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THE  
RADICAL REMEDY  
FOR CHRONIC  
ECONOMIC ILLS

by

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## THE PHILOSOPHY AND THE LAW

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**A** LONG habit of not thinking a thing wrong gives it a superficial appearance of being right and we are so accustomed to poverty that we regard it as the natural lot of the great masses of the people; that we take it as a matter of course that even in our highest civilization large classes should want the necessities of healthful life, and a vast majority should only get a poor and pinched living by the hardest toil. There are professors of political economy who teach that this condition is the result of social laws of which it is idle to complain. There are ministers of religion who preach that this is the condition which an all-wise, all-powerful Creator intended for His children.

**E** XISTING conditions, with a few controlling wealth almost beyond comprehension, millions with barely sufficient, clinging desperately to the edge of respectability, and tens of millions submerged in a poverty that crushes manhood and destroys womanhood, while wealth and power, on one hand, like poverty and hopelessness on the other, extirpate from the minds of men every humane and gentle virtue, are not a natural development of society, nor foreordained. Existing conditions, with want and the fear of want as the

largest contributing factor in crime and all our social ills, prevail because the Moral Law has been defied and the Natural Rights of men ignored in the organization of society; because legislation has established privileges--that is, legal rights in violation of natural and unalienable rights contemplated by the Declaration of Independence. America was created in order that every man should have the same chance as every other man to exercise mastery over his own fortunes, to break every kind of monopoly and to set men free, upon a footing of equality, upon a footing of opportunity, to match their brains and their energies.

THE Natural Right which each man has is, not that of demanding employment and wages from another man, or the government, but, that of employing himself--that of applying his own labor to the inexhaustible storehouse of sustenance and wealth which the Creator has, in land, provided for all men. Were that storehouse open and, with few words, legislation of economic righteousness would open it, ~~the~~ every man would have the same opportunity to establish and maintain himself that confronted Adam and Eve, the Pilgrim of New England and the Pioneers of the West

Then, all being free to employ themselves, the mere opportunity to labor would cease to be a boon, and since no one would

work for another for less, all things considered, than he could earn working for himself, wages would necessarily rise to their full value, and the relations of workingman and employer be regulated by mutual interest and convenience. Take the case of any one of the vast masses of unemployed men, ~~to whom, though he never heard of Malthus, it seems that there are too many people in the world.~~ In his own wants, in the need of his anxious wife, in the demands of his half-cared for, perhaps even hungry and shivering children, there is demand enough for labor, Heaven knows! Put him upon a solitary island, and altho cut off from the enormous advantages which co-operation, combination and the machinery of a civilized community give to the productive power of man, yet, with his two hands can he fill the mouths and keep warm the backs of those dependent upon him. Within the bounds of civilization, where the productive power is at its highest development, he cannot. Why? Is it not because in one case he has access to the material and forces of Nature and in the other this access is denied? We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That is, all men have equal right to the use and enjoyment of the elements provided by Nature, and every man is entitled to the whole product of his labor, or its equivalent.

HERE is but one way to remove an evil--that is to remove the cause of it. Poverty deepens as wealth increases, and wages are forced down while productive power grows, because land, the source of all wealth and the field of all labor, is monopolized, a larger and larger portion of labor's product being exacted for legal permission to live and work on the land necessary to existence. To extirpate poverty, to make wages what justice demands they should be--the full earnings of the laborer--we must therefore substitute for the individual ownership of land a common ownership. Nothing else will go to the cause of the evil. In nothing else is there the slightest hope. This presents a problem of impossible solution to a thoughtless conservative who thereupon dismisses the subject as radical and fearsome nonsense. When the answer is known, however, the most bewildering puzzle may be very simple, and very simple legislation will serve to divide the land of the country equitably--not equally, but equitably--among all the people of the country, including, automatically, every child born into it, and also those that may come from other shores. If two men find a diamond they do not march to the lapidary to have it cut in two. If three sons inherit a ship they do not proceed to saw her into three pieces; nor do they agree that if this cannot be done equitable division is impossible. And, so it is not necessary, in order to secure equal rights to land, to make an equal

division of it. All that it is necessary to do is to collect its rent for the common benefit. We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community, the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual, ~~and, treating necessary monopolies as functions of the State, abolish all restrictions and prohibitions save those required for public health, safety, morals and convenience.~~ Dishonesty lies, not in taking this fund, as proposed, but in not taking it. We are all caught in a great economic system that is heartless, and here we contend with a bad principle that is kept in obscurity altho it engenders innumerable bad facts that are conspicuous in existing conditions. Because the taking of this fund, for the use of the community that creates it, is right in principle there are facts by the thousand to recommend it, but we have only greed, ignorance and thoughtless conservatism in opposition to it. ~~Some following the same line of thought, and who are right, see, in the only change consistent with the principle, that the only change consistent with the principle, is the only change consistent with the principle.~~ Great causes are never tried upon their merit, but divided into particulars and the discussion the hottest ever some matter of little or no importance. Taxation is discussed endlessly but this principle of righteousness that would eliminate taxation, is kept in obscurity by subtle propaganda which diverts attention from the truth because it cannot be honestly and logically assailed.



~~of that value which is the creation of the community.~~  
~~It is the application of common property to common~~  
~~uses.~~ Man is driven by his instincts and needs to form society. Society, thus formed, has certain needs and functions for which a revenue is required. These needs and functions increase with social development, requiring a larger and larger revenue. Now experience and analogy, if not the instinctive perception of the human mind, teach us that there is a natural way of satisfying every natural want, and if society is included in nature, as it surely is, there must be a natural or a right source from which to acquire the necessary funds. Inasmuch as every contribution to the social welfare, every advance in our material development, the benefit of any excellence in government, all human progress and achievement, are reflected in the increased rental value of land, nothing could be more logical and honest than to take this fund to finance the needs and functions of administration. ~~Here is provision made by natural law for the increasing need of our social growth; here is an adaptation of nature by which the natural progress of society is a progress toward equality, not toward inequality. Here is a fund belonging to society as a whole, from which, without the degradation to~~  
~~alas, private or public, provision can be made for the~~  
~~weak, the helpless, the aged, from which provision can~~  
~~be made for the common wants of all as a matter of~~  
~~common right to each.~~

~~He~~ He, who, by any exertion of mind or body, adds to the aggregate of enjoyable wealth, increases the sum of human knowledge, or gives to human life a higher elevation or greater fullness--he is, in the large meaning of the words, a "producer," a "working-man," a "laborer," and honestly entitled to honest wages. But he who, without doing aught to make mankind richer, wiser, better or happier, lives on the toil of others--he, no matter by what name of honor he may be called, is, in the last analysis, but a beggar-man or a thief.

Labor may be likened to a man who, as he carries home his earnings, is waylaid by a series of robbers. One demands this much, another that much, but last of all stands one who demands all that is left, save just enough to enable the victim to maintain life and come forth the next day to work. So long as this last robber remains what will it benefit such a man to drive off any or all of the other robbers? Such is the situation of labor throughout the civilized world. The robber that takes

all that is left, is private property in land. The land owner makes no social contribution in exchange for the wealth he acquires by giving other men a Legal Right to exercise their Natural Right to the use of land, and a million men are thus lawfully robbed to enrich a hundred land monopolists and speculators.

If one finds a dollar, he is that much richer, because someone lost it and is that much poorer. Likewise, if one acquires a dollar, or a million dollars, for which he renders no corresponding service, he is that much richer, because others have somehow been robbed and are that much poorer. This is a thought that should be kept persistently in mind, ~~because the benefit we receive must be matched against the loss for the~~  
~~lost, sent for, sent, by~~

ROBINSON CRUSOE, as we all know, took Friday as his slave. Suppose, however, that instead of taking Friday as his slave, Robinson Crusoe had welcomed him as a man and as a brother; had read him a Declaration of Independence, an Emancipation Proclamation and a Fifteenth Amendment; assured him of his belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and informed him that he was a free and independent citizen, entitled to vote and hold office; but, at the same time, had also informed him that that particular island was his (Robinson Crusoe's) private and exclusive property. What would have been the differ-

ence? Since Friday could not fly up into the air nor swim off through the sea, since if he lived at all he must live on the island, he would have been in one case as much a slave as in the other. Crusoe's ownership of the island would be equivalent to his ownership of Friday. Private property in land, no less than private property in slaves, is in violation of the true rights of property. They are different forms of the same robbery, twin devices, by which the perverted ingenuity of man has sought to enable the strong and cunning to escape God's requirement of labor, by forcing it on others. Improvement, no matter how great, and reform, no matter how beneficial in itself, cannot help that class who, deprived of all right to the use of the material elements, have only the power to labor--a power as useless in itself as a sail without wind, a pump without water, or a saddle without a horse.

That very law which moulds a tear  
And bids it trickle from its source,  
That law preserves the earth a sphere  
And guides the planets in their course.

But the domain of law is not confined to physical nature. It just as certainly embraces the mental and moral universe, and social growth and social life have their laws as fixed as those of matter and motion. Nature acknowledges no ownership or control in man except as the result of exertion. In no other way can

her treasures be drawn forth, her powers directed, her forces utilized or controlled. She makes no discrimination among men, but to all is absolutely impartial.

The laws of Nature are the decrees of the Creator, and in them is written broadly and clearly the equal right of all men to the use and enjoyment of Nature; to apply to her by their exertion, and to receive and possess her reward. If any good man or woman had the power to create a world, it would be a sort of world in which no one would be poor unless he was lazy or vicious. That is just precisely the kind of world that this is; that is just precisely the kind of world that the Creator has made. Nature gives to labor, and to labor alone; there must be human work before sustenance or any article of wealth can be produced; and in a natural state of things, the man who toiled honestly and well would be the rich man,

and he who did not work would be poor. We have so reversed the order of Nature, that we are accustomed to think of a working-man as a poor man.

**W**HAT NATURE demands must be delivered and neither society nor the individual can evade the Law of Consequences. We can do as we please, and take the consequences. If what we do is right and logical, the consequences will be good and desirable. If we are thoughtless and careless, the consequences will be haphazard, and because what we have done in education and legislation and administration is wrong and wicked we have human beings overworked, starved, robbed of all the light and sweetness of life, ~~condemned to ignorance and squalor and the infection of physical and moral disease~~. They are driven to crime and suicide, not by other individuals, but by the necessities of their environment, for which it seems that no one in particular is responsible, but social progress makes the well-being of all more and more the business of each; it binds us all closer and closer together in bonds from which none can escape. ~~He who observes the law and the proprieties, and cares for his family, yet takes no interest in the general weal, and gives no thought to those who are trodden underfoot, save now and then to bestow alms, is not a true Christian. Nor is he a good Citizen.~~ The poverty, which in the midst of abundance, pinches and embrates men, and all the

evils that flow from it, spring from legislative wickedness -- from a denial of justice. Man is created with wants that must be satisfied if he is to live. He is also created with a head and hands, by the use of which the things he needs can be produced, and born into a world overflowing with opportunity. In permitting the monopolization of the opportunities Nature freely offers to all, we have ignored the fundamental law of Justice.

By sweeping away this injustice and asserting the right of all men to natural opportunities, we shall conform ourselves to the law, we shall remove the great cause of the unnatural inequality in the distribution of wealth and power, we shall abolish poverty, ~~tame the ruthless passion of greed, dry up the springs of vice and misery, light in the dark places the lamp of knowledge, give new vigor to invention and fresh impulse to discovery, substitute political strength for political weakness, and make tyranny and anarchy impossible.~~ We shall reap the "consequences" of righteousness.

Though all the bards of earth were dead  
And all their music passed away,  
What Nature wishes to be said,  
She will find a voice to say.

**N**EVER, when Nature says one thing, does wisdom say another, and unless Nature's voice finds expression in the wisdom and righteousness of legislation it will express itself as it has so many times heretofore in catastrophe and revolution, and this government of the people, for the people and by the people will perish from the Earth, so "our part," and the utmost in Patriotic Endeavor, is to put Justice and Humanity into our laws--to lift so high the incomparable standards of the common interests and the common justice that all men with vision, all men with hope, all men with the convictions of America in their hearts, will crowd to that standard and a new day of Political Achievement will give respectability and glory to the flag we love.