decline in the price of food. It is only when the laws sufficiently encourage the growth of intelligence among the agricultural classes that they can displace all the obstacles to the increase of food, and make all land that should be cultivated of so high a degree of fertility that the price of food would fall below the cost of production on the best lands now in use. Then rent will become a very subordinate element in the distribution of wealth, and labor and abstinence will have their proper reward.