

Anti-Slavery and Anti-Poverty

Extracts from the address of Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost before the

New York Anti-Poverty Society, June 19, 1887.

IN the city of Newark, where I live, an American white woman, a widow with four children, answered an advertisement in a newspaper asking for someone to do a certain sort of work; and when she made her application for the work, she was kindly given employment by a man who sells children's pretty dresses for a living for himself and his family. He kindly gave her the privilege of making these children's pretty dresses, and graciously gave her eight cents apiece for them. So that, by hard work through long hours she was enabled to take from the share of the world's wealth which she helps to produce, each day twenty-four cents, each week \$1.44, each year \$72.00.¹

Negro chattel slavery has been abolished in this country because it has been discovered that it is cheaper to hire men than to own them.

"Why don't you build a roof over these men?" said someone to a railroad superintendent who had in charge a gang of hands—men used to be men, now they are hands—"Don't you see that the rain falls upon them, and don't you know that they will get pneumonia and the asthma?" "Put a roof over them?" said the superintendent. "Men are cheaper than shingles; there are plenty more to take their places when these drop out."

If you liberate men from chattel slavery and put them into industrial slavery, you knock off iron shackles from them, but you leave them shackled by social conditions still; and until these social conditions are changed so that it will be possible once more in this free country for a man to make a living for himself and family without the help of his wife and children, you simply give him the privilege of henceforth taking care of himself, and millions of men that are all the time out of work in this country are demonstrating that that is a very difficult thing under present circumstances to do.

Now what constitutes slavery? It is slavery when one man takes another and compels him to yield up all or part of the products of his labor to him. The man who owned another in the old

chattel slavery days had only that power. He took the product of the man's labor, and he gave them shelter, clothing and food. Now, wherever you find a man or a woman who works long hours and long years, and at the end of those long years has nothing to show for all his work, because it has been taken away from him with the exception of just what was necessary to keep him in working condition—if that is not the same thing, then I should like to have somebody define for me the difference between slavery and slavery.

We are going to abolish Industrial Slavery. How? By abolishing private ownership of land.² Just as soon as the wickedness of ownership in man was fairly discovered, this nation rose and put that infamy out of the way. Just as soon as men begin to understand that no man can own land without owning the people who are on the land, they will put this infamy out of the way. What are you going to do is asked. Turn the whole land into a gigantic mud pie and slice it into fifty million pieces and give one piece to each inhabitant? No; we are not such blooming idiots as that. Are you going to take away the title from those who hold them at present? No; after we've cut off the lion's claws and pulled his teeth, he may still call himself a lion, but he can't get the lion's share. Is the government going to own the land? No; the government has no more right than the individual. The land is going to be made free, so that *when land is unused anyone can go and use it*. Isn't this going to make land tenures uncertain? No; perpetual *POSSESSION* is as good as perpetual ownership. Isn't somebody going to offer a bigger rent, perhaps, for some desirable piece and take it away from the user? No, for there will be nobody to offer the rent to. If another wants your land he will have to buy it from you, just as now. How is all this going to be done? Simply by shifting the taxes from all the products of labor, and putting them all on the land (according to its value). And that will force the unproductive member of the partnership out and give the assets to the useful members—Labor and Capital. LAND ONCE FREE, MEN WILL BE FREE TO EMPLOY THEMSELVES AS THEY LIKE.

That is the first lesson for the primer class of political economy.

NOTES—The speeches of this first decade struck the keynote of the movement. (1) Now, fifty years later this would be about 60c, \$3.60 and \$180. (2) See *Progress and Poverty*, Bk. 6, ch. 2, par. 1-4; Bk. 8, ch. 2, par. 5-13, et seq.

Progress and Poverty (\$1.00 a copy, postpaid) and other books by Henry George may be obtained from the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation,

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