

of power by putting another class in. The rights of the people as a whole would be no better conserved by the farmer class than by the manufacturing class, the merchant class, the "labor" class, the lawyer class, the middle class, the plutocratic class, the "lower" class, or any other class. What is needed in American politics is not another class organization for class purposes; but an organization which shall faithfully stand for equal rights for all men, regardless of their class.

A writer in *The Sunny South*, published at Atlanta, claims Uncle Tom's Cabin as in reality, though without its author's intention, a defense of slavery. This claim is made because the book "portrayed a relation between the employers and employed which begot more confidence and mutual good will than has ever existed between these classes elsewhere." In the view of Uncle Tom's Cabin which this writer presents we are not deeply interested, either for it or against it; but we are interested in the clear vision he has of the essential character of the labor question, and his extraordinary candor. Among other things of like tenor with the words quoted above, he says of African slavery as it existed at the south that it "was the most satisfactory adjustment of the opposing claims of capital and labor that ever has been known!" It is a sad thought, but true, that the present condition of multitudes of workingmen is so hard that chattel slavery might be an amelioration, if not a "satisfactory adjustment." Yet there is something morally stunning about the suggestion of chattel slavery as an ideal solution of the labor problem.

The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* takes *The Public* to task for urging reduction of fares on street cars instead of advocating taxes on gross receipts. How competent the P.-I. is to discuss any question of taxation may be inferred from its contention that an increase of direct taxes on lot owners would increase rents, and so

force tenants to bear the additional tax burden. It should read and digest John Stuart Mill's chapters on taxation before setting up as a fiscal schoolmaster. No wonder it imagines, after that display of fiscal ignorance, that a tax on the gross receipts of street car companies would be borne by the corporations. But consider. If street car companies could not afford to do business for less than 5 cent fares, then it is true that a tax on gross receipts, with fares limited to 5 cents, would be borne by the companies. Inasmuch, however, as that would reduce their receipts below the profit mark, they would have to quit business. Such a tax, therefore, is out of the question. But suppose the companies could do a profitable business at 4 cents fare, as they certainly could; then a tax of 20 per cent. on gross receipts, with fares left at 5 cents, would be paid not by the companies, but by the passengers, at the rate of one cent a ride. The companies would then be called the tax payers, and the passengers would be referred to—is it not so with indirect tax payers now?—as persons who pay no taxes. Yet the real tax payers would be the passengers; the companies would be nothing but collectors.

Commenting upon the criticisms that are made of stock watering, J. Sterling Morton's *Conservative* has a very sensible thing to say. It calls attention to the fact that corporation stock is not the only kind of property that is "watered." It has witnessed, it says, in Nebraska, "the rise of raw prairie land from one dollar and twenty-five cents to twenty-five and fifty dollars an acre." And this enhancement, it adds, has come—

not because of any effort or expenditure upon or about these lands on the part of their owners. "In fact," it proceeds, "The *Conservative* has observed lands mortgaged to secure cash loans for sums aggregating ten and twelve times more than their owners paid for those lands." And then it shrewdly asks:

Have land owners then differed very much from the owners of railroads in raising their values for the purpose of

borrowing money? Have they or have they not been watering their stock?

Of course land owners have been "watering" their stock. The increased land value being due to no work or expenditure of their own, it is to them pure "water." And the reason they can appropriate this "water" is precisely the same as that which enables railroad companies to appropriate the "water" of their watered stock. Neither could appropriate that increment—truly an "unearned increment,"—but for a monopoly privilege. The railroads do it by means of their monopoly of right of way; the landowners do it by means of their monopoly of location. In each case the pecuniary measure of communal growth attaches to the earth-chance, by means of which alone the value can be appropriated; and the owner of that earth-chance—be it right of way, farm, mine or city lot—diverts the earnings of the community as a whole, in contradistinction to his earnings as an individual, away from the community's pocket into his own. In the one case the sums thus diverted are called "land values;" in the other, stock "water." The *Conservative* is right. Landowners who get enhanced prices for their land are virtually "watering" their stock.

There is this difference, however, between the profits of the land owner and that of the stock waterer, a difference which The *Conservative* overlooks. The law has not attempted to limit the profits of landowners; it has attempted to limit the profits of railroads. It fixes maximum dividends on railroad stock. And stock watering is resorted to by railroads for the purpose of enabling them to pay dividends which nominally are within the legal limit, but actually are far in excess. Therefore, while increased land values and watered stock are the same economically, legally the former are innocent while the latter is larceny by trick and device.

Socialism receives a new definition at the hands of one of its devotees, J.

Pickering Putnam, architect. In his interesting brochure on "The Outlook for the Artisan and His Art," just published by Charles H. Kerr and Company, of Chicago, Mr. Putnam defines socialism as "the substitution of constructive for destructive competition." The difference between the two he succinctly describes. "Destructive" competition is "objective, a seeking to obtain for oneself some object desired equally by others, but without adding to the world's wealth;" whereas "constructive" competition is "subjective, aiming at the development and happiness of the individual without injury to others, through the creation of something useful." We doubt if socialists generally will accept Mr. Putnam's definition. They may well object to it, for it would sweep away their philosophy, which rests upon the idea of abolishing economic competition. What he calls "destructive competition" is nothing but monopoly; and what he calls "constructive competition" is nothing but true economic competition. Mr. Putnam vaguely recognizes this when he says that "the most prominent and dangerous characteristic of the present industrial scramble is not the fostering of a healthful competition, but rather its very destruction by monopoly and special privilege." To foster healthful competition, what is really needed, is very far from being the program of change in industrial details which Mr. Putnam prescribes. All that is needed is the abolition of monopoly and special privilege, which he truly indicates as the antitheses of healthful competition. With freedom and equal opportunity secured to all, men would decide for themselves, through the action and reaction of healthful competition, better than they could through any law making machinery, whether such changes as Mr. Putnam proposes are desirable. Desire would then regulate production. That is what it should do. That is what all classes of economic reformers wish it to do. That is what it naturally would do. Yet that is

what it never can do except through the force of economic competition, of free competition, or, as Mr. Putnam calls it, of "constructive" competition.

It is unfortunate that the old-time American debating society has never developed into something like the parliamentary debating clubs which are found in England and some of her colonies. The old American debating societies were never very useful. Seldom did they discuss questions of more vital interest than "Resolved, That country life is preferable to city life." Vital questions were as a rule taboo. Those of a religious character opened the door to heterodoxy, and those of a political character to partisan rows. Both were, therefore, dangerous. Modern American debating societies, however, do handle questions that have life in them, but usually in academic form, and as a rule men are assigned to debate the question, on this side or the other, with an utter disregard of the debaters' convictions. Debates of that kind can have but little influence either in making debaters or influencing public opinion. Yet debating societies could be so organized as to make them the moulder and mouthpiece of public opinion wherever they exist.

Even in so large and cosmopolitan a city as London the parliamentary debating clubs are real institutions, and in provincial places they exert a marked influence upon public affairs. They are mimic parliaments, where actual measures are as seriously discussed as in the law making body itself. To illustrate the earnestness and public spirit which characterize these clubs, we quote from the leading paper of Durban, Natal, South Africa, the following report:

The concluding meeting of the fifth session of the Durban Parliamentary Debating society was held in the council chamber, town hall, on Tuesday evening last, and proved to be one of the most interesting meetings of the session, the business being the election of leader for the ensuing session. Messrs. McLarty, Tassie and Dunlop were nominated for the post, and the

two first-named were chosen to submit programmes they would be prepared to debate should they be elected. Mr. Tassie's programme was as follows: (a) Imposition of income tax in order to relieve existing duties and abolish the stamp duties; (b) compulsory vaccination of the white population with calf lymph; (c) the introduction of the decimal system of weights and measures; (d) amendment of the customs union tariff as regards the tax on meat; (e) introduction of the postal order system on the same lines as existing in England; (f) proposed issue of loans for railway extensions, acceleration of traffic and the duplicating of the main trunk line; (g) taxation of land values. Mr. McLarty's programme embraced the following: (a) Abolition of taxes on food; (b) imposition of the single tax; (c) entire stoppage of Indian immigration; (d) railway reform and facilities as regards the export of coal; (e) safeguarding of drifts and rivers; (f) provision of open spaces as "lungs" for the populace of towns; (g) vaccination of the white population. Questions were asked the two candidates on their respective programmes, and upon a ballot being taken, Mr. McLarty was declared elected as premier, and Mr. Tassie as leader of the opposition.

No one could participate in debates of that kind without gaining strength as a practical debater, nor could any community maintain such a society without benefit to its political and moral sense. If the entrance into American public life were through similar debating societies, we should soon have a higher grade of politics and a better order of politicians than we are at present familiar with.

LAND TENURE AND TAXATION.

Though the imperialistic craze has thrown English politics into confusion as regards foreign policies, pretty much as it has disturbed the currents of politics in the United States, the political tendencies in England were never so satisfactory as now, so far as they concern home government.

Sound principles of taxation are making a distinct impression there upon public sentiment. Split into two great factions as is the liberal party—which corresponds to our democratic party—by the tory principle of imperial expansion, it is nevertheless virtually a unit for the democratic principle of taxing ground values. Upon whatever else that party