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AMERICAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY:

AN INQUIRY

AS TO THE

REMEDIES

FOR

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EVILS

PROPOSED BY

HENRY GEORGE AND OTHERS.

BY JAMES TAYLOR.

Late Editor Ohio State Journal.

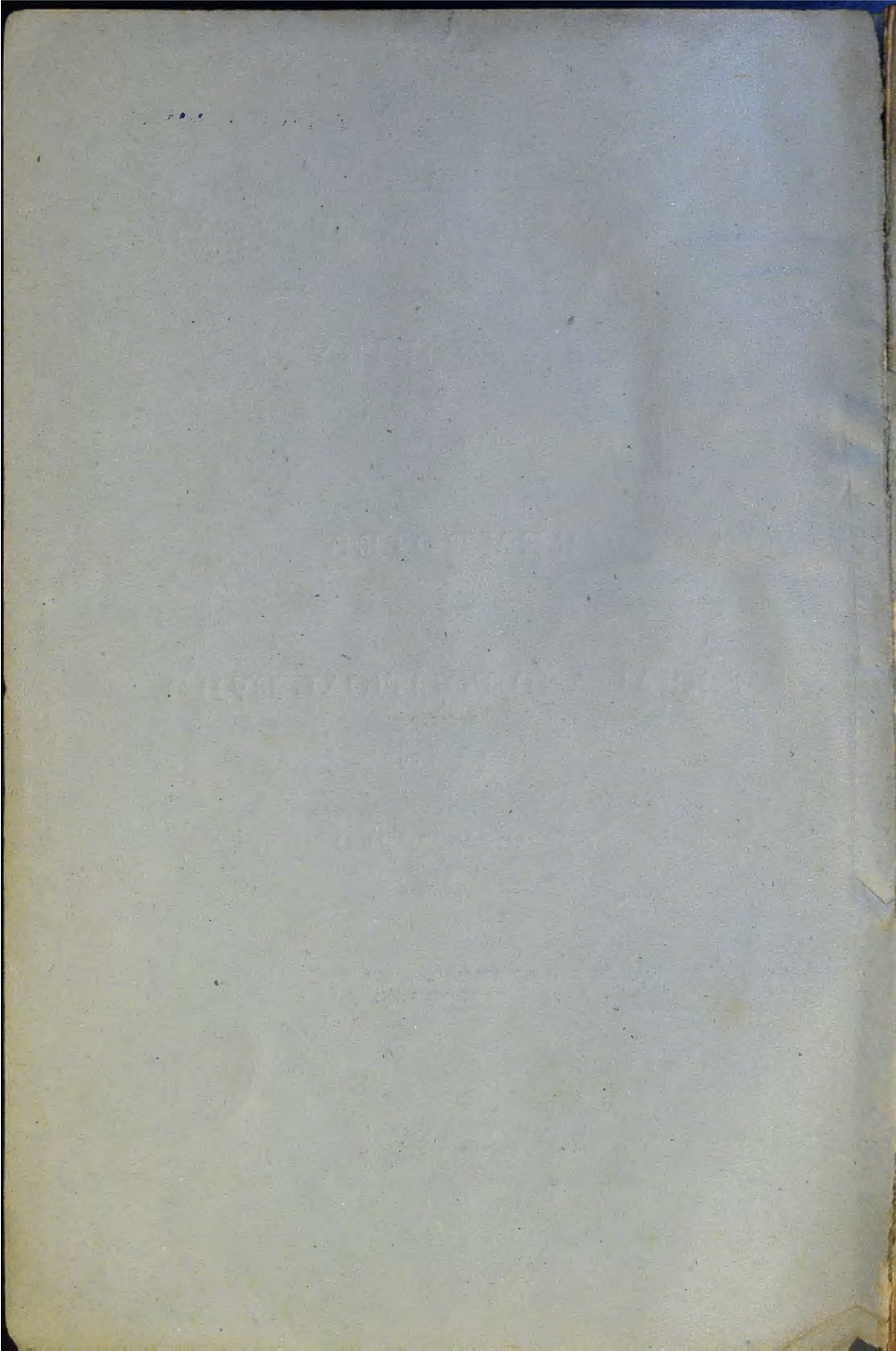
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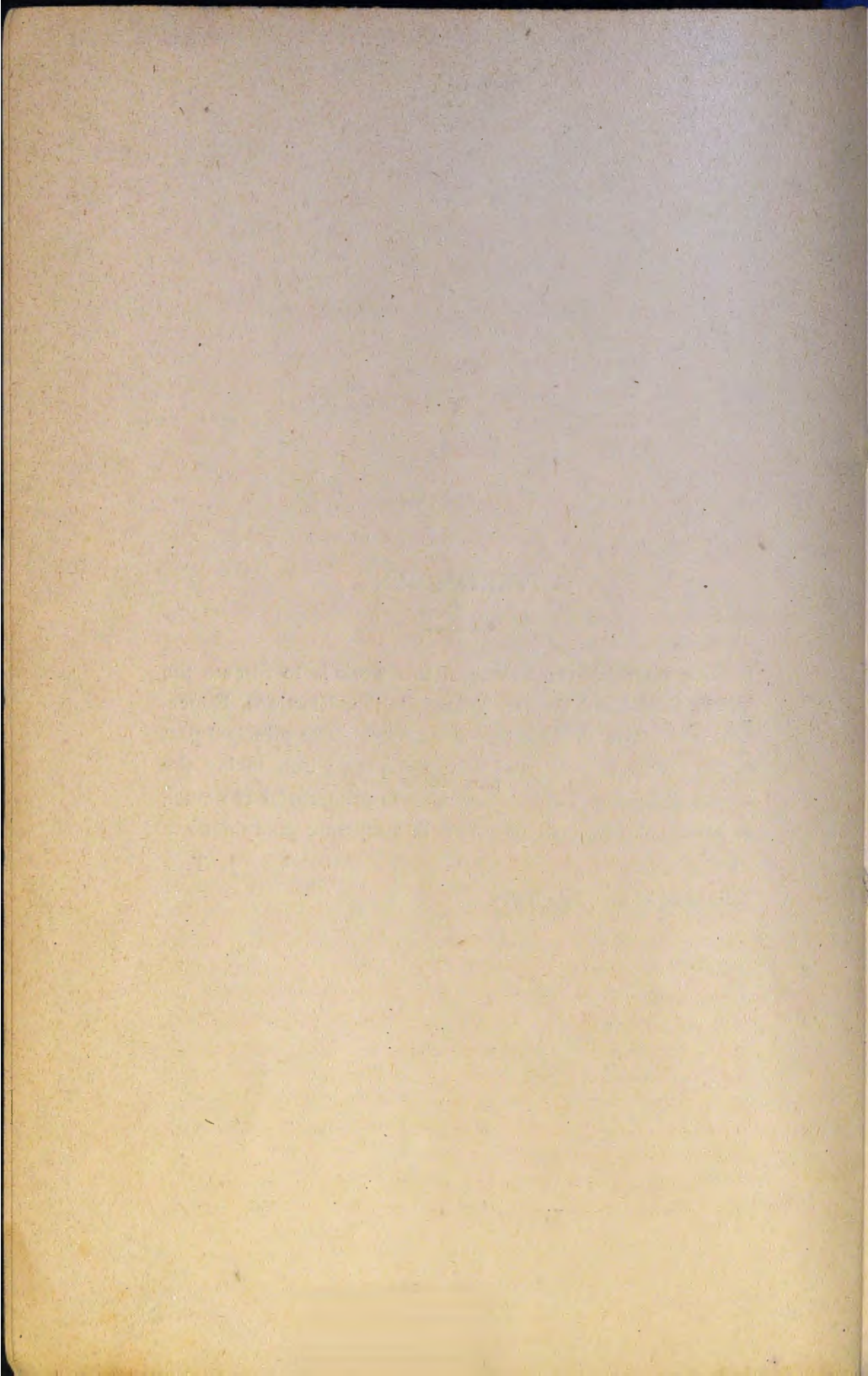
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The intent of the author of this work is to discuss the questions of Land Tenure, Transportation, Elections, Education, etc., from an American standpoint. The principal part of the work is now ready for the press; but, taking the advice of friends, I have concluded to print Part I (so much as pertains to the land question) in a separate pamphlet.

J. T.

Columbus, Ohio, July, 1883.



AMERICAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

PART I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Measured by the life time of the great nations of ancient and modern times we are yet a young people, though for full two hundred years we and our fathers have maintained characteristics distinguishing us from the other peoples of Christendom; for, be it remembered, liberty and self-government have been the heritage of the American people from the earliest colonial days. The founders of Virginia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maryland, Pennsylvania and other colonies were born in nominal freedom, but in a land in which their equal right to participate in the affairs of government was not recognized. They braved dangers and privations of the sea and the wilderness to emancipate and enfranchise themselves and their children. They suffered and struggled for liberty—not only liberty of action—but liberty of *thought*. Our fathers were self-governing freemen before the Revolution. Up to that period they acknowledged the nominal sovereignty of the king of Great Britain; yet before the northern breeze carried to the ears of Patrick Henry the din of resounding arms several generations of native Americans (who in theory and practice were as pure democratic republicans as any now living) had appeared on the stage and had passed away. Liberty was the birthright of our fathers. The surrender of Cornwallis secured for them independence and national sovereignty.

We, the American people, are the heirs of humanity—the heirs of all the generations of time. The original settlers

of the American colonies were English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, French, Dutch, Germans, Swedes and Danes—substantially one people, though of differing political nationality and speaking different but kindred languages. Who were these people? They were a compound of the Celtic tribes of Western Europe and of Romans, Greeks, Hebrews and Carthaginians, with a preponderating admixture of the blood of the Goths, Vandals and other Teutonic nations and tribes which, age after age, during the gradual decadence of the Roman empire,

—“the fertile North
 Poured ever from her frozen loins, to pass
 The Rhine and the Danube, when her barbarous sons
 Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
 Beneath Gibraltar and the Libyan sands.”

The Teutonic conquerors of the Western empire were themselves a mixed people—a people, compounded by the commingling of the blood of all the nations, tribes and families which, thirty centuries ago, dwelt between Eastern Asia and Western Europe; between the Indus and the Arctic Circle—remnants of the notable nations of antiquity—Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Egyptians and Hebrews, as well as of the nameless and almost numberless tribes of barbarians subsequently known as Scythians, Sarmatians, Slavs, Finns, etc. The conquest of Western Europe by these people and their incorporation with the subjects of the falling empire “made new nations”—Saxons, Anglo Saxons, Franks, Danes, Normans, etc., and finally English, French, Germans, Dutch, etc. To the “noblest, the best and the bravest” of all these nations the American people can trace their origin. The ancestors of millions of our people were present at Marathon, at Trasimenus and Cannæ; they upheld the banners of Charles Martel at Tours, when three hundred thousand infidels bit the dust, and the Christian world was redeemed from Moslem oppression; they participated in the “doleful rout” of Charlemagne and his peers at Fontarabia; victorious and vanquished, they fought in opposing ranks at Hastings with William and with Harold; at Crecy with Edward and with

Philip; at Bosworth Field with Richmond and with Richard; at Marston Moor with Fairfax and with Rupert; at Dunbar with Cromwell and with Leslie; at Aghrim with Ginkell and with St. Ruth. Transferred from Europe and its narrow prejudices, the founders of our Republic forgot the factions and quarrels of their native land. Men who, believing that they were fighting for principle, had encountered each other in mortal combat in the civil wars of France and Britain, met in America as friends, and agreed to consign all past differences to oblivion, and to dwell together in peace. The free air of America imparted to them not only a love of political liberty, but a keen sense of personal independence; and, anticipating Jefferson by more than a hundred years, they knew without the teachings of a written declaration that God had created all men equal. In vain did the ruling powers in England, France and Holland attempt to impose upon them the odious principle of feudalism and the subordination of man to man. All such attempts, except in the matter of negro slavery, were firmly and successfully resisted. But slavery, appealing as it did to cupidity and the love of wealth and power, proved too strong for that sense of justice which is inherent in all liberal minds. In an evil hour the fathers consented to make the black man an exception as regards the rights of humanity; and for that error their posterity paid a fearful penalty. May not our children pay a like penalty for our own errors?

If any people ever had a right to glory in their ancestors, surely Americans have that right. For a hundred generations the progenitors of the American people have been the "choice and master spirits" of each and every age. We belong to (and constitute the leading member of) the progressive and conquering race of mankind. We stand at the head of the great Teutonic family. We are more Anglo-Saxon, than the English of the present day; we are more German than the subjects of the Emperor William; we have with us more men of Swedish descent than reside in Sweden; more Dutch than in Holland; more Scotch than in Scotland; more Irish than in Ireland; more Welsh than in Wales; and yet

(with the exception of a few alleged Irishmen, Germans, etc., who pose for votes just before election, and cut fantastic tricks in the face of heaven and decency) we are all Americans, proud of our country and its institutions, and ready, according to our best lights, to spend and be spent in its service. Convince the average American that it is his duty to do a certain thing and he will do it, even at the risk of fortune, limb and life. Conviction comes through truth, and truth is revealed through full and free discussion.

I have sketched the origin and character of the American people as a premise to the conclusion that we have a political and social system (a political and social philosophy, if you please,) peculiarly our own—radically differing from any now in vogue in Christendom, except in Canada and Australia. In theory our polity and our institutions are as near to nature as a high civilization will permit; and the highest civilization is not necessarily antagonistic to nature's laws and methods. If our practices are not in consonance with our theory, that fact is attributable to our negligence in adapting nature's rule to our changed, and ever changing, condition as regards population, wealth, production, etc. The forms of government established in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Connecticut more than two centuries ago were natural, just and expedient; and, though intended merely to regulate the public affairs of a few thousands of settlers, scattered here and there in the wilderness, were capable of indefinite expansion and application—contained, in fact, the germ of that political system which now prevails over all of North America except Mexico. Yet the precise forms of government adopted by the Puritans and Quakers would not suffice for the government of great commonwealths like Massachusetts and Pennsylvania as they exist to-day. The principle, however, is as enduring as the procession of the heavenly spheres; and but slight modifications were required to adapt it to the government of a nation which numbers its citizens by scores of millions.

“Liberty and property” was the rallying cry of our

fathers when they entered upon the work of emancipating themselves from feudal slavery. The right of each individual person to acquire, possess, and enjoy private property is as sacred as his right to life and liberty. Such is, and ever has been, the American idea. For that reason the founders of the Republic rejected feudalism in all its forms. In the days of feudalism the masses of the people were legally incapable of owning private property. It required the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of lives before kings and nobles would acknowledge the rights of man the individual—his right to the possession of himself and his earnings. Yet in these latter days we behold the spectacle of men who have received the highest culture which famous seats of learning can bestow—men who assume to be philosophers and leaders of thought—urging a retreat from the advances which we have made in the direction of universal liberty, equality and enfranchisement, and a restoration of the feudal system under new names and forms.

If we would preserve our national characteristics, and that personal dignity and independence, that freedom of thought and action, which we inherit from our fathers, we must reject the dreamy and incomprehensible theories of social science and political economy which the alleged *savants* of England, France, Germany and Italy are now thrusting upon our attention. I do not share the apprehensions of some that immigrants from Europe are inimical to our country and its institutions. The great body of European immigrants were Americans in principle before they left their native land, and when they have resided here long enough to acquire the privileges of citizenship they become as thorough Americans as any of us. The foreign danger that menaces us comes in the shape of books written by men who occupy the places filled by Voltaire, Rousseau and kindred spirits a hundred years ago. The works of Voltaire and his coadjutors, written under the guise of philosophical disquisitions, inquiries into the origin and nature of things, expositions of the eternal verities, etc., prepared the minds of men to become actors in the

terrific scenes and appalling tragedies of the French Revolution; and their theories and mysticisms had such a malign influence on the minds of some Americans that our infant republic came near being wrecked during the administration of Washington. True, Voltaire was misapprehended both in Europe and America, and his supposed disciples perpetrated excesses never contemplated by him; but that fact tends to exemplify the folly of talking in riddles and dealing in enigmas when discussing serious problems.

It may be that another social and political upheaval like the French Revolution is necessary in Europe, and that the social philosophers of England, France and Germany are (unconsciously, perhaps,) sowing the wind preparatory to harvesting a whirlwind such as the earth has not produced for many ages. The wrongs suffered by many of the common people of Europe are, indeed, almost insufferable; and perhaps no redress can be had except through revolutionary and anarchical violence. But every wrong suffered by any portion of the American people can be redressed by peaceful, lawful and legitimate methods—without a reign of terror, and without a resort to musket, cannon, dynamite and the torch.

Both the premises and the conclusions (as far as they arrive at conclusions) of European political economists and social philosophers are inapplicable to the people and government of the United States. Here the foundation of our social and political fabric rest upon the rock of ages—justice, equal rights and popular consent. Our theories are correct even according to the reasoning of the “advanced thinkers” of Europe. Whatever is wrong with us is the result of a misapplication or non application of fundamental principles, the soundness of which is admitted by all. On the contrary, the foundations of government in Europe, (even in republican France and semi-republican Britain) rest upon the sandy and unstable substructure of force—*naked force*. Here we have liberty regulated by law and consent. The liberties of the people of Europe are regulated by law and the *bayonet*. Should the standing armies of Europe be disbanded no gov-

ernment on the continent, except Switzerland, could exist for a week—all, all, would be swept away like shocks of corn before a cyclone. Would it be wise on the part of the people of the United States, after having enjoyed the blessings of self-government for two and a half centuries, to abandon the paths of safety marked out by Liberty and made smooth by Experience, and seek among the subjects of kings and emperors for engineers to “blaze” us new roads through the dismal wilderness of Mysticism, Communism and Social Democracy?

Whenever the people of the United States abandon their distinctive Americanism they abandon all those “great general and essential principles of liberty and free government” for which their fathers toiled and struggled, and for which many of them sacrificed their lives on the field of battle or in prison. It is fashionable just now, especially in high educational circles, to claim, or rather to regretfully concede, that our country has never yet produced even one “great thinker.” I most fervently thank God that she has not, and my prayer is that she never may! It seems to me that great thinkers, like great conquerors, are instruments raised up by the Almighty to scourge the nations because of their corruptions and iniquities. In all ages great thinkers have acted the part of John the Baptist to great conquerors. Voltaire was a fair sample of the great thinker; Napoleon was a fair sample of the great conqueror. Though America has produced no great thinker, yet she has produced a multitude of men who could, and can, think and reason in the light of nature, and, therefore, think and reason correctly and practically. We are a nation of practical thinkers, though by no means deficient in imagination, and in the cultivation of the “humanities.” American thinkers laid the foundation and reared the superstructure of the freest and at the same time the strongest government known among men. Some years ago a distinguished American orator said: “Ours is the only genuine republic that now exists, or that ever has existed, on

the earth." That was a concise and accurate statement of the fact. All future republics may safely adopt our model.

An American whose mind is not muddled and dazed with European mysticism always reasons in direct lines—aims to see the end from the beginning. Your European philosopher reasons in circles, or rather in a series of eccentric circles whose lines cross and recross each other in a mazy and labyrinthian style—beginning in mist and ending in mist. I once read a little book of some thirty pages, entitled, "Nothing by Nobody." It was a splendid specimen of grandiloquence, abounding in truisms and aphorisms; word was piled upon word and sentence upon sentence; the reader's attention was riveted to the pages as by a fascination, and expectation was on tiptoe, for each sentence indicated that the point and pith of the matter would be found in the next, but the word "FINIS" was reached before the point appeared. The presumption is that that book was written by some European philosopher, and was sent forth as the precursor of scores of books on political economy and kindred subjects which have appeared during the last twenty years.

I have forgotten the name of the philosopher who said: "It is impossible for a man to communicate to others, that which he knoweth not himself." No doubt he was an American—perhaps Franklin, for Franklin always reasoned in direct lines. The inference is that a man who knows any thing, and knows it well, can impart his knowledge to others. It may be that those European writers have a clear mental conception of the topics on which they treat; but, if so, they are unfortunate in not possessing the capacity to communicate their knowledge to others, especially to Americans. It is unnatural for an American to reason like an Englishman, a Frenchman or a German. When an American, especially an American professor or politician, imagines that he knows all about Adam Smith, Mill, Spencer, Leveleye, and half a dozen other European writers on political economy and other abstruse subjects, his friends should look after him; "send for the wise woman;" go with him hunting or fishing; induce-

him to "go to his uncle's in the country." He is pretty far gone, and may do mischief if not restrained by persuasion or force. The American whose brain is muddled with European ideas of political economy is very apt to forget the meaning of plain Saxon words. If he be a "scholar" he will—before delivering a lecture on political economy to a college class, or to a mixed audience of farmers, merchants and mechanics—take such words as "rent," "interest," "capital," "labor," "profit," etc., and translate them from English into Greek; from Greek into Latin, from Latin into German, from German into French, and from French back into English—being exceedingly careful to note and analyze all of the varied shades of meaning in each of the several languages. When he mounts the rostrum he informs his hearers that in the "science" of political economy the words "rent," "interest," "land," "capital," etc., have certain *fixed* and *definite* meanings—he well knowing (if he has read the works of the masters of the "science") that authors do not agree in terminology, and that A uses a word in one sense, B in another, and C in still another. He announces that in the present lecture he will elucidate three leading topics in political economy,—"**CAPITAL, RENT, INTEREST.**" He then proceeds to give the politico-economic definition of the words, first in English, then in Greek, then in Latin, then in German, then in French, and then mustering and arraying all of the Greek, Latin, German and French synonyms he translates the whole batch into English and distributes knowledge among his auditors by the shovelfull. That may not be an exact-delineation of the methods of some of our great educators, but it is not a bad sample. An hour and a half may be consumed in defining the politico-economic meaning of three words—words used every day by millions of men who are so simple that they believe they know their signification, when ("scientifically" speaking) all such words are Greek, Latin, Arabic and Choctaw to them; and Greek, Latin, Arabic and Choctaw they will remain till they go down in sorrow to their graves if they continue to waste their time in listening to the

lectures of "learned" men who themselves know nothing of any practical value, and are, therefore, incapable of imparting information to others—men whose discourses are "like a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Happily, however, we have American professors and teachers who think and reason like Americans—think and reason in direct lines—men who can lay down their premises and state their conclusions in language intelligible to every one who knows the use of his mother tongue. They have no occasion to define the meaning of words, for they so construct their sentences, so arrange their line of argument, that each word is understood in its intended sense, without a resort to definitions. They recognize the fact that several hundred words in our language have a distinctively American meaning—a meaning that is puzzling and bewildering to the average Englishman; and when speaking to Americans they employ such words in the American sense. The great majority of professors in our institutions of learning are that class of men. It is to be regretted that they do not more frequently appear before public audiences.

It is said, and said truly, that Americans are too practical, too busy, too eager to acquire wealth; and it is charged that that American characteristic is the natural outgrowth of our institutions. Such is not the fact. Lust for wealth, and the power which wealth confers, is a vice inherent in human nature—a vice which, though injurious to mankind, the body politic cannot suppress or eradicate, except at the sacrifice of liberty of thought and action. The state, however, may rightfully impose restraints upon the acquisition of wealth. The possession of exorbitant wealth not being necessary to the happiness of individuals, the state should intervene to restrain, discourage or prohibit such acquisition, whenever the public good requires such intervention. The legal rule is that every man has the right to possess and enjoy all the wealth he can lawfully acquire. That rule is just, and no honest man will undertake to gainsay it. But if the right of Dives to possess property to the extent of \$100,000,000 neces-

sarily involves the abject poverty of 100,000 Lazaruses, then the right of Dives must lapse—in his case the law becomes inoperative; for, surely, no just law will require that 100,000 men shall be clothed in rags and subsist upon crumbs, thrown from the tables of the rich, to the end that one man may roll in luxury or shut up in his garner, to be destroyed by weevil, moth and mildew, grain sufficient to furnish bread for a multitude of men as good as he. That, of course, is an extreme case; but the statement of such a case illustrates a principle which cannot safely be ignored. But may not the state properly intervene to prevent the possibility of such an unequal distribution of the good things of life? We all know that it is utterly impossible for any one man to earn \$100,000,000 during a life time—that is, legitimately earn and acquire such a sum. Yet fortunes of that magnitude have been acquired by some of our countrymen within twenty or twenty-five years. If their estates were lawfully acquired, then the law should be changed, for it is patent to every man of sense that the law never contemplated any such thing. The state should, therefore, intervene and so change the law as to provide against the recurrence of such things in future. That would be doing no injustice to any one—that would be applying the American rule of “the greatest good to the greatest number.”

Alleged “anti-monopolists” are just now raising a hue and cry against corporations,—railroad corporations, especially. Do not these supposed reformers know that they are on the wrong trail? They are doing the very things which the real monopolists desire them to do. They are, by their incendiary utterances, uniting in one solid body the holders of stocks and bonds in all the corporations from one end of the Union to the other. Why not go to the bottom of things? Why not open the anti-monopoly batteries upon the manipulators of stocks and bonds issued by the great transportation lines—men who alternately act as “bulls” and as “bears” in the stock market, who make pretended “war” on each other in order to “bear” the market and then make

peace in order to "bull" it; at the same time dividing the spoil with holders of grain and provisions whose commodities have been carried to market at half price; thus fleecing their fellow stockholders and the general public. While "bearing" the market they purchase all the stocks and bonds that may be offered at less than their value; when they "bull" the market they aim to get more than the securities are worth, and they generally succeed. If there be no law to put an end to such practices, that is not because of any defect in the fundamental principles upon which our government and institutions are based. Let those principles be applied according to their original intent and meaning—let them be adapted to existing circumstances—and there will be a "panic" among the great "bears" and the great "bulls." Corporations are necessities of commerce and industry. The man who makes war upon corporations, as such, makes war upon the whole community—makes war upon every industrial interest in the nation. A war upon the "interior rings" who control and manage our great transportation lines would be sustained by holders of stocks and bonds as well as by intelligent men in every walk of life. Practically, we are all agreed that corporations, being the creatures of the law; should be compelled to obey the law; but we should distinguish between corporations and the men who have usurped their privileges and franchises.

It is said (and no doubt on good authority) that one man receives as rental on real estate in the city of New York upwards of \$3,000,000 a year. Is not that an enormous tax to be levied on the commerce and industry of a single city? Is it just that any man should possess the power to make such a levy and enforce collection? Must it not be true that the existence of that man is the cause of untold wretchedness, poverty and crime? But he lawfully acquired or inherited his estates, and, therefore, the law must maintain him in their possession and enjoyment. Yes. But may not the law be justly changed so as to forbid the descent of these vast estates to his children? Does not the safety of the commonwealth

demand that such change be made in the law? If the possession of so much real estate by a single person menaces the peace of the state, may not the state provide against the acquisition and possession of such overgrown fortunes? If not, then the state possesses no power to make provision for its own peace and safety.

Despite the excellence of the fundamental principles of our government, it must be confessed that those principles, if not applied in practice, must sooner or later become inoperative because of *non-user*. The fact is indisputable that monstrous abuses have developed during the last twenty years—abuses which have become so incorporated with political, industrial and commercial practices and customs that they appear to the unreflecting observer as necessary parts of our political, social and economic institutions—as necessary evils which must be endured. In the opinion of many good and patriotic men these abuses are a standing menace to peace and order, and even the existence of free government. The principal abuses may be enumerated thus: (1) Land monopoly, or the absorption of all the soil of the country by a part of the people; (2) the unwarrantable power assumed by great corporations, and the refusal of these bodies, or their managers, to subordinate themselves to the law of the land; (3) the corruption of public officers and legislative bodies; (4) the corrupt use of money in elections, especially in primary elections and party conventions; (5) conflict between capital and labor; (6) inefficiency in educational methods, and insufficiency of school funds; (7) widespread indifference in matters of religion; (8) the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage. The remedies proposed for these abuses—these manifest evils—are more multifarious than the practices or customs complained of. Each reformer, or school of reformers, stands ready to indicate a remedy; and they all demand legislative action—the general impression among reformers being that radical changes in our national and state constitutions must be made before these abuses can be eradicated. It is claimed that a constitutional amendment was required for the abolition of slavery.

True enough ; but the existence of slavery, and the supposed right of property in man, was recognized in positive terms by the National constitution. Not so as to the other evils and abuses complained of. When incidentally referred to in any of our constitutions, they are reprobated as pernicious practices to be suppressed by law and public opinion. No injurious monopoly, no pernicious practice, can plead constitutional sanction. Where legislative remedies are required, cannot they be applied without resort to changes in the fundamental law? And is it not true that many of the evils complained of are not within the purview of legislative action? A custom which may have been harmless in its inception, half a century or a century ago, may now be injurious and oppressive to millions of people. Whenever such custom has acquired the force of law, should it not be abolished by positive statute?

We often hear the remark that the average American laboring man has more comforts about his house than the nobility of Europe could command three hundred years ago—that American laborers have houses, furniture, clothing and food such as Queen Elizabeth would have envied in the days of her glory. That is perhaps true. But is it not also true that the average American workingman is a more intelligent and refined gentleman than the average nobleman of the sixteenth century ; and his wife and daughters are habituated to the use of comforts and luxuries such as were undreamed of by the maids of honor at Queen Elizabeth's court? Is it not also true that the American workingman earns all that he gets? and is he not entitled to all that he earns? If from any cause, or from numerous causes, laboring men are defrauded as to their rights and earnings, is it not the duty of patriots, regardless of wealth or poverty, to assist them in regaining their lost rights? Is not that the path of honor and safety? Is not the idea too prevalent with us that the chief end of man is to acquire property, money, stocks and bonds—no matter how the acquisition may be made, if not in flagrant violation of law or custom? Is it not true that property, liberty and order are menaced because of the preva-

lence of that idea? Workingmen, it is said, are often unreasonable in their demands, and ready to break out in riotous proceedings without adequate cause—to band together for the destruction of life and property, under pretense of redressing grievances which are merely imaginary. Perhaps so. But it should never be forgotten that civilized men who have no homes—who depend upon daily work for daily subsistence—are always dangerous. Whether with or without just cause, a hungry mob is destructive; and we know not when the time may come when the failure of a crop, or some similar cause, may reduce a million or two of American workingmen to the condition of paupers and beggars. Have business men forgotten the scenes which were enacted in our cities a few years ago? Except in a few localities no great damage was done, but there was terrible “thundering in the index.” Men whose courage never failed them in the darkest hours of our great civil war, when a million of disciplined men were arrayed in arms against the government, stood upon our streets with blanched faces in the presence of unorganized mobs, and knew not where to turn for relief. Communism was almost triumphant in nearly one half of the cities of the Union, though not one-tenth of the rioters knew anything about the principles of Communism.* Of course, mobs are always suppressed in the end. But what does the suppression of mobs by the military arm involve? Does it not necessarily involve a large standing army, to be maintained by the people’s labor?—does it not involve the destruction of popular liberty, no matter what the form of government may be?

The question of monopoly, especially of land monopoly, is of paramount importance—is, in fact the question of the age. The crisis is upon us, and statesmen, politicians, land holders, merchants and manufactures, should not delay in recognizing the fact. “A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished,” [Proverbs xxii, 3.] Silence and apparent indifference will not much longer suffice to keep the land question out of active politics. The question is, “Will some existing party

have the nerve to deal with and solve the problem?" If no existing party possesses the wisdom and the courage to correct the manifest evils and defects of our land system, may we not reasonably expect the rise of a new party—possibly a revolutionary, destructive and impracticable party—that will command a majority of votes?

AMERICAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

PART I.—CHAPTER I.

THE QUESTION OF THE AGE.

§ 1. Shall the American land system continue as at present, or shall it be reformed? Shall the law forever permit a Vanderbilt, a Gould or an Astor to purchase and hold land equivalent in area and productiveness to a great State like Pennsylvania or Ohio? Shall great corporations, more soulless than any Vanderbilt, Gould or Astor, be permitted to hold title to real estate equal in area and productiveness to the German empire? Shall the law of reason and nature be so perverted, so misconstrued, as to place title to land on the same footing as title to a horse, a cow, a pig or a bale of merchandise? These and kindred questions are now pending before the American people; and if not satisfactorily solved by the present generation of Americans, our immediate posterity will, most assuredly, be involved in trouble—in civil convulsions, wars and revolutions, in which the substance, if not the name, of liberty must perish.

§ 2. If a Vanderbilt or a Gould may purchase and lawfully hold a territory sufficient for a kingdom or an empire, will he not possess more power over the people residing upon his land than any king or emperor in Europe—more, even, than the autocratic Czar of all Russias? If any man may lawfully acquire a title in fee simple to all of the real estate in a city, township or county, will he not be absolute lord and ruler over the people of that city, township or county, notwithstanding the existence of the right of suffrage in the mass of men

—notwithstanding the observance of republican forms? If any man be permitted to hold title to more land than he can cultivate and utilize by the labor of himself and family, must not other men and other families be deprived, to a greater or less extent, of the opportunities of earning a livelihood? If one-tenth of the people own nine-tenths of all the land in any given district, will not that one-tenth of the population have an undue advantage over the nine tenths who own no land? Can equality of civil and political rights be maintained, except in theory, so long as a fraction of the people are in possession of nearly all of the natural opportunities for producing subsistence and wealth?

§ 3. Mr. Henry George, in his "Progress and Poverty," maintains that all, or nearly all, of the political and social evils of the age—ignorance, vice, poverty, idleness, tramps, overflowing jails, penitentiaries, almshouses and the like—are directly traceable to land monopoly, or rather to private ownership of land; for all private ownership, he holds, is monopoly, no matter how small the holding. Thus: If I assert ownership to a city or village lot, or to a few acres of land in the country, even if the tract be less than I can cultivate with my own hands, or even if it be covered with buildings erected by me, I am a usurper of the rights of all other men, women and children in the vicinity, each of whom has the same right to the land that I have. That is the substance of his argument, covering near three hundred pages of his book.

§ 4. The land of a nation is the common property of all its citizens, according to Mr. George, therefore, the assertion by an individual of private and exclusive ownership over any given area of the earth's surface, however small, is simple usurpation. His remedy is a resumption by the people—the government—of all land grants to private persons and corporations, to the end that the people may be restored to their primitive rights.

§ 5. There are great numbers of men who hold that

George's proposition is too absurd to require serious consideration. That assumption is unsound. No such question can be disposed of by refusing to consider and discuss it. Mr. George is a forcible writer. The premises on which he bases his arguments are specious and plausible, and it cannot be denied that many of his facts and deductions are unanswerable—wild and impracticable as his proposed remedy may be. It is not alone political adventurers and demagogues, Communists, Social Democrats and other "landless resolute" who agree with the author of "Progress and Poverty." He has arrayed on his side not a few of our ablest literary men, magazine writers, Presidents and Professors in colleges and universities, statesmen and jurists of recognized ability and integrity, together with some leading merchants and manufacturers. Managers and editors of daily and weekly newspapers would also side with him were it not for the fear of giving umbrage to the supposed omnipotent power of land holders and dealers and speculators in real estate.

§ 6 We have laws on our statute books which prohibit the forestalling of the market in the necessaries of life. Why should not the law forbid the forestalling of the market in land, since by the use of land, and in that way alone, can the necessaries of life be procured by human labor?

§ 7 In some of the States the farmers, having a majority of votes in legislative bodies, have enacted severe laws against making "corners" in grain and provisions, and against "dealing in futures" in such things. These laws are popular, and are enforced by the courts whenever a case is made. If an Ohio, Illinois and Iowa farmer may own one, two or three thousand acres of land, (as a large number of them do) whether he cultivates it or not, what is that but making a "corner" in land? If I buy land or city lots not for personal use, but to hold for a rise, what is that but "dealing in futures?"

§ 8. Dealing in futures in grain, provisions and other necessaries of life is a risky operation on the part of the

dealer, since the margin of profit may be on the wrong side, and it is, at the worst, but a transient evil. And the same is true as to "corners" in grain, provisions and other perishable property. Combinations to "corner" bread, meat, and the like, may succeed in raising prices temporarily; but the reaction which is almost certain to follow creates a free market, and the prices decline to a point as far below the average value as the "corner" had raised them above it; so the consumer at the end of the year has paid only the average price of the article purchased. But how is it with the land speculator, the maker of the real estate "corners," the dealer in land futures? Has he not, if he be a man of discernment, a safe investment for his money? Is not the element of risk wholly eliminated in his case? It is impossible for a reaction, or a general decline in prices, to ruin him, as in the case of the dealer in grain and provision "futures." In nine cases out of ten the decline in nominal values does not affect him in the least, for he is under no obligation to sell, and, unlike meat, potatoes and apples, his land will neither rot nor become stale—its existence being "from everlasting to everlasting." His earthly "future" is safe against all possible contingencies. He or his posterity is sure to gather in the wealth consequent upon the growth of population in the vicinity—sure to reap the reward of other men's toils and struggles.

§ 9. When the writer was a youth he was compelled, in order to acquire the rudiments of an education, to walk a mile and a half through a dense forest to a log school house. Why? Because dealers in land "futures" had purchased from the government, at \$1.25 per acre about one half of the land in the district—the district consisting of nearly half a township. That land they held for a full generation, neither improving it themselves nor permitting any one else to improve it. It was afterwards sold by their children (nearly all of whom squandered the proceeds in riotous living) at prices equal to the value of improved farms in the vicinity.

That is but a fair sample of the whole country northwest of the Ohio river and west of the Mississippi.

§ 10. Nothing is more certain than that the value of land depends upon density of population. That fact is patent to every man of observation—is universally recognized. And from that acknowledged fact Mr. George deduces his theory that all private ownership in land is fundamentally wrong—a flagrant usurpation. His proposition, briefly stated, is that without population in the vicinity land is worth nothing—at any rate, worth no more to a civilized man than to a savage. Is not his position impregnable? If, therefore, population (which in civilized communities implies the presence of capital and labor) constitutes the sole foundation of land values should not the individual factors composing the community participate equally in the benefits derived from the value created by the presence and labors of multitudes of people? Such, in substance, are the queries propounded by the advocates of the abolition of private property in land. How shall such queries be answered? Surely, not by contemptuous silence, not by raising the cry of demagoguery, Communism and Social Democracy. Their premises are not unsound. But may false or unsound conclusions be deduced (or rather forced) from sound premises? That inquiry will be pursued further along.

§ 11. But it is said that a limitation of the area of land that may be held by one individual would tend to discourage stock raising, for the reason that large areas are necessary to the successful breeding of neat cattle, sheep and other animals; therefore, small holdings would result in an increased and ever increasing, price of meat, wool, peltries, etc. That is sheer nonsense. Statistics show that small holdings tend to increase the number and value of useful animals—horses, neat cattle, sheep, hogs, turkeys, chickens, geese and all kinds of domestic quadrupeds and fowls—in any given area in a civilized community.

§ 12. Five thousand acres occupied by fifty proprietors,

with their families, will sustain twice as many quadrupeds and fowls as the same area occupied by five proprietors, with their families and laborers; and the surplus food (over family consumption) produced by the fifty proprietors will double that produced by the five proprietors. This for the reason that small holdings tend to diversity of products, while large holdings tend toward specialties—to the cultivation of corn, wheat or barley, or to the breeding of cattle, sheep or hogs.

§ 13. Your lord of a thousand or two thousand acres will not be "bothered" with the cultivation of cabbages, potatoes, turnips, beets, onions, carrots, peas, beans, etc., beyond the necessities of family consumption, and frequently not even to that extent; neither will he be "bothered" with turkeys, chickens, geese, ducks or guinea fowls. No. He can do better. He does not deal in small things. He sells corn or wheat by the thousands of bushels, and he sells cattle, sheep or hogs by the "bunch," each "bunch" bringing him \$500, \$1,000 or \$2,000. Why should he "bother" himself about apples, peaches and pears, strawberries, butter and honey?

§ 14. Large holdings develop rich farmers; small holdings develop rich agricultural communities, rich counties and rich states. A very rich nation may be composed of persons who are not individually rich—of persons in moderate circumstances. If all, or a great majority, of such persons be proprietors of the soil of the nation they will be so many pillars of the state—men

"With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies?"

Is it not safer and better that the state rest upon ten or twenty millions of such pillars than upon the shoulders of a few thousands of men with heads of gold, bodies of brass, legs of iron and feet of clay?

PART I.—CHAPTER II.

CORRECTIVE LEGISLATION NEEDED.

§ 1 The policy of our government of permitting individuals to purchase unlimited acres of land at the minimum price was vicious from the beginning. Land speculators going in advance of settlers, appropriated the greater portion of the choice lands. Then the settler had the alternatives (1) to settle on inferior land, (2) to pay the speculator an advance of three, four and five hundred per cent., or, (3) like the Wandering Jew, to "move on." In either case the speculator put money in his purse, without rendering any equivalent; for if settlers took up and improved inferior lands in the vicinity, or if they settled on and improved lands in the township next west, north or south, up, up went the selling value of the speculator's land. Such is the effect of civilization—such the effect of increased population.

§ 2. Should not the people of the United States demand of Congress (and make the demand in terms which Congress dare not disregard) to reverse the National land policy in all the new States and Territories—in all places where the title vests in the government? Within twenty years, under the existing policy there will be no public lands fit for human habitation. Where, then, will be the poor man's city of refuge? Where shall he fly to escape oppression?

§ 3. We make a merit of sympathizing with the poor, landless Irish, while fostering and legalizing a system of land monopoly in no way materially differing from the Irish system, except for the worse; for the British government claims the right to intervene, and does intervene, to mitigate the oppressions and atrocities of landlordism, while in this land

of the free, the tendency, in both national and local governments, is to abdicate all power, to relinquish all control, and let the great landlords add possession to possession, and manage their improved estates, and their waste estates, according to individual interest, whim or fancy, even though some of these landlords be great corporations, artificial persons, created by statute for purposes other than managing landed estates, and of dealing and speculating in lands. If these things be not corrected, two generations will not pass away until we shall be invoking the sympathy of the Irish people in our own behalf.

§ 4. What was the intent of Congress in granting millions of acres of land to railroad corporations? Will any man have the hardihood to assert that the intent was to create corporations whose landed estates should equal the area of great commonwealths, kingdoms and empires, and whose opulent chiefs should rival the splendors of ancient Oriental royalty? No. The intent was to aid in the construction of highways deemed essential to national safety and convenience. The expectation was that the companies would put the lands upon the market at about the price of public lands in the same vicinity, not hold them on speculation, and for the purpose of parcelling out lordly and royal estates to the managers, their sons and favorites. True, the acts of Congress do not express the legislative intent as clearly as they should have done, though the intent is clear enough to any honest seeker after truth. Why should not Congress, without delay, pass acts declaratory of the original intent, requiring the companies to sell at government price, and in limited quantities, lands to all comers who declare their intention to occupy and cultivate the estates so acquired? In default of such sale, why should not Congress authorize the entry of the land by private persons, and the issue of a patent to the purchaser, vacating the patent to the company? Would that be impairing the obligation of the original contract, especially if the proceeds of the sale be turned over to the company? I affirm that it would not, and that such

action would work no injustice to the company and its creditors. "The safety of the commonwealth is the supreme law;" and no commonwealth can be safe which nourishes in its bosom corporations or individuals possessing greater power and authority than itself.

§ 5. Moreover, these corporations should be forbidden to convey to any individual, land beyond a certain limit, say 640 acres, and then only upon the filing of a declaration of intent to settle upon and improve the land in person within a limited period, and the failure to settle and improve should work a forfeiture of the land to the government.

§ 6. In early days, when the government was in need of money to pay the interest and principal of the public debt, there was some excuse for permitting men to purchase unlimited quantities of public land, but no such excuse has existed for more than fifty years. No man should be granted a patent for public land, whether by purchase or otherwise, except upon condition of personal occupancy, the failure to occupy, to work a forfeiture of all title and claim. Such a regulation as that would grub up land monopoly by the roots, and save some part of the public domain for the use of coming generations.

PART I.—CHAPTER III.

LAND ENOUGH FOR ALL.

§ 1. The natural resources of the landed area of the United States, exclusive of Alaska are more than sufficient to furnish employment and subsistence to a thousand millions of people, or more than two thirds of the present population of the globe. Under our existing land system the tendency, except in comparatively few localities, is toward land aggregation—land monopoly. By the year 1908, and perhaps sooner, the population of the Union will foot up, 100,000,000, and not less than 200,000,000 by 1940. Unless something be done within a few years to check the tendency toward land aggregation we shall, when our population reaches 100,000,000, have within our borders at least 85,000,000 of landless persons—that is, persons having no proprietary interest in real estate, and 14,000,000 of the remainder will be owners of but a fraction of the whole area. When our population reaches 200,000,000 the proportion of landless persons will be greater still, and so on, at an increasing ratio, as people multiply. Such results are inevitable if owners of money be permitted to purchase and hold all the land they can pay for.

§ 2. But have we land enough, if properly distributed, to employ and sustain the hundreds of millions of people who, in a few generations, are to fill the places we now occupy? We certainly have. The productive area of the United States, exclusive of Alaska, and exclusive of desert and rocky plains, barren mountains, irreclaimable swamps, lakes, streams, public grounds, railroads, highways and streets in cities, towns and villages, amounts to 1,500,000,000 acres.

§ 3. Before the year 1890 the population of the United States will foot up 60,000,090, or 12,000,000 families averaging five persons each. If the land were divided equally among these families each would possess an estate of 125 acres, or 25 acres to each person. But as population increases the tendency is toward concentration in cities, towns and villages. It is safe, therefore, to assume that when our population mounts up to 60,000,000, at least 30,000,000, or 6,000,000 families, will reside in cities, towns, etc. We have land enough to apportion an average of two acres to each of these families—that is, two acres exclusive of streets, alleys and public grounds—leaving 1,488,000,000 acres to be occupied by the 30,000,000, or 6,000,000 families, of the rural population; an average of 248 acres to each family.

§ 4. With a population of 100,000,000 we shall have 60,000,000 of people, or 12,000,000 families, in cities, towns, etc., and 40,000,000, or 8,000,000 families, in the rural districts. To families resident in cities, etc., may be apportioned 24,000,000 acres, or two acres per family, leaving 1,476,000,000 acres to 8,000,000 of agricultural families—an average farm per family of 184½ acres.

§ 5. When the population reaches 250,000,000, which it probably will about the year 1960, the city, town and village population will amount to 180,000,000, or 36,000,000 families, while the rural population will number 70,000,000, or 14,000,000 families. An average of two acres to each city and village family will require 72,000,000 acres while 1,428,000,000 acres may be divided among 14,000,000 agricultural families—an average of 120 acres to each family.

§ 6. With a population of 500,000,000 or 100,000,000 families, 1,350,000,000 acres can be divided among 25,000,000 agricultural families—an average of 54 acres per family; while 150,000,000 acres can be allotted to 75,000,000 families residing in cities, villages, etc.

§ 7. Should the population within the present limits of the United States (excluding Alaska) ever reach 1,000,000,-

000 (a contingency neither impossible or improbable) then 1,180,000,000 acres may be set apart for 40,000,000 rural families, or an average of $29\frac{1}{2}$ acres per family, leaving 320,000,000 acres for the use of families resident in cities and villages.

§ 8. Allowing, therefore, an average of two acres for each city and village family, the average size of farms under differing populations will be as follows:

Population.	Ag. Families.	Acres.
60,000,000	6,000,000	248
100,000,000	8,000,000	184½
250,000,000	14,000,000	120
500,000,000	25,000,000	54
1,000,000,000	40,000,000	29½

§ 9. To show that the country is capable of sustaining the several populations above indicated it may be remarked that if, in proportion to productive lands, the entire country had been as densely populated as Ohio, in 1880, the total population of the Union would have been 224,000,000; if as dense as Pennsylvania, 267,000,000; if as dense as New York, 325,000,000; if as dense as Massachusetts, 713,000,000. When, if ever, the total population reaches 1,000,000,000 Ohio should contain 14,186,000; Pennsylvania, 14,440,000; New York, 16,128,000; Massachusetts, 2,505,000; Texas, 90,910,000. Massachusetts may, and probably will, attain her proportion of 1,000,000,000 before the close of the present century.

§ 10. It may be claimed that in the foregoing estimates, too much population has been assigned to cities and villages; and that, therefore, the figures do not properly represent the average acreage of farms. But a careful study of the statistics of civilized nations will satisfy the intelligent reader that if there be error in the estimates, that error consists in not assigning to cities and villages their due proportion of population. The tendency of population, as before remarked, is toward concentration in cities and villages and that tendency is greatest where landed estates are large. Small estates

tend to diffuse population—large holdings to concentrate it. But the tendency toward concentration cannot be wholly destroyed by limitation of the area of landed estates, nevertheless, such limitation would greatly retard such tendency.

§ 11. If our laws, which permit unlimited ownership of land, remain unchanged, there will, within a few years, be an absolute decline in the rural population in all of the older States, though the increase in the aggregate population of these States may continue at the rate of twenty five or thirty per centum during each decade. It follows, therefore, that unless a stop be put to land aggregation—if no limitation be placed upon the right to purchase and hold real estate—the rural population will not amount to 40,000,000, or 8,000,000 families, when the total population foots up 100,000,000, nor to 70,000,000, or 14,000,000 families, when the total population amounts to 250,000,000. Indeed, it is questionable, with unlimited land tenure, whether the purely agricultural population will amount to 50,000,000 with a population of 500,000,000. Under such circumstances more than nine-tenths of the people will own no land, and no interest in land. Great as is our country, and magnificent as are her resources and natural opportunities, we are now approaching the fearful abyss of the extremes of wealth and poverty involved in the proposition that government has no right to intervene to regulate the tenure of land, and to limit the area of individual holdings.

PART I.—CHAPTER IV.

UNJUST PROFITS OF MONOPOLY.

§ 1. If some regulation as to the distribution of land, as hereinbefore indicated, be agreed upon and enforced, the number of families, especially in thickly settled communities who will contribute toward the production of the food supply will be augmented two or three fold. Large tracts of idle and unimproved land within the limits and on the borders of cities and villages—not infrequently breeders of malaria—would be subdivided and utilized as sites for residences, for orchards, vineyards and vegetable gardens. Thus the aggregate production, especially in fruits and vegetables, would be greatly increased; the forestalling of the markets in such commodities would be made more difficult, and prices would be kept within reasonable limits. And, furthermore, such a condition of affairs would tend to abolish starvation wages, both for the mechanic and for the common laborer; for the man who possesses a home of his own, together with sufficient land to keep his hands busy—sufficient to produce subsistence for himself and family—will not sell his labor to another for less than it is reasonably worth. He is not compelled to submit to extortion, and, therefore, will not.

§ 2. Take any average manufacturing city in America, and what reasonable hope can a skilled operative in the mills and factories, much less a common laborer, have of being able to acquire a home of his own? By economy he may be able to save part of his wages until he has accumulated \$500 or \$1,000—sufficient to build a comfortable cottage to shelter himself and family. When he looks around for a piece of land on which to build his house he finds, after calling upon

numerous agents and dealers, that his \$500 or \$1,000 will not suffice for the purchase of a small plot of ground, which cost the present owner \$25 or \$50 less than ten years ago. If he applies to some large land holder in the city or suburbs, he is met with a flat refusal to sell at any price. Land is going up, and the land holder wants to get the benefit of the rise, or perhaps he is reserving it for the supposed benefit of his children. Under such circumstances, what is the poor mechanic to do? He cannot build because he owns no land; he very properly hesitates to purchase land partly on credit and to employ a contractor to build his house partly on credit, for the good and sufficient reason that in such case he is liable, in event of a "financial panic" or "labor depression," to lose all that he has paid, and so make his last estate worse than the first; for when ejected from the property which he once esteemed as his own he will have no money to pay rent or furnish food and clothing, no employment, no roof to cover his head, no ground on which to keep a few pigs and chickens, and on which to raise vegetables and fruits for the subsistence of his family.

§ 3. But, say land dealers and speculators, if a man cannot afford to pay the market price for land in his native or adoptive city, that is no fault of ours:—the world is wide, and he is at liberty to go elsewhere. That argument is both disingenuous and dangerous. It is making converts to the Henry George theory that all private property in land is usurpation and robbery, and that it is the duty of the government to resume all land grants, and to authorize any man to occupy land who will pay rent to the government. The mechanic knows full well that but for the presence and labor of himself and other men like him the land speculator could not find purchasers at one tenth of the price demanded from him. He feels that he is wronged; that he is at no greater liberty to go elsewhere than is the absorber and monopolizer of land—not as much liberty, in fact; and that he should be permitted to occupy a small portion of the earth's surface upon the payment of a reasonable price. That permission

being refused he is inclined to fall in with the theory of George and men of his school, and to take for nothing that which is denied to him for pay.

§ 4. It is no answer to the complaint as to the exorbitant price of land in cities and villages to say that capitalists who build houses to rent, are willing to pay the prices asked for land, and to improve it and build upon it; for, even if true, that answer does not satisfy the demand, and ought not to silence the complaint of the workingman. Landlordism in the city is more oppressive than landlordism in the country. The mechanic or laborer who occupies a rented house in the city is compelled to pay at the rate of 10 to 15 per cent. on the cost of the house, and at the same rate on the real or speculative value of the ground upon which it stands; and in most cases he pays on the speculative value.

§ 5. For example, A owns one hundred building lots which he values at \$1,000 each, though the actual cost may have been \$50 or \$100 each. He has money sufficient to erect buildings on twenty of his lots and proceeds to do so at a cost of \$600 each—he well knowing that there is a demand for such buildings. He demands and receives from mill and factory operatives \$200 per annum for each house, or full 20 per cent. of the average income of the most skillful mechanic. Thus the landlord secures 12½ per cent. on \$1,600, while his actual investment is only \$700; and on that actual investment he receives an income exceeding 29 per cent. At the end of the year the landlord has in his coffers \$4,000, at least \$2,400 of which is in excess of a fair rental. Then the next year he can by investing his extra \$2,400 build four more houses, thus augmenting his income to \$4,800 a year; the next year he can build more new houses by investing surplus money received for rent; and so, continuing from year to year, until at the end of eight years he has a house on each one of his one hundred lots the aggregate value of which, including houses, he estimates at \$160,000—perhaps \$200,000 or \$220,000, for if there be a

brisk demand for houses he adds the speculative value of the lots and collects rents accordingly—though the original cost amounted to only \$22,000, that is, \$10,000 for the lots and \$12,000 for the houses; for it must be remembered that eighty of the houses were erected with the proceeds of excessive rent—the legitimate rent being sufficient to maintain his family handsomely. Thus at the end of eight years he will be receiving an income of \$20,000 to \$25,000 on an original investment of \$22,000. And, if he chooses to do so, he can, by investing his surplus or excess of money received as rent, for three years more, erect an additional house on each of his lots, and have a handsome sum in cash wherewith to repeat the operation elsewhere. Thus an original investment of \$22,000 can be made to yield an income of \$40,000 to \$50,000 per annum. These are not imaginary figures. Just such investments are being made in every progressive city and considerable village in the United States. The Astor family, of New York, is a notable example.

§ 6. Is the enterprising man who buys land and builds houses to rent doing anything wrong? May not a man, so long as he breaks no law, do as he will with his own? May he not invest his money as he pleases? Can cities become great and prosperous without habitations for the people? If whatever is *lawful* is *right*, then, of course, no wrong is being perpetrated. But a few years ago slavery was lawful in fifteen States of our Union. Was slavery, therefore, right? Less than a century ago lotteries were lawful throughout Christendom—were, in fact, encouraged and commanded by law; and the same is true of other customs and practices now prohibited by statute.

§ 7. Landlords and speculators in land are not bad men, at least, not consciously so—not bad men because they are landlords and land speculators. Many of them regard themselves as public benefactors, and are so regarded by their neighbors and fellow-citizens. They do not mean to wrong or oppress their fellow men. They simply exercise their lawful

rights; and such are their mental constitutions, education and moral conceptions, that they cannot conceive that a lawful act can work injustice to any human being. They reason that if it be right for A to speculate in stocks and bonds, or cattle, sheep and hogs, or to deal in provisions, groceries and dry goods, it cannot be wrong for B to invest his money in land, and hold it for a rise, or to build houses and collect as much rent as people will pay. They hold the theory that property in land is like property in ships, live stock and merchandise; and they act upon that theory. Are they to blame? In the eye of the law they certainly are not. But is the law just or expedient which authorizes and encourages land speculation, land monopoly and landlordism? That is the problem we are now seeking to solve.

§ 8. Extremes meet. Wealthy real estate owners and not a few proprietors of mines, mills and factories, hold that it is not desirable, not for the good of society, not in the interests of industrial production, that workingmen should be proprietors of the houses in which they live. Of course, they do not openly proclaim these views from the rostrum and in the newspapers. That would cause workingmen to inquire into the matter. That would be breaking Diana's idols and taking away Othello's occupation. Communists and Social Democrats join hands with landlords and proprietors of mines, mills and factories—agree with them that workingmen should not own the houses in which they live, for the reason that workingmen should not be capitalists in any sense of the word. The same idea has worked itself into nearly all the labor unions of the country. But Communists and Social Democrats oppose the acquisition of real estate by workingmen upon a widely different theory from that which obtains with landlords and employers of labor. The Communistic idea is that the laboring man who builds or buys a house cannot be relied upon to maintain the interests of his order in the supposed conflict between capital and labor.

§ 9. Capitalists, landlords and employers who discourage the acquisition of homes by workingmen are making a terrible

mistake. Confusion, turbulence, ruin lie that way. From that direction we may expect the approach of a modern Attila, with his modern Huns, both white and black, in that direction our eyes may soon, too soon, discern the dragon banners of modern Alarics and Genseric, with their hosts of modern Goths and Vandals, coming in battle array to overwhelm and raze our civilization and polity, as their prototypes overwhelmed and razed the civilization and polity of Rome.

PART I.—CHAPTER V.

THE QUESTION HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED.

§ 1. What are the historic facts as to land tenures? Mr. George discusses the question at some length [Book vii, Chapter 4,] and asserts (1) that "the primary and persistent perceptions of mankind are that all have an equal right to land, and the opinion that private property in land is necessary to society is but an offspring of ignorance that cannot look beyond its immediate surroundings—an idea of comparatively modern growth, as artificial and baseless as the right divine of kings;" (2) that the researches of modern travelers and scholars "into the growth of institutions prove that wherever human society has been formed, the common right of men to the use of the earth has been recognized, and that nowhere has unrestricted ownership been freely adopted;" (3) that "historically, as ethically, private property in land is robbery;" (4) that private ownership of land nowhere springs from contract; it can nowhere be traced to perceptions of justice and expediency; it has everywhere had its birth in war and conquest, and in the selfish use which the cunning made of superstition and law." He then cites the early history of society (as delineated by modern travelers and scholars) in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, and asserts that the primitive rule in all of these countries was "the common use and enjoyment of the land of the community" by all of its members.

§ 2. It may be that the "primary and persistent perceptions of mankind" are that all have an equal right to land; but no historic fact is better established than that the right to

exclusive possession of land by private individuals was recognized by all the nations of antiquity of which we have any authentic account—the Syrians, Hebrews, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans.

§ 3. According to the accepted chronology, three thousand seven hundred and forty years ago, the patriarch Abraham purchased of Ephron, the Hittite, the field and cave of Machpelah, the consideration being “four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchants.” [Gen. xxiii, 16, 17.] The sons of Heth were called in as witnesses to the transaction. “The field and cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field were made sure unto Abraham” for a possession to himself and to his posterity to endless generations; to himself, “his heirs and assigns forever.” It may be objected that Abraham acquired the property for a specific purpose—for a burying ground, which implied a public purpose. It is not so stated in the record. But admitting that the conveyance was made for a specific purpose, from whom did Ephron, the Hittite, acquire *his* title, if all land was regarded as the common property of the people? He sold the land, received the money for his individual use, and put Abraham in possession. Did he, like Strongbow and Fitzgerald, acquire his title “by war and conquest” overwhelming and dispossessing Machpelah (possibly the patriarch, and progenitor of the Irish race, as the name inferentially implies,) with a superior force of archetypal Normans and Saxons? If he acquired his title in that way he could well afford to tender the property to Abraham as a gift, which he did. Can that record of a land transaction account for the feud which for ages (especially on the part of the Irish) has existed between the Irish and the Jews, and which exists even unto this day? A theory like that is as probable as many of the fine spun theories based upon the alleged “forgotten records of the people.” The real estate transaction between Abraham and Ephron, bears a striking resemblance to a similar transaction at the present day. Ephron offered to make a *gift* of the land to Abraham, which offer

was declined. [Gen. xxiii, 10, 11.] For what reason did Abraham insist on making payment? Is it not probable that law or custom in that age, as in this, made a valuable *consideration* requisite to a valid transfer of land?

§ 4. Did not the Egyptians recognize private property in land three thousand six hundred years ago? When Joseph was deputy ruler over Egypt a terrible famine afflicted the nations. By command of Pharaoh, Joseph laid up great store of corn in all the cities of Egypt. The Egyptians paid money for corn from these stores as long as their money lasted. When their money was exhausted they bartered their cattle and other domestic animals for food, and they continued that barter until they had nothing left but their persons and their land. Some chronologists hold that Job was contemporary with Abraham. If that be so, then Pharaoh and Joseph utilized the saying of Job that "all that a man hath will he give for his life." The poor Egyptians were stripped of everything but their bodies and their land. These they bartered to Pharaoh for bread; "the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them; so the land became Pharaoh's"—the priests alone retaining their land. Prior to that time every man owned his vineyard, field or farm; but because of sore distress the people relinquished their titles, made all land public property, and became tenants, rent paying tenants. [Gen. xxvii, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26.]

§ 5. The land in Egypt has been public property from the days of Joseph until now, the rents (or taxes) paid by cultivators at present amounting to from three-fourths to nine tenths of the produce—a splendid exemplification of the beauties of common property (or government ownership) in land?

§ 6. In Egypt, as in America, there is land enough for all; yet in this garden spot of the earth—this Paradise of common property in land—this region of unsurpassed and inexhaustible fertility—the laborer is so harrassed, burdened and oppressed that it is with the greatest difficulty that he

can obtain a bare subsistence. He and his ancestors for more than a hundred generations have been slaves of government. For him there is neither hope nor promise in this life; like the Russian serf and the American slave of thirty years ago, his sole comfort is in the hope of the life to come; in his case injustice and oppression have done their perfect work; and not with dread, but rather with joy, he looks forward to the time when it shall please the Most Merciful to call him to liberty and rest; for in his estimation the world is a scene of weary toil, of injustice, oppression and slavery, "and heaven alone is the land of the free."—[Malte-Brun, xlii, 8.]

§ 7. The reasonable presumption is that the builders of the pyramids owned freehold estates which their degenerate sons bartered for bread! They were firm believers in an immortal existence. If their faith was well founded, and if they are now permitted to revisit the scenes of their glory, how must they despise the mean spirited product of their loins who are, perforce, content to toil from morning till night, and from year's end to year's end, for a handful of grain and a mess of pottage! Such is the effect of common (or government) property in land; for let it not be forgotten that in theory at least, there is no private property in Egyptian land. Land is common property, and the rulers, as alleged representatives of the people, can, and do, advance rents (or taxes) at pleasure, and have done so under all dynasties, all changes in government.

§ 8. Mr. George asserts that the invariable rule with ancient people and nations was that "the division of land between the industrial units, whether families, joint families or individuals, only went as far as was necessary for that purpose pasture and forest land being retained as common, and equality of agricultural land being secured, either by periodical re-division, as among the Teutonic nations, or by prohibition of alienation, as in the law of Moses."

§ 9. Did the law of Moses prohibit the alienation of land? Let us inquire. That the law of Moses contemplated

an equal distribution of land, as near as practicable, is perfectly apparent from the record; but in that law there is not the slightest recognition of the theory of common property in land, save only the declaration that the land is the Lord's, as is the whole earth, "with the fullness thereof, and the cattle on a thousand hills"—no distinction being made in Jehovah's title to land and to the products of human labor. True, the law of Moses prescribes that "the land shall not be sold forever;" but that law also prescribes a rule for the voluntary alienation of land, or for alienation by judicial process, for a given number of years, in no case exceeding fifty years, or until the recurrence of the festival of the jubilee. "According to the number years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbor;" * * "according to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it." A rule is also prescribed for the redemption of alienated land in the country, in open villages, and in the suburbs of walled cities either by the vendor or any of his kindred; and if not redeemed the land reverted to the vendor or his heirs at the year of jubilee; for at the sound of the trumpet proclaiming the jubilee "ye shall return every man unto his his possession;" * * "to the possession of his fathers shall he return." In walled cities the right of redemption was limited a single year; "and if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be established forever to him that bought it, throughout his generations; it shall not go out with the jubilee." [Leviticus xxv, 13, 15, 16, 29, 30, 31, 41.]

§ 10. Such was the land system promulgated by the great law giver of Israel. If not the perfection of wisdom, it surely approaches that ideal. While prohibiting land aggregation and land monopoly, it recognized the right of private property in land to the fullest possible extent; it secured every man in the possession of the fruits of his toil; the right to "sit under his own vine and fig tree, where no one dare molest or make him afraid"—made his house his

castle, where no one dare intrude without his free consent. So long as that law was observed Israel was a great and mighty nation, both in war and peace, though confined to a limited territory. It was set aside by the decrees of kings and tyrants, and by violence, force and fraud—a striking example of which is given in the story of the murder of Naboth, and the seizure of his vineyard, by Ahab, king of Israel, or rather by his paynim wife, Jezebel, who despised the law of Moses, and “neither feared God nor regarded man.” The subversion of the land code of Moses culminated in making Palestine “the abomination of desolation”—“a hissing and a by word among the nations.”

§ 11. Cannot the land code of Moses, after which the land code of Rome was modeled, “be traced to perceptions of justice or expediency?” Mr. George says: “The idea of absolute individual property in land which modern civilization derived from Rome, reached its full development there in historic times. When the future mistress of the world first looms up, each citizen had his little homestead plot, which was inalienable, and the general domain—‘the corn land which was of public right’—was subject to common use, doubtless under regulations or customs which secured equality.” Is it not probable that the use of the public domain, or commons, in the Roman territory was the same, or substantially the same, as the right to the use of public or unappropriated lands in the United States to day?

§ 12: In this country any man may use government lands, and even uninclosed lands belonging to individuals, in all of the new States and in the Territories, provided he recognizes the right of all others to do the same. He is not permitted to inclose such land, for that would be reducing it to private possession, and would be an infringement upon the common rights of others. In a majority of the older States (and until recently in Ohio) all uninclosed land is regarded as “commons,” whether belonging to the government or private persons, where any man may, at pleasure, pasture his live

stock, take fish from the streams, shoot game in the forests and gather spontaneous fruits and nuts, provided he commits no waste, and neither carries off nor destroys timber, and the like. But that rule, regulation or custom by no means implies a recognition of the idea of common property in land. Such customs obtain (and ought to obtain) in all districts containing large areas of unoccupied land. The same custom as to the use of wild and uncultivated land has, with unimportant variations, prevailed among all pastoral and semi-pastoral people in Asia, Africa, Europe and America.

§ 13. The public domain of Rome was reserved for allotment to the sons of citizens, and to allies and strangers who might be adopted as citizens. The period of Roman history selected by Mr. George "when every citizen had his little homestead plot"—four acres and upwards, according to location, quality or productive capacity—is peculiarly unfortunate for his theory that individual ownership in land "nowhere springs from contract," and "can nowhere be traced to perceptions of justice or expediency." The Roman system of exclusive individual property in land, and the limitation of the area that might be held by a single person or family, was manifestly the result of compact, and exhibits in a high degree a "perception of justice," together with the very essence of "expediency"—the republican idea of "the greatest good to the greatest number"—the greatest good of all.

§ 14. The period of exclusive ownership and limited areas of land in Italy was, in many respects, the most glorious in human annals. The owners of these little homesteads filled the Roman legions, and, serving their country without pay, carried her victorious eagles from the banks of the Tiber to the remotest regions of the then known world. Then the state of Rome, both in the city and country, was the nursery of the virtues of temperance, fortitude, frugality, chastity, religion, patriotism and courage. Patrician and plebian were alike animated by one sentiment—the safety of their country, and the advancement of its power and glory. As citizens,

soldiers and magistrates they made a record which must challenge the admiration of the world "till the heavens be no more." [Livy's Rome, i, 21; ii, 12; xxiii, 49; xxiv 18. Ferguson's Roman Republic i, 1.] In all the cardinal virtues they have never been excelled by any nation within the historic period, except possibly the Hebrews from the time of Joshua to the accession of Saul—that period in Hebrew annals, when the land code of Moses was strictly observed and enforced. If land tenure has any influence in molding national character—and who will affirm that it has not?—the example of the Jews and Romans, in their greatness and in their decay, exemplifies the superiority of limited holdings and individual property in land. When land limitation, through intrigue and tyrannical power, became inoperative in Palestine and Italy, both the Hebrew and Roman states entered upon their decline, and except as historic memories, the names of both have been blotted from the roll of nations. If history teaches by example, should not the American people heed her lessons?

§ 18. Tried by the theoretic standards of our times, both the Hebrews and Romans were fundamentally defective in one important particular. They regarded not the rights and liberties of other peoples and other nations. They were simply Hebrews and Romans—were in no proper sense humanitarians. The Jews remorselessly despoiled their neighbors of lands and goods, and, with a good conscience, sold tainted meat to "the heathen round about." While boasting of liberty, the Romans went systematically at work to enslave the nations. Neither Jew nor Roman recognized the claims of universal humanity to justice and mercy; but to their own people they administered justice with an even hand. Tried by our own theoretic standard, may not we of this age be found defective?

PART I—CHAPTER VI.

COMMON PROPERTY AND FEUDALISM.

§ 1. "Great estates," says Mr. George, "ruined Greece, as afterwards great estates ruined Rome." He might have added Egypt, Palestine, Persia, Babylon, India and all the seats of ancient civilization and opulence, to say nothing of the precarious condition of nearly all of the modern nations of Europe, consequent upon the aggregation of landed property.

§ 2. But because great estates, whether held by allodial or feudal tenure, have ruined nations, and may ruin more, does it follow that there should be no private property in land? that government should resume all land grants? Because the barn is infested with rats, should it be set on fire and reduced to ashes? Is it not possible, even practicable, to expel the rats without destroying the barn? Because magistrates, usurping power not belonging to them, have transformed themselves into tyrants and set their feet upon the necks of the people, should all government be abolished? Great estates do not necessarily involve the idea of private property in the soil.

§ 3. In all countries, except America, great estates had their origin in the primitive or semi-barbarian idea of common property in land. After Rome became corrupted the patrician estates were carved out of the public domain, and subsequently augmented by additions of small estates, on the partially disguised assumption that the land belonged to the public; and that the "patron" could protect his "clients" better than a multitude of small freeholders could pro-

tect themselves—the “patron” being the representative, trustee or guardian of his people.

§ 4. What was the feudal system, which subsequently obtained in Europe, but a recognition of the ancient Teutonic idea of common property in land? The sovereign, not in his individual right, but as the universal representative of the nation, was the sole proprietor of the soil of the realm. It was his prerogative to parcel out the land to the great barons or chief vassals. Upon receiving his investiture the baron entered into a solemn engagement to bear true faith and allegiance to the sovereign, (simply another term for the “public” or the “state”) to aid him in peace and war, to see to it that justice was administered throughout his jurisdiction, to protect his sub-vassals, retainers and tenants against all external violence, to maintain the sick and disabled, to relieve the poor, and to entertain strangers. Part of these covenants were entered into expressly with the sovereign as lord paramount, or universal representative, and part of them tacitly with his inferiors or dependents. A like covenant was exacted from the lesser barons or sub-vassals. Such was the central idea of the feudal system—the whole being based upon the primitive conception of common property in land.

§ 5. “I am the state,” said Napoleon the First. William the Bastard might have said the same, for he was the acknowledged universal representative; and his chief vassals, such as Walter de Lacy and William de Warrenne, might, each of them, have said “I am the fief, I am the barony,” though in theory the land of the kingdom, and of each and every barony, was the common property of the whole people or rather the Norman people, or the conquering race—the king and the barons being simply the representatives of the people.

§ 6. Mr. George [Book vii, Chapter 4,] says: “The general course of the development of modern civilization since the feudal period has been to the subversion of these primary ideas of the collective ownership in the soil,” and he

inferentially deploras the destruction of the feudal system, and the dissolution of the Scottish and Irish sept, both of which recognized the collective ownership of land.

§ 7. "The Scottish clansman," says Mr. George, "whose right to the soil was as undisputed as that of his chieftain, has been driven out to make room for the sheep ranges or deer parks of that chieftain's descendants; the tribal rights of the Irishman has been turned into a tenancy-at-will." Let us see about that. In theory the land of the clan or tribe belonged to the people composing the clan or tribe; but in fact the chieftain's power over the soil and its inhabitants was limited only by his individual will. Unless all history be a lie (which I do not believe) the tribal governments in Scotland and Ireland were pure despotisms—despotisms occasionally "tempered by assassination." Under the primitive theory of common property in land in those countries the clansmen had no rights which the heads of clans were bound to respect—were, to all intents and purposes, tenants at will; and they were, moreover, subject in all things to the arbitrary will of a master whose word was the law, and who possessed, and at pleasure exercised, the power of life and death. The so-called "free clansmen" of Scotland and the "free tribemen" of Ireland, though theoretically equal with their chiefs as to ownership in the land pertaining to the clan, or tribe, were, in fact, but little better than slaves—mere adscripts of the soil and in no proper sense its owners. They were free to follow their chief in his raids upon the lands of their neighbors; free to back him in his "fire-raising" and "cattle-liftings;" but they were free in nothing else. Is not that a perverted sentiment which leads a cultured and civilized man to sigh for the return of alleged golden ages such as these?

§ 8. Centuries ago, when the theory of common property was recognized in Scotland, the chief of the Campbells was more absolute lord of the soil, more absolute master of the people, than the present Duke of Argyll; the "Black Doug-

las" ruled his clansmen with severity that would speedily send a bullet through the brain, or knife through the heart, of his descendant of the present day, should he undertake to exercise a title of the tyrannous authority, which was habitually exercised by his ancestors. The Irish landlords of the present day are, indeed, ungodly tyrants and oppressors; but are they not just and merciful, compared with the McMorrhoughs, the O'Neils, the O'Briens, the Desmonds and Fitzgeralds of former ages?

§ 9. In Great Britain, and throughout Europe, there would be little or no injustice in the resumption of feudal land grants, since the lords of feudal estates refuse to perform their feudal duties; therefore, the consideration having failed, the title should lapse.

§ 10. The feudal system—embodying the idea of common property in land—was in vogue in England and France in the days of Edward III and Henry V, though much of the soil of England was held by other than feudal tenures. Speaking of those times Mr. George says: "The English yeomanry—the sturdy breed who won Crecy, and Poitiers, and Agincourt—are as extinct as the mastodon." By that remark he intends to imply that the yeomen who won Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt were tenants or retainers of the feudal chiefs. That implication is wholly erroneous. The armies which Edward and Henry led into France were—exclusive of the Welsh and Irish contingents—composed principally of freeholders, burghers and small farmers, or their sons, while the French armies which they overthrew and annihilated were composed of the feudal militia, led by the hereditary noblemen and gentlemen of France. [Hallam's Middle Ages, ii, 2.]

§ 11. If the English yeoman is as "extinct as the mastodon," (which by the way, is not true.) the fact is not owing to the recognition of private property in land, but to land aggregation—land monopoly—which English law should have prohibited, but did not. The freehold yeomanry of England

were reduced in number by two principal causes; (1) the voluntary surrender of allodial titles by Saxon farmers in order to purchase the protection of powerful Norman barons, during the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and (2) by the purchase of small estates by the nobility and gentry upon the death of the owners. That process of land aggregation has been going on in England for centuries; and is now making rapid strides in all the older States of the American Union. When the owner of a small farm dies intestate, or leaves a will dividing his property among his heirs, the accommodating commissioners (always freeholders) who are sent out to view and partition the property invariably report that the real estate cannot be divided without injury to its value. Thereupon, the court orders that the property be sold, and none of the heirs being able to purchase, the farm is added to the domain of some rich land owner who has the money wherewith to make payment. Thus the soil of a nation may be monopolized. Is there no remedy for that manifest evil except a resumption of all land grants by the government?

§ 12. Mr. George's declaration that in all primitive communities the idea of common property in land has always obtained may be admitted; but it does not follow, therefore, that "historically, as ethically, private property in land is robbery." We have seen that limited freehold estates in Egypt, Palestine, Italy and other countries, gave strength and stability to the state, employment and reward to labor, freedom, virtue and happiness to the people, and filled the horn of plenty to overflowing.

§ 13. Common property in land may not necessarily be robbery; but "war and conquest"—which are but other names for robbery—have enforced that idea in all parts of the globe. The idea of public property in land has always been a favorite one with conquerors, great or small—with the MacDonalDs and MacLeans in Scotland, the O'Neils and O'Connors in Ireland, as well as with Alaric, Kublai Khan and

Timour. History proves—and proves conclusively—that wherever that theory has been adopted and acted upon, except as to pastoral and semi-barbarous nations and savage tribes, the result has been to impoverish and oppress the masses of men—to reduce them to practical slavery. Such is the fact in nearly all of the densely populated regions of Asia, Africa and eastern Europe—in the greater portion of China, in Egypt, India and Russia—for it should be borne in mind that the “primitive” idea of common property in land (*i. e.* practical government ownership) prevails over full one half of the surface of the globe—rules as with a rod of iron, more than two-thirds of the human race. The rulers and magnates of empires, kingdoms, principalities and provinces do not claim to own the land; that, they admit, is common property; but they, nevertheless, enforce the payment of double, triple or quadruple rents, and convert the proceeds to their individual use, or to the purposes of ostentation and despotism.

§ 14. It never made any material difference in countries or societies recognizing common property in land, whether the rulers or chiefs were hereditary or elective. The Scythian, Teutonic and Celtic tribes frequently elected their chieftains. The Cossacks of the Don, of the Volga, and of the Black Sea—though now the main props of the only pure despotism in Christendom—were in their origin the purest of democracies. But the chief or “hetman,” having been elected, became the absolute master of his fellows; and, as their representative, disposed of the property of the order at his pleasure; (for the Cossack idea was a community of goods as well as of lands;) he assigned to each man his labors and duties; and it was death to challenge the justice of his decrees or to murmur against his orders.—[Malte-Brun, lix, 7.] That man’s life was forfeit who disputed the right of an elective Teutonic or Celtic chieftain to order him to change his habitation, or to take up arms in any cause, however hazardous or unjust.

§ 15. The idea of community of goods, or of community of interest in land, necessarily involves the idea of personal

government, despotism and the slavery of the masses. In such community one man, or a few men, must do all the thinking, as is the practice with the Rappites, the Zoarites, the Shakers and other associations in the United States, who maintain the idea of common property. Where but one, two or three men do all the the thinking a single generation cannot pass away until there will be but few persons who are capable of thinking. But it is said that the Rappites, the Zoarites, and Shakers are at liberty to shake off their arbitrary rulers and to resume their privileges as citizens of the United States. That is true, but if they assert their freedom they must abandon their communities, and leave in the hands of others the fruits of their lifelong toil. But how is it with the cultivator of the soil of Egypt, India or Russia? He cannot secede from his community, for if he attempts to do so he has nowhere to go. Suppose such a system be established here, of what value will be the right of an American citizen to change his residence at pleasure? He will still have the right to choose between the frying pan and the fire!

§ 16. We have seen what were, and yet are, the maxims, customs and practices of all civilized nations who have adhered, or yet adhere, to the primitive idea of common property in the soil. That idea, in its purity and perfection obtains among the North American Indians; and their mode of utilizing land is such that it requires a square mile of fertile land to sustain a single human being. Suppose we take Mr. George's advice and recur to the primitive idea, has it not been shown that one of two things must ensue: (1) We shall have millions of civilized men but little if any above the condition of slaves, or (2) we shall turn savages and cut each other's throats until our population is reduced to 1,500,000 or less; then the survivors may enjoy primitive liberty, equality and innocence! Upon the whole would not the latter alternative be preferable.

§ 17. But Mr. George, with great earnestness, and sometimes with equal plausibility, maintains that a resumption

of land grants, and the restoration of the people to their primitive rights in the soil, will cause population to increase and multiply, banish want and fear of want, abolish poverty, ignorance, vice and crime, and bring on the reign of plenty, peace and order. But what if our plenty, peace and order should be the "plenty" enjoyed by the South Carolina negro before emancipation ; such "peace" as Tamerlane proclaimed at Aleppo ; such "order" as reigned at Warsaw in the time of Suwarrow ?

PART I.—CHAPTER VII.

PHILOSOPHER GEORGE'S REMEDY FOR ALL HUMAN ILLS CON- SIDERED.

§ 1. Mr. George teaches that, in point of fact, there is no conflict between capital and labor, and that, in the nature of things, there can be no conflicts between these necessary factors of the production. The real contest, he maintains is between capital and labor on one hand and land, or rather rent, on the other. In his summing up [Book iii, chapter 8] he lays down the propositions: (1) that "three things unite production—labor capital and land;" (2) that "three parties divide the produce—the laborer, the capitalist and the land owner;" (4) that "if with an increase of production, the laborer gets no more and the capitalist gets no more, it is a necessary inference that the land owner gets the whole gain;" (4) that "neither wages nor interest anywhere increase as material progress goes on;" (5) that "the invariable accompaniment and mark of material progress is the increase of rent—the rise of land values;" (6) that "the increase of rent explains why wages and interest do not increase;" (7) that "the cause which gives to the land holder is the cause which denies to the laborer and capitalist;" (8) that "the rental of land on which a manufacturing or commercial city is built lessens the amount which can be divided as wages between labor and capital there engaged in the production and exchange of wealth;" (9) that "the value of land depending wholly upon the power which its ownership gives of appropriating wealth created by labor, the increase of the value in land is always at the expense of the value of labor;" (10)

that "*rent swallows up the whole gain, and pauperism accompanies progress.*"

§ 2. Hence, rent, not capital, is the antagonist with which labor must grapple. Capital and labor must join forces to dethrone rent—that is, to abolish all rent payable to private persons, and to confiscate for the benefit of the whole people the rental of the ground on which stands the merchant's storehouse or warehouse, the manufacturer's mill or factory, the rich man's palace, the widow's house and the mechanic's cottage.

§ 3. According to Mr. George, neither capital nor labor can reap their just reward so long as private ownership in land is recognized, for just that long will a fraction of the people—the land owners—reap the entire benefits of increased labor, increased capital and increased production. Yet with charming inconsistency—after having demonstrated that rent swallows up the whole gain of labor and capital—he insists that each and every owner of a building should pay full rent for the ground on which the building stands, the proceeds to go into the public treasury for the supposed benefit of the people. Throughout his work Mr. George recognizes the payment of rent as necessary and proper—his only objection to rent being that it is paid to parties not entitled to it. Thus: If A occupies a tract of land for any purpose he should pay rent in proportion to the value of the land, that value to be determined by the density of population in the vicinity—the proceeds to be used for public purposes. If it be true that rent swallows up all the gain of capital and labor, just how the individual laborer or capitalist is to be benefitted by turning rent into the public treasury instead of paying it to private persons, Mr. George fails to explain. Perhaps that consideration was too trifling to engage his attention. He does, however, aver, most emphatically, that people who own city or village lots or farms will make money by surrendering their titles and paying rent to the government for the privilege of occupying the land; [Book ix, chapter 3,] for the

reason that if they pay rent there will be no necessity of levying and collecting taxes for the support of government. Possibly there are men who would prefer to pay rent and be excused from taxation; but, like angel's visits, they are, in my opinion, few and far between.

§ 4. After urging with great vehemence, and with endless iteration and reiteration, the common right of all men to an equal share in the fruits of the soil; to an equal right to participate in the opportunities which nature everywhere bestows with lavish hand;—after demonstrating to his own satisfaction at least, that land monopoly, consequent upon the recognition of private property in land, is injurious to capital and ruinous to labor, robbing the capitalist of his just reward and reducing the laborer to practical slavery;—after insisting that the abolition of all private property in land would give labor a free field and its full earnings, and thus “abolish want and the fear of want,” Mr. George comes down to practical work—sums up the conclusion of the whole matter, thus:

“I do not propose either to purchase or to confiscate private property in land. The first would be unjust; the second, needless. Let the individuals who now hold it still retain, if they want to, possession of what they are pleased to call *their land*. Let them continue to call it *their land*. Let them buy and sell, and bequeath and devise it. We may safely leave them the shell, if we take the kernel. It is not necessary to confiscate land; it is only necessary to *confiscate rent*.”—[Progress and Poverty, Book viii, Chapter 2.]

“O most lame and impotent conclusion!” What a tame performance after so much loud roaring and thundering in the index! Here are millions of men, joint heirs to a common inheritance, invited and urged to assert their rights against usurpers; yet when they approach to enter upon possessions rightfully theirs, they are commanded to halt at the boundary line; for they who are now in possession of any given tract of land—they and their heirs and assigns—have the right to remain in possession through all the gener-

ations of time, if they will agree to pay rent. Such is our author's "simple yet sovereign remedy, which will raise wages, increase the earnings of capital, extirpate pauperism, abolish poverty, give remunerative employment to whoever wishes it, afford free scope to human powers, lessen crime, elevate morals, and taste, and intelligence, purify government and carry civilization to yet nobler heights!"

§ 5. Mr. George is in thorough earnest; he fully believes in the efficacy of his remedy; and he has convinced some of the supposed great thinkers of the age of its efficacy. "By confiscation of rent," says Mr. George, "the State may become the universal landlord without calling herself so. *
* In form, the ownership of land would remain just as now. No owner of land need be dispossessed, *and no restriction need be placed upon the amount of land any one could hold.* For, rent being taken by the State in taxes, land, no matter in whose name it may stand, or in what parcels it was held; would be really common property, and every member of the community would participate in the advantages of its ownership." The confiscation of rent, however, to be made "under such conditions as would sacredly guard the private rights to improvements"—rent to be paid for the bare land, and in no case to be a charge against buildings, fences, orchards, vineyards and the like.

§ 6. If it be true as Mr. George confidently asserts, that rent, under all conceivable circumstances, swallows up all, or nearly all, of the gains of labor, how could the earnings of capital be increased; how could remunerative employment be given to all, if rent must continue to be paid, but paid to the state instead of to private persons? Would not wages, as wages, still remain at a point barely sufficient for the necessities of the laborer, and would he not be compelled to rely upon his share of the proceeds of rent for pocket money on holiday occasions, and for the means of purchasing clothes befitting holiday and public occasions? And from whom would rent money be actually collected? From whom but the laboring man? The land holder might be the nomi-

nal rent payer; but does not all experience teach that the landlord invariably reimburses himself for taxes paid, by throwing the burden upon the tenant, either directly or indirectly? And is not the *rent* under consideration simply an increased *tax*, which must, in one way or another, be paid by the tenant, or his sub-tenants or hired laborers? For example, A is a landlord, the owner of a thousand acres of land. As rental for the bare land the state demands and receives, say, \$2,500. The landlord's improvements (houses, barns, fences, ditches, etc.,) cover the entire tract; and he is sacredly "guarded" in the private possession of those improvements. They may be worth little or much; but without them the land would be worth little or nothing for the purposes of cultivation. As rental (nominally) for improvements he may demand \$5,000 or \$6,000—thus reimbursing himself for his outlay, and perhaps adding \$1,000 or \$1,500 to the normal rental. The proposed tenant or tenants may take his or their choice—pay the rent demanded, go elsewhere, or let their brains and capital remain idle; for the landlord can realize more than the rental paid to the state by pasturage and other shifts, such as hiring men, at low down wages, to cultivate his land on private account. No man can so well afford to pay the rent as the owner of improvements; and no man possesses such power to compel the laboring man to make good his outlay in the way of rents or taxes; for the laborer *must live*, and will work for even a scanty subsistence when compelled to do so. Will not, therefore, "this sovereign remedy" for all human ills culminate in paying rent to each of two or three landlords, instead of one?

§ 7. Mr. George says: "We already take some rent in taxation. We have only to make some changes in our mode of taxation to take it all." That is not the fact. We may nominally take rent in taxation, but in reality we do, and can do, no such thing. The higher the taxes, the higher the rent, and the higher the rent, the less reward can labor receive. Turn the question of taxation over, and view it from all

standpoints, and the inevitable conclusion, based upon experience, is that all taxes, no matter how levied or collected, are drawn from the annual products of industry. That is the rule. The exceptions, neither numerous nor important, are spoken of in another chapter. If taxes were drawn from accumulations, or from subsisting wealth in any form, is it not plain that the aggregate of national, as well as individual, wealth would be constantly diminishing instead of increasing; so that in a comparatively few years we should be as free from luxury as were, and are, the Indians, our predecessors and contemporaries on this continent? Do not statistics show that while we have more than doubled our wealth during the last twenty five years, we have, within that period, collected as taxes, and disbursed on various accounts, sums of money amounting in the aggregate to about *fifteen thousand millions of dollars*—not far from equal to the taxable value of all the real and personal property, moneys and credits, within the limits of the Union? Are not facts like these conclusive as to the source—the reservoir—from which our revenues are drawn? Industrial production, and that alone, enables us to pay taxes and yet keep our property intact and to increase it in value.

§ 8. In some portions of our country labor does receive its full reward; and the same is true of a majority of laborers in all parts of it. Were it not for the enormous taxes exacted in the way of rent, and the high price of many essential articles of subsistence (consequent upon the inadequacy of the food supply) in all considerable cities and villages, the American laborer would have no just cause of complaint—might regard himself as among the happiest of mortals. Could he escape the payment of rent and become a food producer, even to a limited extent, his condition would be enviable indeed. He would at all times be above want, or the immediate fear of want—would be on the highway to independence, if not to affluence. But if ever the American workingman be emancipated from the thralldom of rent—from the extortions of landlords, hucksters and forestallers of food—his

charter of freedom will not emanate from a system of land tenure which will double rents for his alleged benefit, which will permit owners of money or other exchangeable things, to absorb and hold possession of all the land they can pay for, either as private owners or as alleged renters from government. The government rent, or tax, theory necessarily involves the monopolization of the possessory right to the soil by a comparatively few persons—by persons only who are able to pay the rent, and who can extort from the tenant the amount of the rent paid, and such additional sum as the tenant, under compulsion may consent to pay.

§ 9. Mr. George very correctly remarks that the confiscation of rent by the government will tend greatly to reduce the price of land—reduce it to nothing, in fact, in the hands of a great many holders. That will be the monopolizer's opportunity. To the poor man that will be a repetition of the Egyptian policy of the time of Joseph—an aggravated repetition of that policy, for the poor man who cannot pay rent must abandon not only his land but his improvements also; abandon house, orchard, vineyard, meadow and cornfield; for, what will his "sacred" right to the improvements amount to when he has neither private nor possessory right to the soil on which these improvements have been placed? For the rent, mind you, must be paid as a condition precedent to the right of possession, because rent belongs to the whole people, and is, therefore, "sacred"—a sacred of sacreds, like unto the "holy of holies." Two sacred rights in conflict with each other, cannot co-exist—the sacred right of John Smith to occupy his house and grounds and the sacred right of the public to collect rents as a condition of that occupancy; for are not the rights and interests of millions of men paramount to the rights and interests of a single man, especially if that man be a delinquent, a recusant, who refuses to pay rent—*because he hath not money wherewith to make payment?* That is the quintessence of the proposition; for the law of rent, according to the teachings of the book under consideration, is more unchangeable than the code of

the Medes and Persians—as immutable as the foundations of Ben Nevis and the eternal hills. Rent must be paid—paid to the whole people—though the heavens fall, for if the people do not receive their rent in due season they may be stinted in their rations of meat and drink, and will not have wherewithal to array themselves in garments becoming their quality when they desire to attend lectures, music halls, theatres and other moral and high toned places and amusements! Upon the arrival of the rapidly approaching millennium, poverty will hide its deformed head; for, are we not to become a nation of landlords—every mother's son of us, and every mother's daughter, too?

§ 10. It is claimed that common property in land, and the payment of rent by the occupant, is consistent with the highest uses of land. That may be true as to the densely populated portions of great commercial and manufacturing cities, though neither history, statistics nor experience can be cited in proof of the fact. And he must be a simple minded man, indeed, and wholly deficient in observation, reflection and experience, who imagines that under the system of tenancy, sub-tenancy and servile labor necessarily involved in government ownership of real estate, the soil of the country or suburban districts would ever be subjected to a high state of cultivation—applied to higher and intenser uses, except in isolated cases—until the population of the country embraces hundreds of millions of souls, and even then under labor conditions the most grinding and oppressive—such conditions as now exist in Egypt, India and China. The motive for high culture would be weak if not wholly absent. The greater portion of our soil is capable of indefinite improvement. An average acre of Ohio land can be wrought up to such a state of cultivation as to give it a capacity to produce annual crops worth \$500, \$600 or even \$1,000, by the annual application of one hundred dollars' worth of labor. But it requires years of time, as well as the application of capital, skill and labor—drainage, deep culture, the use of fertilizers, etc.—to subdue land and subject it to such intense uses. The land-

lord, or tenant-in-chief, would not incur the necessary expense, for either the sub-tenant would reap the benefit, or the lord paramount (the government) would advance the rent so as to make it correspond with the productive capacity of the land; for such meliorations or betterments, though not so palpable to the eye, are more permanent in their nature, than houses, fences, orchards and vineyards. Mr. George distinctly lays down the proposition that they become blended with the land, and subject to rent and taxation by the government. Thus the motive for giving land its highest productive capacity would be destroyed; the sub-tenant would not devote his time and capital to the betterment of the soil, for that would tend to an indefinite increase of rent; and as for the common laborer, his personal interest in such things would be infinitesimal, indeed. Man, in his better aspects, is not supremely selfish. yet it cannot be denied that self-interest is the main spring of human action. Therefore, if you desire the citizen to intensify the uses of land, you must "sacredly guard" his private right to the possession of "his lands, tenements, and hereditaments, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging," subject to the payment of no rent or tribute, save only his just proportion of taxes necessary for the legitimate support of government.

§ 11. In defining the meaning of the term "land," Mr. George, [Book i, Chapter 2] says: "The term land necessarily includes, not merely the surface of the earth as distinguished from water and air, but the whole material universe outside of man himself;" * * * "embraces, in short, all natural materials, forces and opportunities." If, therefore, the material universe—earth, air, water, fire, electricity, sunlight, moonlight, starlight; "all natural materials, forces and opportunities,"—be the common heritage of all the sons and daughters of men, why should we demand rent for the solid surface of the earth, and permit every interloper to trespass upon our other valuable domains, without paying a dime of rent? Are not all of the fish within three leagues of land (measuring from headland to

headland) in the oceans, gulfs and lakes upon our borders, the peculiar property of the whole people of the United States, according to the "common heritage" theory? Of course they are. And is not the same true of nearly all the wild fowls and wild beasts that inhabit the waters and the land? Are we not, in common with the people of other nations, the owners of everything animate and inanimate in and under the waters of all oceans and seas—owners of the birds and fishes that swim in and upon the waters, owners of the treasures of diamonds, rubies and "pearls of great price" that lie at the bottom of old ocean? Is it fair and equitable, therefore, that I should be required to pay rent for the farm which I occupy while Smith and Jones, Thompson and Brown, are permitted (without payment of rent or tribute) to catch fish, gather rubies and pearls, and to shoot fowls, deer, elk and buffalo, without let or hindrance, and to sell their goods in the markets of the world? Is not the water in the Ohio river common property? Is not that river a natural opportunity? Is not water reckoned as among the "forces" of nature? Why should a few scores or hundreds of men be permitted to utilize this common highway, and vex and torture its waters to produce steam as a motive power for the propulsion of their boats, without paying rent or tribute, if I have no right to cultivate a field of corn without paying rent? Is not electricity a natural force? Why, then should men be permitted to accumulate fortunes by its use, and yet pay no rent? It will not do to say that rent should be paid for the use of land because the quantity of land is fixed, and can neither be increased nor diminished. Is not the same true of water, electricity and of all natural forces and opportunities? Neither is it true that all men are at liberty to engage in fishing, navigation and telegraphy. True, there is nothing in the constitution of nature, or in the laws of the country, to prohibit any man from engaging in such occupations; but he alone is really at liberty to do so who possesses the requisite capital and skill, and the same is true of farming, manufacturing and merchandising. More-

over, that law of civilization known as division of labor, prohibits the entrance of all men upon the same pursuit or occupation.

§ 12. The idea of common property in land, as elaborated and explained by Mr. George, is a survival of the idea of feudalism—is, in fact, the essence of feudalism, barring some of its ridiculous and absurd forms—the substance being not only retained but intensified. The idea embraces (1) the lord paramount (the government) or the man who, for the time being administers the affairs of government; (2) the tenant-in-chief, whether an individual or corporation, who undertakes the management of a vast estate—an estate containing from 10,000 to 100,000, or even 1,000,000 or 10,000,000 acres; [Progress and Poverty, book vi, chapter I] (3) the sub-tenant or farmer, and (4) the common laborer. Thus the feudal system is to be re-established, with modifications adapting it to our more advanced civilization. The tenant-in-chief must necessarily be a capitalist of large means, and, though not clothed with the power of life and death, analagous in authority and grandeur to the ancient baron; the sub-tenant, with less means will correspond in rank with the knight of olden times; the common laborer (though an acknowledged joint proprietor of the soil) will be the servant of his master or masters, like unto the ancient churl, clown or villein. Such must be the condition of affairs in the open country. In cities we shall have the counterpart of the Roman rabble—idle, worthless vagabonds—clamoring for bread from the public stores, and for free passes to circuses, theatres and musical festivals; for, being the lords and owners of the soil of the realm, why should they not eat the fruits of the earth, and enjoy all of the good things of life? Mr. George [Book ix, chapter 4] distinctly proposes to apply the revenues derived from the rental of land to the establishment of “public baths, museums, libraries, gardens, lecture rooms, music and dancing halls, theatres, universities, technical schools, shooting galleries, play grounds, gymnasiums, etc.,” and also to urnish heat, light and motive power, as well as water, at the

public expense. Then, he exclaims, "We should reach the idea of the Socialist;" * * * "government would change character, and would become the administration of a great co-operative society." In other words, government would become the "be all and end all;" man the individual, unless he be a government tenant or a government official, would become as nothing. And this is the feast to which we are invited in the name of common rights and equal liberty! From all errors, heresies and confusions, such as these, may the good Lord (influencing the good sense of the American people) deliver us and our posterity!

PART I.—CHAPTER VIII.

LAND LIMITATION—WAGES—FOOD SUPPLY.

§ 1. A few years ago a certain American politico-economical theorists taught that "slavery is the natural and normal condition of the laboring man." By that was meant chattel slavery, the absolute ownership of one man by another. The assumption that it is not for the well being of society that the laboring man should own the house in which he lives, or the land which he cultivates, is but a modification of the labor theory involved in slavery. Though nominally free, and, as a political factor, the equal of the landlord, is not that man under servitude who must, perforce, divide the fruits of his toil with another for the use of a roof to shelter himself and family—for the privilege of cultivating the soil?

§ 2. Is he a freeman, in the full acceptation of the term, who from week to week, and from year to year, is necessitated to work for *wages*—to receive the sole compensation for his toil from the hands of another? The word "servant" sounds harsh in American ears. But is the mere hireling aught else than the servant of his employer? Such a relation does not necessarily imply degradation on the part of the employe; neither does it imply social or political inequality between servant and master. The servant may be, and often is, the social and intellectual superior of the master; but he is, nevertheless, a servant, and in many respects a dependant. I speak now of laborers who subsist wholly upon wages. The fact of servitude of employe to employer is inwardly recognized by every wage maker who possesses sufficient education and reasoning power to enable him to perceive the true relation of men and things. The hired laborer on a farm, the

skilled artisan who works for wages, the factory superintendent and the railroad president are all servants, designate them by whatever terms you may. The essential difference between these classes of servants is that the factory superintendent and the railroad president are, to some extent, at least, their own employers, and, therefore, though servants, are not wholly dependent upon their employers.

§ 3. That there are men who, even if the opportunity offered, would refuse to become self-employers—who would choose the precarious life of a hireling only—is, no doubt, a fact. Such people have always existed, and will, most likely, exist till the coming of the millennium. But is it not also true that the great mass of men would gladly, if they could, become self-employers, in whole or in part—would gladly embrace the opportunity to reap a portion of the profits of their toil, not merely wages sufficient to enable them to subsist, or, by rigid economy, to save a little against the feebleness of old age, or the day of involuntary idleness? The author of "Progress and Poverty" is, in sentiment, no doubt, the friend of the laboring man; yet he joins with land monopolizers, mine and mill owners, Communists and Social Democrats in throwing obstructions in the only way which leads to industrial independence through self-employment—limited ownership or occupancy of land.

§ 4. If all, or the great mass of workingmen, whether farm hands, common laborers or artisans, were owners of homesteads in the country, or in the suburbs of cities and villages, could not, and would not, they be self-employers to the extent of one-half of the subsistence of themselves and families? We all know—at least all who observe such things—that such is the fact now in thousands of instances. When out of employment elsewhere the owner of a small tract of land can readily find something profitable and pleasant for his hands to do. If he repairs or paints his house or fence outside of ordinary working hours, he saves a carpenter's or painter's bill. If he plants a tree that tree is his own, and he

may reasonably hope to eat the fruit thereof. If he feeds a few fowls and pigs he is producing animal food for his family. If he be blest with a family (and to such a man a family is, indeed a blessing) his boys can be employed before and after school hours, and during school vacations, in raising small fruits and vegetables for family use or for sale. A man so situated and surrounded will have but little difficulty in keeping the wolf from the door in the day of commercial distress, financial panic and labor depression; for, unlike the renter and mere hireling, he is a self-employer and the producer of the main and most essential portion of the subsistence of himself and family—the renter and hireling meantime, being driven to enforced idleness, has no alternative but to accept charity, (always humiliating to the spirit of a true American citizen,) or to go hungry himself, and send his children supperless to bed. In that way honest, industrious and God-fearing men are, unconsciously to themselves, transformed into infidels, beggars, hoodlums and villians. Hence populous penitentiaries, asylums for the insane, poor houses and children's homes. These be facts—well known facts. And yet alleged statesmen, professional philanthropists, and even the reverend clergy, shut their eyes to such facts and declaim against the degeneracy of the times, and the terrible advances of ignorance, pauperism, vice and crime; generally attributing the evils to all causes except the true one, and continually casting about in search of remedies which, when found, are usually an aggravation of the distemper.

§ 5. It is probable that in future years, as in years past, we shall have "hard times," financial disturbances and labor depressions, for such things originate in such a multitude of causes, and cause and effect are so blended in their production, that it is impossible—though all the statesmen in the world were wise as Solomon, and all of one mind—to make full provision against their recurrence. But it is both possible and practicable for American statesmen, backed by the popular voice—that voice which, when honestly, intelligently and earnestly expressed, is truly the voice of God—to mitigate

and dull the edge of these periodically recurring scourges of civilization. Let the number of self-employed food producers be multiplied to such extent that they will utilize even one-tenth of the producing capacity of the soil of the country, and a panic like that of 1873 would be felt by the great body of the people as a mere temporary inconvenience, however distressing and injurious it might prove to commercial men, manufacturers and all classes who deal largely in credits; and even those classes would be much less injuriously affected, for the people generally would be able to purchase and pay for the necessaries and comforts of life, and thus—though temporarily checked—the wheels of commerce and industry would be kept in motion. It is a well known, and well remembered, fact that the farmers of the United States—except such as were deeply in debt or engaged in speculation—were not injuriously affected by the panic of 1873; on the contrary, they continued to maintain their families in comfort—not only holding their own, but steadily increasing in wealth and substance—while other industries were struggling to recover from paralysis. That is a lesson which should not be lost upon the American people.

§6. Like many others who base their arguments and conclusions upon European idea of caste, or permanent social classes, embodied in the phrase “the shoemaker to his last,” Mr. George habitually speaks of the laborer or artisan as a person who must live by wages, though he incidentally, or rather parenthetically, admits that some men are at times employers of their own labor. But his law of wages and his law of rent do not apply to such persons, except to a limited extent. His theory of labor and wages proceeds on the idea of once a hireling, always—in all things, and exclusively—a hireling. He applies the same idea of exclusiveness and perpetuity to the capitalist and the landlord. Thus in his politico-economic kingdom or republic, he sets up his three distinct estates—Landlord, Capitalist and Laborer. These, he regards as necessary, essential ever enduring entities, and to maintain his argument it is incumbent upon him to so regard

them—otherwise his argument fails; goes glimmering with other exploded fallacies. He proposes to preserve these distinct estates intact, even after the setting up of his paradise of common property in land—the only change being that the public shall become the Landlord and receiver of rent, while Capital and Labor remain in the subordinate relation which they occupy at present. That theory is repugnant to the general tenor of American ideas, and its utter fallaciousness is thoroughly demonstrated by American experience, notwithstanding the fact that it finds adherents in the opposite extremes of American society—in landlords, mill and mine owners, Communists, Social Democrats and some members of trade unions. The fact is patent to all readers of history, and all observers of passing events, that up to within a few years, the great majority of Americans, whether agriculturists, manufacturers or merchants, were, at one time or another, and not infrequently at the same time, employers and employes—at once landlords, capitalists and laborers. To that fact, more than to all other causes combined, we owe our civil and political liberty, our national strength, our material progress—everything that is worth preserving. Outside of populous districts and centres of population, the same practices prevail at the present time. But increase of population (accompanied with foreign theories of political and social polity) is gradually, insiduously undermining and weakening the force of these wholesome American ideas. If we do not speedily adapt ourselves to the changed condition of affairs, consequent upon increase of population and wealth, our grand superstructure of free government may be sapped and mined and brought about our ears with a crash that will startle the nations, and cause black despair to enthrone itself in the minds of the friends of rational liberty in all quarters of the globe.

§ 7. Some years ago Henry Ward Beecher made a remark to the effect that the aim of every patriotic American was to “build up his little kingdom of a family.” That is American political and social philosophy in a nutshell—an

epitome of the history of the American people for more than two hundred years. That was the central idea at Jamestown, at Plymouth Rock, at New Haven, at Charleston, at Philadelphia, at Baltimore—with Puritans, Cavaliers, Catholics and Quakers. Our fathers, though disagreeing in some things, agreed in making the family the social and political unit of America. Despite the assaults and specious arguments of Communism and Social Democracy, may that social and political unit continue to be recognized through all our generations, to the end of time! Does not the idea of the little family kingdom involve the idea of territorial domain, as well as of magisterial rule—of house and land, as well as parental authority? Must not that kingdom be shadowy, indeed in which the monarch has no land on which to erect his palace and his throne? Must not he be a feeble potentate, indeed, who is content to pay tribute to a man of equal rank—his moral and intellectual inferior, it may be—for the privilege of living in the land of his fathers? Why should not a parity of personal and family rights be maintained? Why should not that parity be restored wherever, and whenever it has, from any cause been disturbed or destroyed? By parity of rights I do not mean equality of possessions and property; for that would be to punish frugality and industry as crimes. As matters now stand, I have the right to purchase any piece of real estate that I may fancy if I have the money to pay for it, and the owner be willing to sell. But if half a dozen or a dozen men own all the vacant land in and around the city in which I live and, refuse to sell to me at its true value, or at a price that I can reasonably afford to pay, of what value is my naked legal right to own a homestead? Is it not a shame, a disgrace to American civilization, that corn is grown, and cattle pastured, on land (in and adjacent to our cities and villages) for which scores, hundreds and thousands of men would willingly pay from \$500 to \$3,000 per acre, for the purpose of converting it to higher and intenser uses?

§ 8. A noted social and political philosopher of the last century said that the man who suffers under oppression does

well to submit so long as he is unable to throw off the yoke ; but he is unworthy the name of a man who submits to the oppressor when he has in his hands the means to withstand him. So the man who pays rent and works for wages does well so long as he is compelled to do so. In that way he may lay the foundation to an independent fortune, large or small. It should be the primary aim of every American working-man to be, in a measure at least, his own employer—first as a holder of real estate sufficient to furnish himself and family with a home ; and, second, as the manager of his individual business, whether agricultural, mercantile or mechanical, or as a participant in profits as a member of a firm or corporation. Such a man is personally and industrially independent. Would it not be well for our country if the number of such men were greatly increased ?

§ 9. Political economists, especially of the European school, (and that school is now powerful in America,) are wont to recur to primitive man, and to base their theories and arguments upon his supposed condition and surroundings. These men, while rejecting or doubting the biblical account of the creation of man, describe the progenitors of the human race with a minuteness which argues that they must have been present at the gray dawn of creation—must have participated, either as principals or assistants, in modeling the first man, and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. A patent liniment advertisement, containing the picture of an ape pouring liniment on his knee from a bottle held in his left hand, while rubbing it with the right, says :

“If I am Darwin’s grand papa,
’Tis perfect, don’t you see,
That what is good for man and beast
Is surely good for me.”

That is the essence of political economy, according to the “primitive man” theorists. Primitive man was a natural philosopher, scholar and statesman. Whatever he did we should do. That is the theory. Adam wore a fig-leaf apron. Primitive man held to the theory of common property in

land—the common right to gather wild fruits and nuts, and to burrow for wild roots with his uncut finger nails. He used stone implements or no implements at all. He clothed himself in skins of wild beasts, when he could manage to capture the beast. Therefore, so should we! Ugh! Moses made “mistakes,” it is said; and, therefore, his account of the creation of man is to be rejected as “superstition.” Yet the asseverations of men who, according to their own cosmogony, came into the world a million of years after the appearance of man upon earth, are to be received as law and gospel; and woe unto the “unscientific” rustic who cannot discern immutable and eternal truth in the misty utterances of these modern Mahomets! What do we know—what can we know—of primitive man? The North American Indian is believed to be the nearest approach to that mystical being; and in what respect is he better than a brute? We have to do with civilization, not an imaginary golden age—an age in which men regarded ochre as more valuable than gold.

PART I.—CHAPTER IX.

EVIL EFFECTS OF LARGE ESTATES.

§ 1. Our inquiries thus far have demonstrated that private property in land, when coupled with reasonable limitation as to area, is not robbery, either historically or ethically; that it springs from compact; that it is in accord with the highest perceptions of justice and expediency; that, in all ages and countries where it has had a fair trial, the application of that principle has been pre-eminently conducive to private and public felicity; and that the idea of common property in land has generally had its origin in usurpation, war and conquest, and has uniformly resulted in governmental corruption, official pride and ostentation; in the concentration of power in the hands of a few; in great inequality in the distribution of wealth; in depriving labor of its just rewards; in the creation of an order of nobility, titled or untitled, hereditary or elective; in despotism and flagrant abuse of power; and in the consignment of the masses of men to ignorance, poverty and degradation.

§ 2. Governmental land monopoly is worse, even, than the monopolization of the soil by private persons; for the great land owner, though possessed of immense power and influence, is not invested with magisterial or judicial authority; neither can he control and direct the military arm. He is measurably under the control of magistrates and courts; and his tenants and laborers may, and sometimes do, successfully withstand his extortions. But suppose that the government assumes the relation of lord paramount—sole owner of the soil of the nation—what individual, or combination of individ-

uals, can hope to withstand the orders and decrees of the magistrates and courts who have subject to their beck a military force of five, ten or fifteen millions of men? A government so constituted and endowed, though republican in form, would be, in fact, a terrible, irresistible despotism; for, be it remembered, land monopoly, whether public or private, tends to the concentration of population in cities, and to the multiplication of homeless and dependent men—of such men as Cæsar and Napoleon moulded into tools of their ambition, in the name of liberty and equality. That class of men will constitute a majority of Americans of military age, within thirty years, unless a check can be applied to land monopoly. Let all land be declared public property, and all such men will conceive themselves to be personally injured and insulted should any man, or number of men, revolt against the payment of exorbitant rents, in the proceeds of which the idle vagabonds of cities have a real or supposed interest. Hence, they would be ready and anxious, at the command of government, to suppress with an iron hand all anti-rent insurrections and demonstrations. The revival of the idea of common property in land begins in demagogu—unconscious demagogu, it may be—and should that idea prevail, it will end, as it has always ended, in the utter subversion of liberty.

§ 3. The author of "Progress and Poverty" [Book vi, Chapter I] maintains that "land in large bodies can be cultivated more cheaply than land in small bodies, because of the introduction of agricultural machinery; and that, therefore, restriction of ownership or occupancy, will reduce the aggregate production of wealth," and "tend to diminish the general productiveness of labor and capital." For such reasons, he is in favor of stimulating, rather than discouraging the strong tendency toward large farms—the larger the better—and toward agricultural production on a large scale, just as manufacturing is carried forward on a large scale, by substituting an "army of operatives for many independent hand-loom weavers." The cases are not parallel—not analo-

gous. Machinery can be applied to every process in the manufacture of cloth, and a thousand and one other articles of factory production. But that is not true as to agricultural operations. Mowers, reapers, threshers, etc., can be profitably employed only in the cruder and less intense forms of agricultural production—in cultivating and harvesting grain, hay and the like; in producing the raw materials of two articles of human food—bread and meat, and even in that production machinery occupies a subordinate place. Bread and meat constitute but a comparatively small fraction of the food supply of any civilized people. Our almost infinite varieties of fruits, vegetables, edible roots—butter, cheese, poultry, eggs, milk, honey, etc.—supply American tables with full three-fourths of their burden, though we are, in proportion to numbers, the greatest consumers of bread and meat in the bounds of Christendom. Machinery can be employed to but a limited extent in the production of the major part of the food consumed in this or any other country, as is shown by the fact that the market value of food consumed annually by the American people is about \$4,600,000,000—the value of the grain consumed being less than \$400,000,000, and the value of the animal food consumed, exclusive of poultry and fish, being less than \$600,000,000. And, moreover, improved agricultural machinery has no influence upon the production of full one-half of the grain and meat produced in the United States, the contour of the surface and the nature of the soil rendering its uses impracticable. It is a great error to assume that because the owner of an eighty acre farm cannot afford to invest in mowers, reapers, steam threshers, etc., he is placed at disadvantage with his rich neighbor who can. Such a man can hire machinery to reap, mow, thresh, and garner hay, as cheaply in proportion to acreage, as can the proprietor of thousands of acres who owns his machinery. These facts expose the fallacy of the arguments put forward in favor of large landed estates or holdings, which Mr. George (in a moment of forgetfulness, perhaps) declared were the ruin of Greece and Rome.

§ 4. Mr. George argues that the resumption of all land grants (or, which is the same thing, the confiscation of rent) by the government would work no injustice, so long as the occupant of the soil is "sacredly guarded" in his private ownership of the improvements—the possessory title to be unlimited in extent as well as perpetual in duration, subject to purchase, sale or bequest. Would it not puzzle half a dozen Philadelphia lawyers, including the learned Attorney General, to point out the essential difference between that species of title and that which now obtains in all of our States and Territories, save only in the matter of rent paying? May it not be that the title which Abraham acquired from Ephron the Hittite was of that nature, and that Moses made a "mistake" in not recording the fact? If my right to houses, barns, fences, orchards and vineyards is to be held "sacred," must not that right necessarily include the right to the *exclusive* control and occupancy of the soil on which those improvements stand? What is the difference in principle between the "sacred" right of perpetual possession, and the "sacred" right of John Smith to hold private property in land, the title being vested in him, "his heirs and assigns forever?" While Mr. George's scheme, if practicable, might work no injustice to forestallers of land, and dealers in land "futures," it would fall with crushing effect upon thousands and hundreds of thousands of innocent and helpless people, in both city and country. Admitting the right (which I do not deny) of government to intervene to protect its citizens against forestalling and monopoly, would it be just or equitable to resort to retroactive legislation, to the passage of *ex post facto* laws, to deprive a man of that which he acquired in accordance with the express letter of law—that law having been universally recognized and acquiesced in at the time of the acquisition? Can justice be established in no other way than by working iniquity?

PART I.—CHAPTER X.

OUTLINE OF THE REMEDY.

§ 1. It requires no *ex post facto* law, no confiscation of rent, no tearing down of the widow's house, to put a stop to land forestalling, land aggregation, land monopoly. That can be accomplished without going back upon the fundamental principles of our government—without doing injustice to any human being, high or low, rich or poor. Laws limiting the area of land that may be acquired or held by any individual, and inhibiting land speculation and land monopoly, can and should be passed to take effect in future. Such laws would be in consonance with enlightened public opinion and with the highest "perceptions of justice and expediency."

§ 2. When the question of land monopoly, and land limitation is fairly presented to the American people, what reason is there to doubt that they will demand the abolition of land monopoly by an overwhelming majority—not by the confiscation and seizure of the property of individuals, but by the interdiction of such things in future. If no man may acquire by purchase, gift, bequest or inheritance, beyond a stipulated quantity of real estate, then, as a matter of course, all great landed estates, whether in city or country, must be divided upon the death of the present owners. If such a law were passed to-morrow, would not that put an immediate stop to land aggregation, and would not the process of land distribution—the multiplication of landed proprietors—commence within a few months thereafter? How could it be otherwise, since holders of land, up to and beyond the lawful limit, could not become purchasers, or if they ventured

to disregard the law and make purchases, they would pay their money without acquiring title, even a possessory right. Within fifteen years after the passage of such a law the number of independent freeholders would be more than doubled in all of the States east of the Mississippi, and in Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota and California—perhaps quadrupled in the latter named State, now celebrated for large farms, ranging from 10,000 to 60,000 acres each. Thirty years hence there would be but few large landed estates in the more populous States, and fifty years hence none at all. Thus, within the lifetime of a single generation land monopoly would be extirpated, without shock or violence, and without injustice to any man, woman or child.

§ 3. It cannot be denied that the adjustment of the details of land limitation would be attended with difficulties; but that is true of all great problems of statesmanship. And, then, the justice and expediency of the proposition being admitted, the adjustment of details will not, perhaps, be exceedingly difficult, for "where there is a will there is a way."

§ 4. It is objected that a legal limitation of landed estates will tend to lower the price of land. That is true and untrue. It will, undoubtedly, tend to the destruction of speculative values in land, both in city and country, for the reason that mere speculators and dealers in land "futures" will be debarred of the right to purchase. But limitation on the plan proposed will not injuriously affect the normal or true value of land, for that is, and always will be, determined by the density of population in the vicinity, the advantages of location for manufacturing or commercial purposes, the productive capacity of the soil, etc.; but especially upon density of population. The striking down of speculative values will work no injustice, since, all such values—nearly all land values, in fact—arise from contiguous population; and the holder of more land than he can utilize or cultivate is not fairly entitled to all the benefits of advance in land values

consequent upon the presence of a dense population, much less to the benefits arising from speculative values, or probable future advances in price. He can well afford to accept the normal or true price—a price that will justify immediate improvement or cultivation. That price he can realize at any time, for the exclusion of speculators from the right of purchase will tend to increase rather than diminish the number of purchasers. There are thousands of people who will pay \$1 per bushel for apples in a free market where there are tens and hundreds who are able or willing to pay \$5 per bushel to a forestaller; and yet the man who has a “corner” on apples may be able to realize \$5 per bushel for his entire stock; but that does not prove that apples are really worth \$5 per bushel, except on the principle that any article or commodity is worth what it will bring when the purchaser has the choice of paying three or four prices or denying himself the gratification of his appetite or fancy. The same principle applies to land values, purchases and sales.

§ 5. The limitation of the area of land that may be held by a single person should not be fixed and uniform throughout the entire country, a state, or even a county. It should depend upon population in any given district without reference to county or state lines. If it be agreed that each family in cities and villages should be allowed an *average* of two acres, then for a city of 60,000 inhabitants 24,000 acres would be required—a fraction more than the area of an original surveyed township in the Western States and Territories. If the land were equally divided there would be 12,000 separate estates of two acres to each family of five persons. But as many families would, of choice, confine themselves to a quarter, an eighth, or a tenth, of an acre, and many other families would choose to own no land at all, the maximum holding within three miles of the centre of the city might be fixed at, say, ten acres on or near the outskirts, and diminishing in quantity toward the centre. Thus the *average* could be maintained—an average of values if not of area. The same principle could be applied to villages and

counties, or parts of counties. Agricultural lands might be graded according to quality and productive capacity. If, for example, the limitation be fixed at one hundred acres in a given district, the man who chooses to occupy the first grade would be restricted to one hundred acres, the occupant of the second grade might own two hundred acres, of the third grade three hundred, and so on, the estates being equivalent in value, though widely differing in area. In that way large tracts of land now esteemed as "waste" might be reclaimed and utilized by drainage, the use of fertilizers, etc.

§ 6. Mr. George intimates that such a law would be evaded, and, therefore, inoperative. Such will not be the case if the law be framed by men who are in earnest. No law ever devised by man would be so near self-executing as a properly drawn land limitation act. Under such an act the disqualified man would take nothing through an unlawful purchase. His supposed title would be void and he would be liable to ejectment at any time. No other man would purchase from the holder of an invalid title, and a bequest of the property to his children would be a vain thing, for, having no title himself he could not create a valid title in his posterity by bequest. But it is said that rich men would evade the law by purchasing land in the names of their minor children. That the law should strictly forbid, and all such transactions should be declared void *ab initio*. No land should be purchased in the name of a minor child. If a minor inherits land within the limitation, very well; but the children of rich men should take their chances with all other children. Because a child is born with a gold spoon in his or her mouth that fact should give him or her no precedence or advantage in natural rights over a child born in a hovel or a manger. All should have an equal chance, and the men and women of each generation should be trained to look out for themselves.

§ 7. We have seen that we have land enough to furnish homesteads for two hundred millions of families—one thousand millions of people. The advocates of free trade (or unlimited ownership) in land argue that because of the abundance

of land no present necessity exists for legal limitation, and that no such necessity will exist until our population reaches 200,000,000 or 250,000,000. That argument is unsound. Land monopoly should be discriminated against—prohibited, in fact—even though population in the older States should cease to augment. We have seen that Ohio has her proportion of 224,000,000, Pennsylvania of 267,000,000, New York 325,000,000 and Massachusetts of 713,000,000; and several other States will reach these proportions within a decade. So long, therefore, as the right to own land in unlimited quantities exists, a large proportion of the people—a large majority, in fact, in densely populated districts—will own no land; and that proportion will increase from year to year, and from decade to decade.

§ 8. It is said that demand and supply will regulate the value of real estate. Such is not the fact. The law of demand and supply has no application to land, for the reason that the supply in any given area is fixed and incapable of increase. Not exceeding 20,000 acres, including streets, alleys, etc., can lie within three miles of the centre of a city of 60,000 inhabitants. An average county contains about 320,000 acres; and if such a county contains 50,000 inhabitants, an equal division of the land among 10,000 families would allow but 32 acres to each family, or about 150 acres to each agricultural family, and an average of two acres each to families residing in cities and villages. If a few scores of men be permitted to own 500 or 1,000 acres each of agricultural land, and if half or more of the area of cities and villages be owned by a few persons, it follows, of necessity, that one-half or more of the families of the county can own no land, however desirous they may be to become possessors of homesteads. In such a case the demand is great, the supply limited, and incapable of increase. The law of demand and supply is properly applicable to such things as can be increased by labor or importation, as cattle, sheep, grain, iron, cloth, and the like; for, in such cases demand creates the supply, except in times of famine or general scarcity,

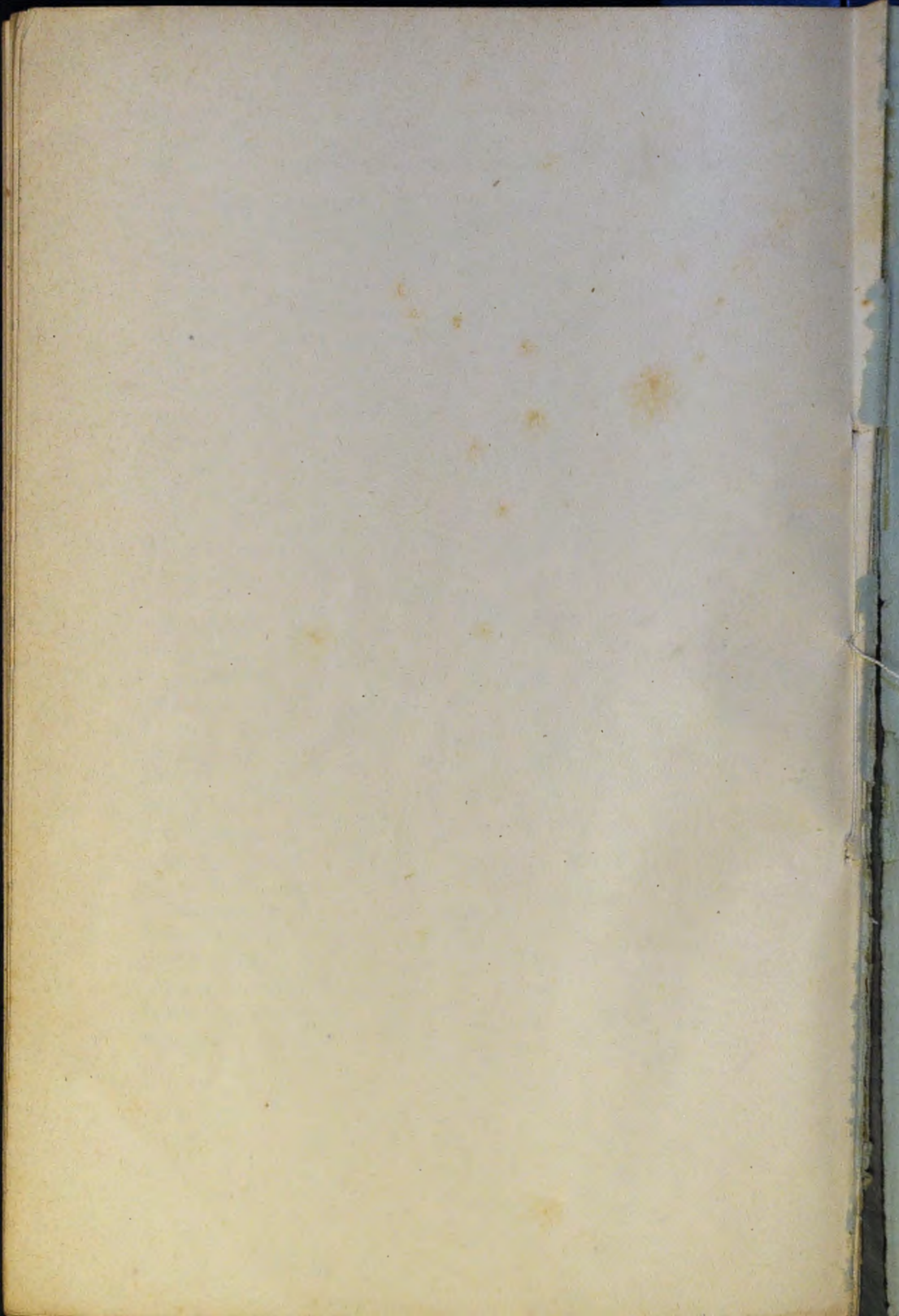
and at such times all articles of necessity command famine prices, because the supply is unequal to the demand. Land monopoly keeps land up to famine prices at all times, for demand cannot increase the supply, but only increase the price.

§ 9. It is not to be expected that, under any circumstances all families will become owners of homesteads. We have now, and shall always have, great numbers of persons who enjoy incomes independent of current industry and commerce. Such persons will choose to reside in hotels and boarding houses, and will not care to own land. To these may be added sailors and fishermen, together with thousands of heads of families who, for lack of economy and thrift, will never be able to purchase or build a home, and who would not occupy and utilize land if they could procure it for nothing. Such people—some from choice, some from necessity—must during life be hirelings, dependents upon others, but their children should not be condemned to such a fate, but should be placed on an equality of rights and opportunities with all other children.

§ 10. The aim should be to make ourselves a nation of land owners, as near as practicable. Absolute equality in land or other property is wholly impracticable. An approach to equality is all that is attainable, all that is desirable, perhaps. Mr. George [Book vi, Chapter I] says: “But while sub-division of land can do nothing to cure the evils of land monopoly, while it can have no effect in raising wages or improving the condition of the lowest classes, its tendency is to *prevent the adoption or even advocacy of more thorough going measures, and to strengthen the existing unjust system by interesting a larger number in its maintenance.*” Or, to state the proposition differently, If the entire soil of the country is held by a few thousands of men the people may be induced to deprive them of their titles, and seize all land, or all rents, for government use; but if eight or ten millions of families own homesteads, they will be too numerous and too powerful to be overthrown by Communism or Social Democracy. Is not

that a valid argument in favor of an equitable distribution of land? But is not Mr. George's declaration that land distribution will "have no effect in raising wages, and improving the condition of the lowest classes"—that is, common laborers—wholly unphilosophical, contrary to human experience? Land distribution tends to self-employment; and is it not a rule, without an exception, that wages are higher in self-employing communities than in those where the whole population is dependent upon a few persons for employment and subsistence? If operatives in mills and factories were generally owners of a few acres of land each would they not be measurably independent, and in condition to demand a fair equivalent for their labor; and would they be compelled, in times of industrial depression, to descend to the rank of common laborers, thus overstocking that branch of the labor market, and reducing wages to the starvation point? Is it not demonstrable that land distribution and consequent self-employment would tend to mitigate the evils of ruinous competition in the labor market, both as to skilled workmen and common laborers?

§11. I do not believe, nor affect to believe, that the adoption of the system of land tenure hereinbefore briefly but imperfectly outlined would wholly "abolish want and the fear of want," and put an end to human suffering, pauperism, ignorance, vice and crime; but I do maintain that such a change would be beneficent in a multitude of ways. It would bring nearer together the extremes of wealth and poverty, give to the great masses of our people a consciousness of personal independence, give an impetus to industry, secure to labor its just reward, and so broaden, deepen and strengthen the foundations of the Republic as to reasonably insure its continuance for ages, and cycles of ages, and make ours, indeed, "the last and noblest empire of time."





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