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Editor

A SACRIFICE FOR HUMANITY

A spirit as rare as it is commendable is that which moved Charles Garland, of Boston, to refuse a million dollar inheritance for the reasons he is quoted as saying:

"Private property is the main cause of unhappiness. I did nothing for the money in question. It is more than any man needs. It might be doing poor people a lot of good rather than so accumulating to no purpose."

This spirit is commendable regardless of what one may think of the wisdom of the action taken. Mr. Garland has chosen the course that seems to him the best way to serve humanity. He has made his personal interests the last consideration. He has made a sacrifice that, with economic conditions as they are, very few would have the strength to make even if they had the desire. He has proven himself to be a man.

Nevertheless it does not follow that abandonment of a fortune in this way is a practical method of helping the poor. The million dollars might, as Mr. Garland states, "be doing poor people a lot of good," but it also might be doing them a lot of harm. The latter will probably be the case should it get into the control of one less scrupulous or less influenced by principles or ideals. With society constituted as it is, that is most likely to be the result of the young man's action. However, this does not mean that his sacrifice will be useless. Whatever other consequences it may have, it will call attention to the evil of unearned fortunes, to social injustice and to discussion of means of bettering them. Moreover it must put Mr. Garland in position where any message he may feel called upon to present

will have a wider and more respectful hearing. So, though he may not have made the best use of an opportunity, he has made a far better use than 999 out of 1,000 would have done.

Mr. Garland might have retained control of the million and still denied himself the selfish benefits due to its possession. He could have exercised control to make the money a factor in substitution of justice for injustice in social conditions. He could have made it a help to movements to ensure possession of wealth to those who have earned it, and make impossible unearned acquisitions. He might have followed the path of such men as Tom Johnson, Joseph Fels, Henry D. Lloyd and others who sacrificed for humanity, but made sure, as far as lay within their power, that no enemy of humanity should reap the gain.

Should Mr. Garland, a financially poor man by his voluntary act, engage in effort to rid the world of the predatory powers that have made the earth private property and are impoverishing the great mass of humanity, he will meet with opposition. This opposition will come from forces backed by unearned wealth. His own discarded million may be used to frustrate the very object he had in view when he abandoned it.

Still, the fact that he might have chosen a more effective way must not blind one to the equally obvious fact that Charles Garland has proven himself a man of the highest motives, moved by noble ideals and endowed with courage and resolution to sacrifice for them. It is inconceivable that such a man should fail to accomplish much good.

THRIFTLESS MARYLAND

In the year 1906, the State of Maryland transferred title to an island in the Patapsco river at Baltimore to a private individual for the sum of \$15. The following year two other islands nearby were sold for \$35 each to two other individuals. These islands are merely banks of mud. The purchasers made no other use of them than to sell them later for several hundred dollars profit. The new purchasers have also made no use of the islands, but this year, 14 years after the original sale of the first island, the city of Baltimore, believing the islands essential to a plan of port development, took an option on all three, and the

price agreed upon was \$215,000. Of this sum \$125,000 was for the first island and \$90,000 for the other two. In other words, when the State parted title with these islands it conferred the power on private parties to levy upon the earnings of the people of Baltimore to the extent of \$215,000 in fourteen years. In this there is nothing unusual. There is inexcusable prodigality in every transfer of publicly owned land to private individuals. There is inexcusable prodigality every day that state or nation continues to permit private appropriation of communal values. This is the kind of extravagance which is keeping the great bulk of the American people in poverty.