

safe tax is one which lies on incomes or property which are "unearned," in the sense that they evoke no useful productive energy.

RELATED THINGS

CONTRIBUTIONS AND REPRINT

WATCHING THE CROWD.

For The Public.

I often journey through the town,
And watch the forms go up and down—
Go up and down.

Unsignaling they course past me,
Like stranger vessels on the sea—
The human sea.

Swept fiercely on in Self-Love's wrath,
They brush me hastily from the path—
I choke their path;
Or like a child's self-acting toy,
Their shifting thought I give employ—
Soulless employ.

But in these forms I look below
The surface life that frets them so—
That frets them so;
And buried deep in all I see
Imprisoned souls look out at me—
Yearn big toward me.

I hear these souls, unheeded, plead
Through forms that chase the phantom need—
The phantom need:
"Oh, Brother! We are one with you;
Our life must rise or fall in you—
In stranger you.

"With you we know the feast is spread,
With you is peace for weary head—
Tormented head.
One circle we—no gulfs divide;
What seems our difference is outside—
Yes, all outside."

So in the throng I ever wait
The falling of the prison gate—
That ancient gate;
When fettered souls at last set free,
Join in Love's merry liberty—
Her life-completing liberty.

JESSE S. DANCEY.

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A KICK IN HIGH FINANCE.

For The Public.

After indulging in no little amount of wrangling—for big men in the making of their deals wrangle not less than do lowly hucksters and housewives in their bargaining, though they sheathe their feelings with far better skill—the trolley nabob and the millionaire manufacturer of street cars came to an agreement touching a price for the contemplated new equipment of rolling stock.

The form of contract already bore one of the necessary signatures, and the nabob had begun to affix his autograph to the paper, when he suddenly paused and raised his pen. "Of course," said he, a little insistent note of caution and suspicion breaking through his well-trained sangfroid, a note often manifested when he was on the buyer side of a transaction, "of course, this price covers absolutely every detail?"

"Certainly," declared the manufacturer, with loud earnestness, adding, however, after a moment of hesitation, and in a voice softer and almost apologetic, "but the figure is so extremely, so absurdly low, that, to come out even, I fear I shall be compelled to make a small extra charge for the straps."

A scowl gathered on the nabob's face, and he laid down his pen and sat up very straight in his chair.

"Extra for the straps!" he exclaimed. "Why, sir, the charge would be preposterous. What do you think would become of me and my company, the 'Great Universal Traction Combine,' if we ventured to charge our patrons extra for the straps?"

G. T. E.

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OPENING EDITORIAL OF THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE PUBLIC.

Published April 9, 1898.

No apologies are necessary for launching a paper like The Public. Though a wearisome superfluity of periodicals burdens the market, none satisfies the desire, widespread and strong, for a paper in which the news reports are not distorted by editorial bias nor discolored with impertinent opinions, but are simple, direct, compact, lucid and veracious; a paper which aims to be right rather than sensational; which is not padded; which clearly relates to their appropriate place in general history those events that have historical value; and which, in its editorial policy, unflinchingly puts public questions to the supreme test of obvious moral principles and stands by the result. For the paper which shall satisfy that desire, there is yet ample room. Whether The Public will do this or not, only experience can show; but it will make a faithful effort.

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Some one has noted the resemblance of most modern newspapers, in their news departments, to old-time gossips swapping scandal across the fence, and in their editorial departments to the gossips' husbands talking politics and "jawing" one another down at the tavern. Perhaps the resemblance is remote; but it is close enough to suggest to the imagination of an evolutionist the possibility of kinship.

Yet the newspaper is unquestionably a useful institution. Although editorial writers are too often mere literary machines, who, by tossing aside their self-respect with their intellectual honesty, and obediently writing at the dictation of unscrupulous bosses, now one way and now another, have taught the public to distrust the sincerity of editorial articles not verified by the signatures of writers whose eccentric sense of honor may have won them public confidence; although sensational news is padded to the bursting point with frivolous details, while other important though comparatively common place matter is robbed of the space necessary to make it intelligible; although both perspicuity and truth are often sacrificed to "hustle"; although many papers are not above catering to the prejudices of rich and poor alike, playing the demagogue now to the galleries and again to the boxes—notwithstanding all these weaknesses, the daily press, as an institution, is nevertheless indispensable. It sweeps the world for news. What if it does, as a rule, pour out its news upon the reader in an inflated daily volume of unassorted, undigested, unrelated facts, semi-facts and fiction, good, bad, scandalous, trivial and bewildering, and introduced with shrieking headlines? Most of these faults are inseparable from daily journalism. Good editing, though a few daily papers are notable for approximating to it, is not possible under the pressure of gathering news by lightning and printing it as fast as it comes in, and often faster.

But just here the weekly paper may be made to supplement the daily. Having the benefit of the great news collections which the dailies make, and being under no constant pressure for time, the editors of weekly papers may discard frivolous details and idle gossip, may separate truth from misrepresentation and fiction, and, garnering the really valuable news of the world, may report it at leisure in compact form, and point out its relation to the news of the week before, the year before, the century before, or the age before.

Thus may the weekly paper enable ordinary men, whether they attempt to read daily papers or not, to understand the history of their own time as it develops. To him who reads daily papers, it may be a newspaper interpreter; to him who does not read them—and the number who have found regular newspaper reading an unbearable burden is not small—it may be a newspaper reader, a species of private secretary who saves his time and energy by reading and sifting the newspapers for him.

Some weekly papers have undertaken this work. So have some monthlies. And their service has been warmly welcomed. But, unfortunately, from a mistaken notion of what makes news interesting, most of them inject into their news reports a

flavor of editorial opinion which not only offends readers holding adverse opinions, but breeds among all scrupulous readers a suspicion of the trustworthiness of the reports themselves. Useful, therefore, as their news reporting is, they do not satisfy the desire as to news reports to which we have referred.

And most if not all of them fall still further short of satisfying that desire in respect to editorial policy. They, like the daily newspapers, are often offensive not only to the democratic public in general, which knows of them but does not often read them, but also to many of their regular readers, on account of their abject submission to plutocratic influences.

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By "plutocratic," let us stop to explain, we do not allude to the rich. Rich men are not necessarily plutocrats. Very often they are on the contrary genuine democrats. Very often, too, the most pronounced plutocrats are poor. He is a plutocrat who, be he rich or poor, sets up wealth as the test of respectability and the insignia of industrial or political authority—that is to say, who favors government by or for the rich. Goldsmith hit off plutocracy when he wrote:

Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law.

What we mean, therefore, by plutocratic influences, is influences which make for the elevation of the rich to industrial or political mastership. To these influences the general press—daily, weekly, monthly—is submissive to the extent of servility. There are few exceptions outside the organs of social reform movements. Even the Democratic papers, most of them, and those Republican papers which still feel the democratic impulse of abolition days, are safely relied upon by our plutocracy to turn in their tracks whenever plutocratic privileges are seriously menaced.

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These considerations justify the advent of a weekly paper like *The Public*, and we repeat that it makes no apology for appearing. Whatever else may be said of it, no one can assert that there is not a field for the kind of paper it aims to be. Such an assertion would imply what is evidently untrue. It would imply that a paper which prints in intelligible form the really valuable news, winnowed from the trash that goes by the name of news, and divested of partisan bias and color, a paper which, moreover, consistently and persistently, not as an organ of some reform movement but solely with reference to fundamental moral principles, is editorially hostile to plutocracy in all its phases and throughout all its ramifications, —it would imply that a paper of that character is not wanted. We believe that in fact such a paper is wanted, and that the paper which shall realize

this ideal will enjoy abundant success, not merely as a business enterprise but also as a trusted teacher and leader. Conscious, however, of the difficulties of the undertaking, we make no promise for *The Public* except that it will be held as closely as we can hold it to the ideal here indicated.

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"THE OUTLOOK" ON PLUTOCRATS.

From an Editorial in *The Outlook* for March 21, 1906.

By the plutocrats we do not mean the very rich. There are very rich men who are not plutocrats; there are plutocrats who are not very rich men. A democrat is a man who believes in government by the people for the people; a plutocrat is a man who believes in government by the rich for the rich.

The plutocrat believes that the object of government is to protect person and property—especially property. Government should simply preserve order while the individuals make money. For the chief end of man is to glorify money and enjoy it for—as long as he lives and his children after him. If government does this, the shrewd and sagacious will make money; the less shrewd and less sagacious will make less money, but they will generally make enough to live, and that is enough—for the less shrewd and sagacious. The plutocrat, therefore, measures all government policies by their effect in dollars and cents. A policy which reduces the chance of the shrewd and sagacious to make money and increases the chance of the less shrewd and sagacious to make money is an unjust policy, because money rewards should be proportional to shrewdness and sagacity. In the view of the plutocrat the object of government is to promote money-making; and the money made should go to those who show the greatest shrewdness in making it. If a policy tends to weaken the confidence of the plain people in the shrewd and sagacious money-maker, it is a dishonest and disastrous policy, and is to be condemned. For if the public confidence in the moral infallibility of the great money-maker is impaired, his power to make money will be seriously weakened. And this is fatal to the ends for which society is constituted—the making of money.

This is the first principle of the plutocrats; the second principle is a natural deduction. Clearly the best and wisest in the community should govern. But since the object of society is to make money, and the standard of excellence is ability to make money, it follows that the shrewd and sagacious money-makers should control the government. Or, to put the principle in other language, since the object of legislation should be to promote prosperity, and since the shrewd and sagacious money-makers have demonstrated their ability to secure prosperity for themselves, they should direct the legislation. The plutocrat is not

necessarily dishonest; but his standard of honesty is a little apt to become the Turkish standard. He does not always think it dishonest to buy legislators; this is only dividing the profit of shrewdness and sagacity between the partners in the enterprise. Honesty does not require that legislators should not be bought; it only requires that they should stay bought.

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LABOR AND NEIGHBOR:

An Appeal to First Principles.

A Posthumous Work

By ERNEST CROSBY.

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CHAPTER XI. Part 1.*

Remedies—4. Justice, Freedom and Co-operation.

The social problem of the future we consider to be how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action with a common ownership in the raw material of the globe, and an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labor.

—John Stuart Mill, "Autobiography," chapter vii.

To regret that socialists fail to avail themselves of natural laws is not to assert positively that these laws are all-sufficient by themselves to secure absolute justice to all. All that we know of them is that they have that tendency, that they have always been grossly hampered by artificial obstructions, and that if left to work out their natural results they would ensure a far greater degree of justice than we now enjoy. Friction always interferes with the mathematical precision of a machine, and there will always be friction in human affairs. To prophesy how much and how little there would be under free conditions, is an idle pastime, and the foretelling of a Golden Age belongs to the realm of poetry and not to that of practical economics. It has never been possible to predict future social systems, but it is always in order to put a stop to injustice. It may be necessary when all impediments to natural laws are removed still to do something more to prevent all exploitation of man by his fellow, but I contend that first we should make all the use possible of

*Mr. Crosby left with the manuscript of this book several notes and memoranda. The four which follow seem to be properly connected with this chapter.—Editors of *The Public*.

"Land value question the most important because all other reforms but increase land values."

"The introduction of machinery has greatly increased and centralized land values, and the equitable distribution of land values will also equalize the effect of the introduction of machinery."

"Monopoly is the king of robbers for it strikes at the root of the tree."

"The foolish thief stealth his victims' goods and is cursed by them; but the wise thief stealth their opportunities, and behold, they rise up and bless him."