

LAND AND LABOR.

Land, Labor, and Property Defined and Discussed—Every Member of the Human Family has an

INALIENABLE RIGHT TO LAND.

The Land Question Very Forcefully Presented by Ex-Representative Steadwell of Buffalo.

Land, Labor, and Property

Are conceived to be the three great problems of the age, upon which hang the destiny of the human race. A clear understanding, and right solution of them would bring humanity up to the highest possible point of physical, intellectual, social and moral perfection and enjoyment.

On the other hand, to misunderstand misapprehend or to violate, either wilfully, or ignorantly the fundamental principles that underlie them inevitably leads to social inequality, injustice, crime and suffering.

These three factors occur in regular sequence as I have named them; and in discussing them I shall take them up in the same order, and endeavor first, to make a clear statement of the eternal principles of natural justice which underlie them, thus showing their equitable status; next to show how, and wherein these principles have been violated, overridden, trampled upon, and set aside, thus showing their present legal and traditional status, and lastly, to point out the way by which I think we may (with the least resistance) return to those neglected paths of equity, and thus gradually undo the wrongs from which society now suffers.

In discussing such weighty problems (or indeed any problem) it is well first to get a clear idea of the terms to be used.

LAND

Includes the earth and all there is in it, or upon it, everything conceivable which has been made, and provided without man's labor for the use, comfort, and sustenance of the human race.

LABOR

Man's agency, by the use of brain or muscle in transforming, modifying, adapting, combining, manipulating and utilizing the bounties of nature for the satisfaction of his wants and desires.

PROPERTY OR WEALTH

Is the result,—the output—of man's labor and skill, exercised upon the natural resources God has provided. The co-operative products of God and man, God furnishing the material, and man the labor. In other words it is the concrete combination of land and labor.

LAND, OR THE EARTH.

"With all the fullness thereof" was created for man's abode, and adapted to his comfort.

No human being separated from the earth and cut off from all its products, could exist, much less enjoy life; therefore it is self evident that every individual has a life interest in it, in a double sense, i. e. an interest in it during life, and an interest in it involving life.

It is a joint interest held in common with the whole race, and one of the first functions of an organized government, or social compact, is to hold these rights and interests in trust for all the individuals entering into the compact, and it is the duty of all governments to so hold and manage this common heritage, that every individual may have his equitable usufruct of it, and keep the principal intact, and unimpaired for the use of future generations.

If "the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," is an inherent and inalienable right, surely the right to the only means of supporting life, the securing happiness is just as inalienable and every human being by virtue of his humanity must have an equitable right to this source of all life. One man cannot justly deprive another of this right. No man can dispose of the tenth, nor can ninety-nine the one hundredth. Neither can the majority establish the right to dispossess the minority by force of numbers, by the lapse of time, nor by the accumulation of precedents.

If one man manages to acquire, and hold, twice his equitable share of this "life-source," he robs one other man; if ten times his share, he robs nine others; and if one hundred times, he robs ninety-nine others, all of whose equitable rights were equal to his own.

But says an objector: A man may forfeit his liberty, or even his life. True, but only for the safety of society. Yet, even when, by preying upon society, he has made it necessary to deprive him of his liberty or his life, we recognize this principle by keeping him at the public expense so long as he does live.

Man's right to the bounties God has provided to the whole human family commences with his birth into that family, and can only end with his death. And they do end with his death, for Jefferson has well said: "The earth belongs to the living, and not to the dead."

From what has been said it logically follows that no government, not even

the government of the people, for the people, by the people," has any better right to dispossess the individual of this heritage than it has to commit robbery, or even homicide, in any other way.

I go even farther, and assert, that this heritage is so sacred and so vital that even the individual has no better right to barter away or alienate it than he has to commit suicide in any other manner.

But suppose one man might by his act, dispossess himself, he could not equitably dispossess another, not even his son.

Or, suppose one generation might by unanimous consent dispossess itself of its right to the earth; how could it equitably dispossess the next, or future generations, who would derive their right to it, not from them, but from God who formed it for the abode of all men, and all generations for all time?

But it may be objected that although these theories may be abstractly correct, yet in practice they are wrong and do not in fact produce the results attributed to them.

But, says an objector "your theory may be all right, but in practice it is wrong. The man who is dispossessed of his right to the land does not die the death of the suicide."

Passing over the manifest absurdity of this proposition i. e. that "it is wrong to do right," I remark, the connection of cause and effect, is sometimes so remote, and the effect so long delayed that the logical connection is lost sight of, and, as Shakespeare says: "The end forgets the beginning."

The old song says: "We never miss the water, till the well goes dry." And the fact of one man selling his right to the land would have about the same immediate effect, as if he had sold his share of the air we all must breathe, to some friend who had the impossible right to bottle it up, and abstract it from the general supply.

The air around would flow in and fill the vacuum, and the man who has sold out would breathe as freely as ever; Even if one-half of mankind should sell their share of the vital fluid, there might still be enough left to support life; but should this process of abstraction still go on, there would come a time when men would fight like tigers for a breath of fresh air, as they did in "the black hole in Calcutta;" and it would only be a question of time when the last human being would be asphyxiated.

Who dare say this would not be wholesale suicide?

And who shall say the first to sell was not quite as much a factor as the last?

In order to illustrate the action of this law, and to show how absolutely man is dependent upon the land, let us in imagination place him in a semi-primitive condition.

Smith and Jones are ship-wrecked near a barren and uninhabited island, and they are the only survivors. Smith being a muscular bully and a good swimmer soon makes a landing upon the island, while Jones who is physically weak, and no swimmer manages to get upon a spar, and is tossed about at the mercy of the waves for a long time.

Meantime Smith has been exploring the island, and finds it a barren rock, but having pools of fresh water which have been caught in the hollows of the rocks during recent rains. He also sees fish swimming along the shore and these so far as he can see are the only means of supporting life.

At last Jones' spar is washed so near the shore that he leaves it and tries to get to land. But Smith meets him at the waters edge and says: "Avast there Jones! You can't land here, this is my island."

"Your island?" Says Jones, "How do you make that out?"

"Why I've got the two fundamental rights to new territory that are recognized the world over, the right of first discovery and occupation, and the power to hold it."

That's a pretty strong case Smith, but I'm not a fish, I can't live in the water, I must land."

"You'll not land, Jones, until you acknowledge my right to this island."

"Well Smith, I acknowledge that according to all established precedents your title to the island is good. But it looks to me as if it was only a good place to starve. What will you live upon?"

"Oh! there's fresh water on the rocks and fish along the shore."

"But can you catch them?"

"I don't know. If I only had a fish hook, I'd be all right."

"Ah Smith there's where I've the deadwood on you. I've got the coveted fish hook. You'll let me land now won't you?"

"All right, you can land; but don't you forget it, this island belongs to me."

"Oh yes, I acknowledge that, but don't you forget that I own the fish-hook. You can't eat your island and without me and my fish hook you would starve to death."

have the standing room to fish, much less room to lounge around day and night, unless you catch fish for me and cook them too.

You see I know my rights and have the power to enforce them. So you can either pay me my rent or get off my land."

Of course Jones having admitted Smith's right to the island, cannot resist the conclusion, backed as it is by Smith's physical superiority and has to submit.

But Smith's tyranny, and Jones' degradation do not end here. Smith keeps demanding more and more rent, a part of which he lays up in store, which enables him to stop Jones from fishing at all, until he literally starves him into selling the precious fish-hook. After which Jones becomes Smith's absolute and abject slave, wholly dependent upon him for his very life.

A. STEADWELL.

BRIEF NEWS NOTES.

Interesting Items Gleaned from People's Party Exchanges.

If you wish to sustain the Republic in its purity you must organize the Alliance, as no other force is so potent for good, and in securing justice from political parties.

The Representative is the name of a new paper to be under the control of the executive committee of the Minnesota State Alliance, with Ignatius Donnelly as editor-in-chief.

The mayor of Detroit, Mich., after careful investigation declares that cities which own and operate their own electric lights do so at one-half the cost of plants operated by private companies.

On last Saturday a week the proposition to move the capital from Topeka came up before the senate and passed by a vote of 28 to 14 several Republicans voting for it, and last week the resolution passed the house.

Surely the citizens of Topeka should not be surprised at the movement to move the state capital from there, not through a spirit of revenge, but on account of the position it took against the state authorities and the tendency to anarchy displayed by many of its prominent citizens.

The senator from New York, Calvin B. Brice, while a citizen of Ohio, hoisted the assessor. The tax inquirer got him for \$17,000 back taxes and this last week a compromise was effected whereby Calvin added \$11,780 to the funds in the county treasurer of Allen county. Such is Democracy, "the workingman's friend."

The attempt of the Republican leaders at Topeka to secure the assistance of the state government to overturn the state government was only partially successful, as only a portion of the employers turned out to obey the orders of the bosses. Many of the corporations could not get them to fight for them. All honor to their independence and sense of justice.

Whatever may be said for or against nationalism, the fact is very evident that it is rapidly gaining ground everywhere. Government ownership of railroads, telegraph and telephones, the municipal ownership of light and water works and street railways, is becoming a common doctrine. The drift is unmistakably in the direction of nationalism and the greedy corporations are responsible.

The republicans have said, give us the offices or we will turn the corporation employees loose and drench your state in blood. We accept the gauntlet thus thrown down and will march into the campaign of '94 fearlessly before the people and confident they will sustain us. The issue is thus made plain. It is the people versus the corporations, and he who is not on the side of the people is recreant to his duty as a citizen. There is no middle ground. Where do you stand?

The east throws down the gauntlet to the West and South in its declared opposition to more new states, and both Democratic and Republican goldbug organs unite in protest against more free silver senators and congressmen. By all means let the issue be openly accepted by the friends of free coinage. Better have an open fight upon these lines than to depend for success upon party lines. An Eastern Democratic goldbug is not a friend to the West and South, and it will be a fatal mistake to depend upon his aid. The new states must be admitted and the same votes which will be cast for free coinage will be sufficient to admit Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

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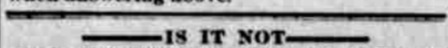
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