

mittee, who were there to give to the affair the superficial appearance of nonpartisanship which it needed to make it effective; and they induced the committee to compromise by inviting Bryan. The real object of this demonstration, it might as well be said, aside from its partisan political object, was publicly stated, quite ingenuously, by one of the promoters. At one of the public committee meetings he said he supposed everyone understood the purpose to be to bring money into town!

Apropos of our article on vaccination, in which we gave space to a letter from M. R. Levenson, M. D., Ph. D., denouncing it, we are in receipt of a criticism of Dr. Levenson. It comes from William N. Hill, M. D., of Baltimore. Dr. Hill says he is a believer in what Dr. Levenson calls the "murderous superstition" of vaccination, and expects to continue in that belief until the overwhelming evidence of its evil character, to which Dr. Levenson alludes, is brought out. He bases his belief on an extended acquaintance with the literature of the subject, as well as direct personal observation. Dr. Hill especially protests against Dr. Levenson's three statements, that vaccination affords no protection against smallpox, that smallpox is generally a mild disease, and that cowpox is a dangerous one. Smallpox is characterized by Dr. Hill as a very dangerous as well as loathsome disease; as to its dangerous character he points to the record of deaths from it among the Indians where vaccination was not used, and in civilized communities prior to the introduction of vaccination. Dr. Hill also refers to the fact that although there was smallpox in Cuba before the war, and although our army was badly mismanaged and various fevers attacked it, not one case of smallpox is known to have occurred. "To what," he asks, in conclusion, "can be attributed this absence of a disease which has always followed armies, if not to efficient vaccination?" With these conflicting presentations of the

question—Dr. Levenson's and Dr. Hill's—we drop the subject.

A BUSINESS TENDENCY.

I.

One of the most marked tendencies of modern business is towards production on a large scale—towards business concentration, as it is often called. This tendency, observable in nearly every department of industry, is notable in connection with manufactures and merchandising. The great factory has completely displaced the shop, and department stores are thought to be driving small stores out of business. Even in agriculture, the bonanza system is supposed to place independent farmers at a sore disadvantage.

Opinions as to whether the tendency thus indicated is beneficial, depend greatly, no doubt, upon the point of view. The head of a large and flourishing establishment would naturally look upon it very differently from the small producer whose field of industry has been invaded and his living possibly taken from him. But there must be some test by which to determine, regardless of narrow personal interests, whether or not concentration is socially injurious. To us it seems that the question depends upon the character of the impulse back of the concentration.

II.

When the reason for changes from production on a small scale to production on a large scale—the reason for concentration in business, as the phrase goes—is that the new method requires less labor than the old, then the tendency is normal and therefore calculated to be beneficial.

Concentration from that impulse is but a form of labor-saving invention. It produces more or better things with no more labor than before, or the same things with less. What the steam car was to the horse cart, normal production on a large scale is to production on a small scale.

The factory is an example. Advances in manufactures, from the production in little shops of 50 years ago to the wholesale production in great modern establishments, has been because the latter method is cheaper—because, that is to say, it

yields better results with less labor. The change is normal, and if in practice it has hardly been altogether beneficent, this is not due to the change from a small to a large scale of production, not to concentration so-called, but to social maladjustments which prevent the benefits of the improvement from being shared by all.

But concentration may come in response to a very different impulse. When it is adopted not as a cheapener of production, but as a method of killing competition, then the tendency it expresses is abnormal and unwholesome. Of concentration from this impulse, the trust is the great example. Trusts have for their object and effect not the object and effect of labor saving inventions, not the lessening of the labor of production, but the forcing of wages down at one end and of prices up at the other, by diminishing production.

Prices of trust products have indeed been known to go down, but that has always been in spite of the trust and not because of the trust. It has been because the trust was too weak for its purpose. No trust has ever yet lowered prices except in response to competition or in fear of it, a force which it is the sole aim and object of trusts to destroy. Though trusts wear the garb of normal concentration, and so mislead both those who oppose and those who favor them into confusing them with normal concentration, as if the two were identical, trusts are no more the same as normal concentration than the wolf wearing Red Ridinghood's cloak was Red Ridinghood herself.

This distinction between normal concentration for increasing production, and trusts for diminishing it, should be borne in mind in considering industrial questions that relate to production on a large scale. If the change from a comparatively small to a comparatively large scale of production be arbitrary, if it be a mere combination of individual establishments to prevent competition between them—if, in a word, it be a trust—then the change is abnormal and oppressive. But if the change be a genuine labor saver, something which instead of lessening production increases it, instead of weakening

competition intensifies it, then the change is normal and the result will be beneficial.

III.

Put to this test, the department store would appear to be beneficial. It belongs in the category of labor-saving devices. The object and effect of the department store is not to increase prices but to lower them, not to lessen production but to augment it, not to prevent competition but to intensify it, not to obstruct the consumer but to accommodate him. Like the great factory, therefore, it is an example of the normal and beneficent tendency toward production on a large scale, an instance of legitimate concentration. And as the factory has displaced the small shops or changed their character, so the department store will in great measure, if not wholly, as related improvements come in, displace or change the character of small stores.

Should this seem hard upon the small storekeeper, it is not more so than the railroad was upon the stage driver. Even if the change could be prevented, the prevention would be unjust. It might seem to benefit small store keepers, but it would actually injure consumers. But being a normal concentration and therefore a natural development, the change cannot be prevented. It is a condition which, like rain and sunshine, must be taken as it comes. And but for social maladjustments which obstruct the diffusion of its benefits, no one, not even the displaced storekeepers themselves, would for one moment desire its prevention.

IV.

As to bonanza farming, there is reason to doubt that it is in fact a labor-saver, though it is said to have driven out the farmers of New England, and to threaten small farming even in the West.

The argument as to New England rests upon an asserted decline in farm values. This basis does not support the argument. While it is true that some farms in New England have fallen greatly in value, it by no means follows that this has been caused by the competition of bonanza farms. It is more likely to have been caused by the shifting of the uses of land in New England, a view which is confirmed

by the fact that while some land values in New England have fallen, land values there in general have enormously increased. The region has been going through a transformation, from farming to more advanced industrial purposes. It may be that this change has been brought about by Western farming. If so, however, that is because the greater fertility of the West has been made available by railroads, and not because there are bonanza farms there.

If small farming in the West is in danger from the bonanza farm, the fact has yet to be shown. It may be in danger from discriminations by railroads; but farmers are not wanting who assert that in the absence of special railroad privileges, bonanza farming cannot compete with farming upon a small scale.

Assuming, nevertheless, that production on a large scale is as normal in agriculture as in manufactures and merchandising, the time must come, upon that assumption, when small farming will give way to bonanza farming, just as small shops have given way to large factories, and as small stores are giving way to department stores. If bonanza farming can produce the same results as small farming, with less labor, or better results with the same labor—if, that is, it is truly more economical—then bonanza farming is destined to be the farming of the future. It will, in that case, be beneficent, even to the small farmers, unless social maladjustments interfere with the normal distribution of its benefits.

What makes the prospect of production on a large scale so ominous, and it is ominous indeed, is the thought, expressed or felt, that the change implies in its culmination a state of society in which the few will be bosses and the many serfs. We think of large factories as being under the mastership of manufacturing barons, whose employes are slaves without the ordinary slave guarantees of support. Department stores, associate themselves in imagination with merchant princes and cringing clerks. And it would be difficult to conceive of bonanza farms without bonanza farmers and their gangs of dependent hands. Such, too, will most assuredly be the outcome if we

allow social maladjustments to perpetuate themselves, and to extend into the era of production on the largest scale.

V.

How shall that be prevented? Many devices are suggested, but they are mere devices, mere schemes to circumvent the operation of natural law. Only one proposition takes natural law into consideration and aims to overcome the effect of maladjustments by establishing normal adjustments. That is the proposition of Henry George.

He advocates the abolition of land monopoly, and as a simple yet effectual means of doing so, the retention in lieu of all other taxes, of the tax we already have upon the value of land—namely, that part of the real estate tax which is measured by the value of the site as distinguished from the value of the improvements. To put his proposition in another form, he would abolish all taxes except the one which is measured solely by land values. He would trust to the resulting increase in the rate of that single tax to transfer from land monopolists to the public treasury the annual ground rent, potential as well as actual, of all kinds of land—mines and city lots as well as agricultural land—each holding paying in proportion to its value as mere land, irrespective of its improvements.

Space is too limited to explain in detail the way in which this single tax would operate to secure to everyone, as it certainly would, what he earns by his work. Suffice it here to say that it would do so by promoting, instead of obstructing, the free play of natural forces in the distribution as well as in the production of wealth. But there is one question regarding the efficacy of the single tax, which bears directly upon the subject of discussion, and to that we invite a moment's attention.

How would the single tax benefit the small storekeeper and the small farmer? That is the question. Since large farmers with the advantage of improved and valuable machinery can produce at lower cost than the small farmer, could they not drive him out of business? In like manner, could not the department store with its vast capital drive out of business

the small storekeeper? How could the single tax offset the great difference between the capitalist farmers' machinery and the small farmers' rude methods, or the large store and the small one?

VI.

The question assumes that it is desirable in behalf of producers on a small scale to perpetuate small modes of production, like small farming and small store keeping. But that, as we have already seen, is not necessarily desirable. In every department of industry in which production can be carried on with greater economy of labor on a large scale than on a small scale, it is desirable that production on the small scale should cease. Whether or not the single tax would permit department stores and bonanza farming to put an end to small storekeeping and small farming is therefore beside the question. The real question is whether the single tax would secure to those who now keep small stores and do small farming, their equal share in the benefits of the change.

Henry George had no expectation of interfering by the single tax with normal concentration in production. On the contrary, he expected the single tax to encourage it. But he expected also that the single tax would open the way to all who so desired, to be equal partners in production—equal, that is to say, in proportion to their contributions of labor. He expected, in other words, that the single tax would bring about in the field of production on a large scale, a system of voluntary co-operation; or, to use his own language in *Progress and Poverty*, that under the single tax "we should reach the ideal of the socialist, but not through government repression."

This ideal would be reached through the radical change in the distribution of wealth which the single tax would effect. The system, being of general application, would automatically distribute products in two funds. The first fund would be the distinguishable earnings of individuals. The second would be the rent or value of exceptional opportunities for production. Among individual workers, the first fund would be divided in proportion to their use-

fulness; the other fund would go to the community as a whole. The law or force by which this equitable distribution would be made, is the natural law of competition, which, like air pressure, so long as it exerts itself not in one direction but in all, produces equilibrium.

VII.

To those who understand the true nature of normal competition, and do not confound it with the monopolistic phenomena of the present day, which superficial writers mistakenly confuse with competition, it is perfectly clear how the result outlined above would come to pass under the single tax. But there are those who fail to grasp the idea. They either lack the imagination to forecast the logical result of a given cause operating in a given way, or their minds are so taken up with the evils of monopolistic "competition," as to leave no room for consideration of the nature of free competition. Without attempting the impossible task of satisfying such minds, we venture a suggestion to others to whom their criticisms may at first seem important.

How would the small farmer and the small storekeeper fare under the single tax, with the bonanza farm and the department store to compete with? Would it not be more pertinent at the outset to inquire how the department store and the bonanza farmer would fare, if they could get no one to work for them?

Think a moment of the effect the single tax would have upon the labor market. Everyone who claimed to own land that other people wanted, would have to pay a tax upon it which would be so high that he could never hope to get it back unless he used the land to its full capacity. But he could not use the land without employing men, no matter how much machinery he had. Machinery won't work itself. Consequently everybody who owned land would either have to give it up or hire enough men to work it to the full. If he gave it up, somebody else would take it. In either case the effect upon the labor market would be the same, namely a brisk demand for labor, in all departments and of all grades, a demand that would constantly exceed the supply. Jobs

would be hunting for men, instead of men hunting for jobs. The inevitable effect of that would be the disbandment of the army of the unemployed, increase of wages, and the consequent independence of workmen.

Workmen, though hired, would then have to be treated as industrial equals. They could no longer be treated as serfs. If they objected to their treatment, others would be glad to hire them; and if they objected to being hired, they would be in position to refuse, for they could themselves become producers on a large scale, hiring one another.

This suggests one of the opportunities which the single tax would afford to small farmers and small storekeepers to protect themselves against bonanza farms and department stores. They could adapt themselves to the large scale of production, and produce as economically as their big competitors. This they could do by forming co-operative organizations of their own, something that they are prevented from doing successfully now because the anti-single tax condition of the time allows peculiar privileges as to transportation and taxation to their great competitors. A bonanza farm is only a co-operative farm. The evil about it is that the owner of the farm also virtually owns the men who help him. Under the single tax that evil would disappear, and the bonanza farm instead of being a farm on which the co-operators are a master and his serfs, would be one on which the co-operators would be partners. Labor in general would be in such demand that help could be got on bonanza farms upon no other terms.

VIII.

The one thing to bear in mind with reference to the single tax principle is that it contemplates the abolition of monopoly and the freeing of labor. It would accomplish this by making competition free. Competition is the antithesis of monopoly. To abolish one is to establish the other. To make competition free, therefore, is to apply the natural remedy to the ills that flow from monopoly.

Now, all the ills which seem to come from normal production on a large scale, are caused by the monopolistic circumstances in which it is

carried on. To get rid of them, free competition must be established. That being established, monopoly and all its brood of evils would disappear.

Whoever will consider what free competition means, will realize the beneficently revolutionary character of the effects that would be produced by the introduction of a principle like that of the single tax, which is simply an appropriate method of unshackling competition. With competition freed and monopoly abolished no one could fail to secure his equitable share in the benefits of social growth. To all such the new modes of production which were more prolific and required less labor, would be welcomed as a boon. It is the operation of the principle of monopoly, not of free competition, that makes them now a menace. If the great factory, the department store, capitalistic farming, or any other normal species of large production is a menace to any industrial class, it is not because such method is in itself bad, but because the injured class is disinherited of its competing power. Restore that power, by abolishing monopoly, through making competition free, and special difficulties of adjustment which now seem to be insuperable obstacles, would prove to be the merest shadows in the path. What labor of all grades needs is not to be helped but to be freed. Being freed, it would help itself.

NEWS

Once more the center of general interest has shifted. Attention is now diverted from the Spanish-American war, the Czar's peace proposition and the Dreyfuss exposure, to the British war in the Soudan. Khartoum, the scene of the Gordon massacre 13 years ago, and the objective point of the British army in Egypt, has been captured. The British and Egyptian flags were hoisted there on the 5th.

The British movement upon Khartoum began last spring with a battle at the Atbara river, which flows into the Nile near Berber, the most advanced post the British had yet occupied. The battle of Atbara, fought on the 8th of April, resulted in a complete victory for the British, though with severe loss. The loss of the na-

tives was greater, however, amounting to 2,000 in killed alone; and Mahmoud, the dervish commander at Atbara, was taken prisoner. Since then the British and Egyptian troops have been steadily pushing their way up the Nile to Omdurman, which lies at the confluence of the White Nile and the Blue Nile, not far below Khartoum. Omdurman was the headquarters of what is called the rebellious movement, for it is to be understood that the British are supposed to be engaged not in invading dervish territory, but in assisting the Egyptian government to put down a dervish rebellion. On the 1st of September the Anglo-Egyptian army, under Gen. Kitchener, encamped within eight miles of Omdurman, and within three miles of the rebel army. At dawn on the following day the dervishes were advancing for an attack. Preparations to receive them were made and at half-past seven their attack was anticipated with artillery fire. The dervishes replied with rifles, following with a sweeping rush upon the British flank. Driven back by a withering storm of bullets from the whole British line, they swayed toward the British center and concentrated there for an attack in full force; but the large body of horsemen which led the attack literally melted under a continuous fire, and the main body withdrew behind a ridge in front of their camp. Gen. Kitchener's army followed them. As it came over the crest of the ridge the dervishes bore down upon its right with 15,000 troops which had been massed for a supreme effort to retrieve the dervish losses of the day. To meet this movement Gen. Kitchener seized an eminence with his main body and wheeling to the right caught the dervishes in a depression where he poured in upon them a cross fire with infantry and artillery which fairly mowed them down. They fought bravely, however, until there was but a remnant left, and these broke and fled. Gen. Kitchener's cavalry drove them 30 miles into the desert. Meanwhile British gunboats on the Nile bombarded Khartoum, destroying all the forts and incidentally injuring the tomb of the original mahdi, who died in 1885. By noon the battle had been won, and in the afternoon the British occupied Omdurman. On the 5th, as already stated, the British and Egyptian flags were raised above the neighboring city of Khartoum, which Gen. Kitchener reports as a complete ruin. The loss to the Anglo-Egyptian army

was 46 killed and 341 wounded; the dervish loss is reported as high up in the thousands. The dervish leader, Khalifa Abdullah, escaped.

Khartoum and all that region in the Soudan were, until July, 1881, under undisputed Egyptian control. About that time the original mahdi, Mohammed Ahmed, led a religious crusade which in January, 1885, captured Omdurman and Khartoum. Gen. Gordon, known as "Chinese Gordon," had been in command there for a year, in behalf of the British government, which had intervened to put down the rebellion; and when the city of Khartoum fell into the mahdi's hands, he was massacred by a mob of the mahdi's followers. The dramatic incidents connected with Gordon's death have been supreme in exciting English public opinion against the Soudan rebels, and arousing English enthusiasm over the recapture of Khartoum. The recapture affects the public mind in England as being in the nature of revenge for Gordon's death.

An American correspondent reports conduct on the part of the British at the battle of Omdurman which is hardly believable; yet the report is apparently confirmed by so conservative a paper as the London Standard. He says that no wounded mahdists were left after the battle, because the British deliberately and under orders massacred them. He also says that this has been the custom ever since Gordon's death. The excuse given for it is that wounded mahdists on the battlefield are as dangerous as if they were unhurt. They never stop killing while life remains. British officers and surgeons, it is said, have been killed or wounded while passing over battle fields trying to relieve the suffering of wounded mahdists—killed by the wounded mahdists themselves. For this reason it has become the practice to send over the battle fields small bodies of the Soudanese troops under command of the Sirdar, Gen. Kitchener, expressly to kill the wounded rebels. The London Standard refers guardedly to the matter in these words:

Some of the Sirdar's Soudanese were cautiously making their way across the field of battle, their duty being one which, however hateful it may seem to the theoretical humanitarian, warfare against a savage horde like the followers of the Khalifa makes imperative. There is no need to dwell on such