

The Great Adventure

Published monthly by THE GREAT ADVENTURE, 203 Tajo Bldg., 1st & Bdwy., Los Angeles, Cal.
Editors: HARRIETT DUNLOP PRENTER, DIANA GRIFFES, AUGUST GAMBLE. Year 25 cents.
Entered in the Post Office, Los Angeles, Cal., as second-class matter. Phone Main 4905.

Vol. 3

APRIL 15, 1919

No. 1

Give a Man Security That He May Reap and He Will Sow

By HENRY GEORGE

Extracts from Chapter I, Book VII, of "Progress and Poverty"

The recognition of individual proprietorship of land is the denial of the natural rights of other individuals—it is a wrong which *must* show itself in the inequitable division of wealth. For as labor cannot produce without the use of land, the denial of the equal right to the use of land is necessarily the denial of the right of labor to its own produce. If one man can command the land upon which others must labor, he can appropriate the produce of their labor as the price of his permission to labor. The fundamental law of nature, that her enjoyment by man shall be consequent upon his exertion, is thus violated. The one receives without producing; the other produces without receiving. The one is unjustly enriched; the others are robbed. To this fundamental wrong we have traced the unjust distribution of wealth which is separating modern society into the very rich and the very poor. It is the continuous increase of rent—the price that

labor is compelled to pay for the use of land, which strips the many of the wealth they justly earn, to pile it up in the hands of the few, who do nothing to earn it.

Why should they who suffer from this injustice hesitate for one moment to sweep it away? Who are the land holders that they should thus be permitted to reap where they have not sown?

Consider for a moment the utter absurdity of the titles by which we permit to be gravely passed from John Doe to Richard Roe the right exclusively to possess the earth, giving absolute dominion as against all others. In California our land titles go back to the Supreme Government of Mexico, who took from the Spanish King, who took from the Pope, when he by a stroke of the pen divided lands yet to be discovered between the Spanish or Portuguese—or if you please they rest upon conquest. In the Eastern States they go back to treaties with Indians and grants from English Kings; in Louisiana to the Government of France; in Florida to the Government of Spain; while in England they go back to the Norman conquerors. Everywhere, not to a right which obliges, but to a force which compels. And when a title rests but on force, no complaint can be made when force annuls it. Whenever the people, having the power, choose to annul those titles, no objection can be made in the name of justice. There have existed men who had the power to hold or to give



1 8

12460

43*
4821
Los Angeles, Ca

exclusive possession of portions of the earth's surface, but when and where did there exist the human being who had the right?

The right to exclusive ownership of anything of human production is clear. No matter how many the hands through which it has passed, there was, at the beginning of the line, human labor—some one who, having procured or produced it by his exertions, had to it a clear title as against all the rest of mankind, and which could justly pass from one to another by sale or gift. But at the end of what string of conveyances or grants can be shown or supposed a like title to any part of the material universe? To improvements such an original title can be shown; but it is a title only to the improvements, and not to the land itself. If I clear a forest, drain a swamp, or fill a morass, all I can justly claim is the value given by these exertions. They give me no right to the land itself, no claim other than to my equal share with every other member of the community in the value which is added to it by the growth of the community.

Has the first comer at a banquet the right to turn back all the chairs and claim that none of the other guests shall partake of the food provided, except as they make terms with him? Does the first man who presents a ticket at the door of a theater, and passes in, acquire by his priority the right to shut the doors and have the performance go on for him alone? Does the first passenger who enters a railroad car obtain the right to scatter his baggage over all the seats and compel the passengers who come in after him to stand up?

CHAPTER II.

There is nothing strange in the fact that, in spite of the enormous increase in productive power which this century has witnessed, and which is still going on, the wages of labor in the lower and wider strata of industry should everywhere tend to the wages of slavery—just enough to keep the laborer in working condition. For the ownership of the land on which and from which a man must live is virtually the ownership of the man himself, and in acknowledging the right of some individuals to the exclusive use and enjoyment of the earth, we condemn other individuals to slavery as fully and as completely as though we had formally made them chattels.

Personal liberty—that is to say, the liberty to move about—is everywhere conceded, while of political and legal inequality there are in the United States no vestiges, and in the most backward civilized countries but few. But the great cause of inequality remains, and is manifesting itself in the unequal distribution of wealth. The essence of slavery is that it takes from the laborer all he produces save enough to support an animal existence, and to this minimum the wages of free labor, under existing conditions, unmistakably tend. Whatever be the increase of productive power, rent steadily tends to swallow up the gain, and more than the gain.

CHAPTER IV.

Thirty thousand men have legal power to expel the whole population from five-sixths of the British Islands, and the vast majority of the British people have no right whatever to their native land save to walk the streets or trudge the roads. To them may be fittingly applied the words of a Tribune of the Roman people:

"Men of Rome," said Tiberius Gracchus—*"men of Rome, you are called the lords of the world, yet have no right to a square foot of its soil! The wild beasts have their dens, but the soldiers of Italy have only water and air!"*

The result has, perhaps, been more marked in England than anywhere else, but the tendency is observable everywhere, having gone further in England owing to circumstances which have developed it with greater rapidity.

CHAPTER II, BOOK 8.

It is an axiom of statesmanship, which the successful founders of tyranny have understood and acted upon—that great changes can best be brought about under old forms. We, who would free men, should heed the same truth. It is the natural method. When nature would make a higher type, she takes a lower one

and develops it. This, also, is the law of social growth. Let us work by it. With the current we may glide fast and far. Against it, it is hard pulling and slow progress.

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.*

Nor to take rent for public uses is it necessary that the State should bother with the letting of lands, and assume the chances of the favoritism, collusion, and corruption this might involve. It is not necessary that any new machinery should be created. The machinery already exists. Instead of extending it, all we have to do is to simplify and reduce it. By leaving to land owners a percentage of rent which would probably be much less than the cost and loss involved in attempting to rent lands through State agency, and by making use of this existing machinery, we may, without jar or shock, assert the common right to land by taking rent for public uses. We already take some rent in taxation. We have only to make some changes in our modes of taxation to take it all.

What I, therefore, propose, as the 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, is—to appropriate rent by taxation.

In this way the State may become the universal landlord without calling herself so, and without assuming a single new function. 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 stood, 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.

Now, inasmuch as the taxation of rent, or land values, must necessarily be increased just as we abolish other taxes, we may put the proposition into practical form by proposing—

To abolish all taxation save that upon land values.

We Must Make Land Common Property

What the Single Tax Movement is most in need of is moral courage; courage to stand for the principles of Henry George; courage to stand with that fearless leader and say "We must make land common property"; courage to repeat with him "That private property in land is a bold, bare, enormous wrong like that of chattel slavery." Nothing is to be gained by telling bankers and chamber of commerce bodies how conservative the Single Tax is and how the exemption of buildings from taxation will benefit land owners.

It is well enough to explain that the Single Tax will combine the advantage of private possession of land with the justice of its common ownership. But let us not try to gain favor by seeking to be respectable in the eyes of those to whom the Single Tax is merely an intellectual cult. Luke North had the right policy. He appealed to the crowd to demand a free earth—Now. The large vote at two elections was a great moral victory. We want faith, work and moral courage.

Henry George and Luke North both believed with Emerson that God will not have His work made manifest by cowards. Let those who can content themselves with slapping the monster of Landlordism on the wrist do so. Or, if they would go so far as to cut a little of his tail off with a pen-knife we will not object. But we prefer to use an ax. We intend to cut his tail off just behind his ears. But it requires faith, work and moral courage.—W. L. R.

THE GREAT ADVENTURE IN CALIFORNIA

State Headquarters, LOS ANGELES, 203 Tajo Bldg., First and Broadway. Main 4905
SAN FRANCISCO, 948 Market, Room 611, Douglas 5690. BERKELEY, 2617 Virginia.

The People of the State of California do Enact as follows:

A new section to be known as Section 15 is hereby added to Article XIII of the Constitution, to read as follows:

For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1921, and thereafter, all public revenues, state, county, municipal and district, shall be raised by taxation of the value of land irrespective of improvements thereon; provided, that war veteran, college and church exemptions in Sections 14, 15 and 1a, Article XIII of the Constitution, are not affected thereby; provided that this shall not prevent the State or its subdivisions from charging for services of public-owned utilities, but the earnings thereof shall be used only for operating expenses, the upkeep of the service, its extension, or the acquisition of other utilities.

The intent of this Single Tax amendment is to prevent the holding of land out of use for speculation and to apply the land values which the community creates to community purposes.

All constitutional provisions and laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

A copy of the above bill, left by Luke North, was submitted to Mr. W. L. Ross, of Philadelphia, Pa., who, possessing the heart of an Adventurer, is leaving his former occupation in Philadelphia and will be here in June, to throw in his lot with us, and to assume the Chairmanship of the California Great Adventure. His indorsement, as follows, comes just in time for publication.

"Editor of The Great Adventure:

You should by all means submit the full straight Single Tax amendment so carefully and ably developed by Luke North and slightly improved in the wording by Judge Ryckman to prevent wrong interpretations. Hon. James G. Maguire, the old friend and advisor of both Henry George and Luke North approves of no backward step and I am sure the supporters of The Great Adventure are practically unanimous for the bill as it stands. No other bill yet proposed is as good. If the present bill were no better than any other I should say submit it as a token of love and esteem in honor of the memory of Luke North who toiled, suffered and died in the cause of the land for the people. Let us at least show this small measure of gratitude for the work he did so well.

Yours very truly,

(Sig.) W. L. ROSS.

Philadelphia, April 4, 1919.

Statement of ownership and management of The Great Adventure Monthly. Published and owned by The Great Adventure Committee, Los Angeles, Cal. Editors: Mrs. Harriett Dunlop Prenter, Mrs. Diana Griffes and August Gamble. Mortgages, bondholders, etc., none. (Signed) Diana Griffes. Sworn to March 21, 1919, before S. G. Pandit, notary, whose commission expires January 23, 1923.

Use the following blank. Send for a pad of them. Help to get the Truth about Single Tax before every California voter. If the people understand, we will win.

TO help carry the TRUTH about Single Tax to every California voter count me in for _____ subscriptions (at 25c each) to The Great Adventure Weekly 203 Tajo Bldg
Los Angeles

Name _____

\$ _____ Date _____ 191 _____ Address _____