

Letters From The People

The Independent solicits from its readers brief letters on current topics and practical reforms. Such letters should not contain more than 500 words. There are many subscribers to The Independent who can give in simple language helpful views as to the ways and means of improving social, political and economic conditions in this country. Letters must be typewritten or written legibly in ink and only one side of the paper must be used. The Independent cannot undertake to return manuscripts.—Ed.

Proposes New Legal Tender

Ackley, Iowa, Sept. 2.—To the Editor of The Independent: If the government would own all land and rent it to the people for a tax to pay the public expenses, the result would be that they would try to make all they could out of the land to lay up for a rainy day, without paying much attention to the improvements on the land; because improvements would naturally add to the value of land and would consequently raise their tax. We all know that land has no value in itself. Our government is glad to give you 160 acres if you will make it your home, but you say, "No." Why? "Because homestead land is too far out of civilization and I would rather pay for my comforts than spend my days in idleness on one-fourth of a section in the wild west." Oh yes, it is the comfort of life that is to be considered, not land or property."

Money is a creation of law to measure all value and will buy all the comforts of life, created by man. If money is the medium by which to obtain all happiness of this world, why then tax only for the public expenses? Single taxers tell me that God made the land for all his people. This may be very true, but I fail to see the difference in a thousand dollar farm and a thousand dollars in cash. One is equal to the other as far as I can see. The trouble is that all have not the farm or the money to buy it.

In order to reap the full benefit of this world we must recognize all men as equal before the law. Tax all property according to its value for the support of all public expenses, and employ all idle laborers to build railroads and pay them in certificates in exchange for their labor, these certificates to be a legal tender for all debts—public and private. To my mind no better money could be had. Thus the government could build railroads with their own money without bonds or national debts, and operate them for the benefit of all the people. As the railroads, so the postoffice, the telegraph, and all other systems of transportation should be supported by a direct tax. It would shift the burden to those who are most able to bear it, but the laboring classes would exchange their skill for money to buy land and make them a home of their own, to escape interest and rent.

This is my doctrine: Let those have the land, the gold, the intrinsic value, but let me have a legal tender redeemed by honest labor and I can buy them all.

A. LUTTERMAN.

The March of a New Idea

It is announced that Victoria, the last of the Australian states to grant full suffrage to women, has at length accorded it. This is a fresh illustration of the tendency of a new idea to run through a series of neighboring communities, as the measles will run through a whole family when one child catches it.

New Zealand led off by giving women the full ballot in 1893. South Australia did so in 1895, West Australia in 1900, and New South Wales in 1902. In 1903 Tasmania and Queensland followed, like sheep over a wall, and the last remaining Australian state, Victoria, has now fallen into line.

A similar series has been observable with municipal suffrage in Great Britain. In 1869 that right was granted to the women of England; in 1881 of Scotland, and in 1898, with practically no opposition, the women of Ireland were given

a vote for all officers except members of parliament.

The course of events in our own country has been much the same. The first American state to grant full suffrage to women was Wyoming, in 1869, and the three other states that have since followed the example all lie close to Wyoming, in a solid block, and all bordering upon one another.

Equal suffrage evidently does not lead to the dreadful results prophesied by its opponents, or we should not find that the communities nearest to those where it prevails are the ones which successively adopt it.

ALICE STONE BLACKWELL.

Origin Of The Single Tax

Los Angeles, Cal., Aug. 30.—To the Editor of The Independent: Occasionally the inquiry comes to me: "Was the single tax invented by Henry George?" Of course, the answer is no. Henry George had no more to do with making the conditions that embody the single tax proposition than had Adam with creating the world, or Christopher Columbus with manufacturing the moon.

Henry George was one of the first to discover the natural law that underlies the theory, and the first man to publicly present the practicability of raising all public revenue by taxing land values, and nothing else.

It is often asked: What right has the public to take economic rent from every person owning land that yields it? The answer to that question is: "The community has a moral right to take, for public purposes, that which rightfully belongs to it. We defy anyone to refute this proposition.

RALPH HOYT.

Asks Brother Hoyt a Question

Holdenville, I. T., Sept. 1.—To the Editor of The Independent: I want to ask Brother Hoyt of California a question, he being a single taxer. Say that A runs a factory located on ten acres of land for which he pays \$500 as rent. A sells to B, a wholesale merchant. B's rent is \$250. B sells to C, a retail merchant. C's rent is \$100.

Here we have \$850 in rent. Now I want to know what or how could we keep A from landing his rent on B and B on C and C on the producer.

Brother Hoyt, please condense your reply and make it plain. Yours for reform.

G. LIGAN.

WHEN A MAN IS DOWN ON HIS LUCK

An Experiment That Taught Something About the "Rarity of Human Charity"

Mr. Gleason, of Torrington, Conn., is not only a prosperous undertaker, but, what is more, he is a director in a total abstinence union. All through his life he was taught by Sunday school teachers and others that it is not the clothes a man wears, but the man himself that counts in this gray old world. Once that all sounded good to Mr. Gleason. He swallowed it as a great truth, but since a recent experience it does not sit well on his stomach, total abstainer though he is. It all came about somewhat after this fashion:

Returning to Torrington from Wilkesbarre, Pa., where he was a delegate to the National Temperance convention, he determined to test the charity of the world, and incidentally of his friends. Disguising himself so that he would pass anywhere for a tramp, he walked from New York to Torrington, depending on charity and his wits to carry him through. He believed that if he really became needy while carrying out his experiment, he could call on his friends along his journey.

He started out bravely enough. The weather was perfect, and it was a delight to tramp along the roads. By the afternoon of the first day he was exhausted by the unaccustomed exertion and determined to try his luck on a trolley car. He thought that if he told the conductor just how it was, he would give him a helping hand. But after listening to the proposal, the conductor told the would-be beneficiary that he had "another think coming." And so it went. Gleason not only had to sleep in fields and fence corners, but he couldn't get enough to eat. With tattered

clothes, unkempt hair, broken shoes, he was actually an outcast.

In the entire distance covered by his experiment, he found only two individuals who did not treat him with indifference or worse—one was a waitress in a restaurant and the other a dog. Gleason got home at last, but with a shaken faith. He stands ready to argue the "man and the clothes" question with any and all comers.

HEN IS THE GREAT WEALTH PRODUCER

Annual Egg and Poultry Earnings of the Country Amount to \$280,000,000

With the strength born of government statistics Franklin Forbes contends in the current Success Magazine that the mother of the American chicken is at once the most productive as she is the most reliable of all of our industrial money-makers. The last census of poultry of the United States showed that the total number of chickens was 233,598,085; turkeys, 6,599,367; geese, 5,676,863, and ducks, 4,807,358. Eighty-nine and one-eighth per cent of the farms of this country had poultry as an asset. At least 250,000,000 chickens, to say nothing of other kinds of poultry, are consumed each year. According to the government authorities "egg and poultry earnings" for one recent year amounted to \$280,000,000. The total value of the gold, silver, wool and sheep produced in America during the year in question was \$272,434,315. The sugar production of the country the same year was but \$20,000,000. That part of the wheat crop used at home, which many consider the most valuable of all our agricultural products, was worth \$229,000,000. The great American hog, as consumed at home and abroad, brought \$186,529,035. The value of the oat crop was \$78,984,900. Potatoes grown in the United States were valued at nearly as large a sum as were the oats. The product of tobacco plantations was estimated to be worth \$35,579,225. Cotton, the dethroned king of staples, could show only 259,161,640, as against the magnificent earnings of its feathered rival. The crops of flax, timothy, clover, millet and cane seeds, broom corn, castor beans, hay straw, and so forth, couldn't, all told, come within a measurable distance of many millions of the poultry earnings. The hens' eggs produced in this country annually would fill 43,127,000 crates, each of the latter holding 360 eggs; also, a train of refrigerator cars to carry these eggs would be nearly 900 miles long; furthermore, it would take 107,818 such cars to make up the train. The ideal hen, Mr. Forbes discovers through the scientists, should lay about two hundred eggs a year. There are many gifted creatures of this sort, and millions would be added to the national wealth if all chickens could be persuaded to make such performances their ambition.

PRESIDENT MUST SEND ANOTHER MAN

J. Martin Miller, Stationed at Aix-la-Chapelle, Persona Non Grata to Germany

Washington, Sept. 5.—President Roosevelt has now before him the case of J. Martin Miller, the United States consul at Aix-la-Chapelle, who is persona non grata to the German government, and who will be in another berth in the consular service unless the president decides to retire him.

When an officer is objectionable to a government to which he is accredited, there is no alternative for the government he represents but to send another person who is acceptable.

Miller, during his service as a newspaper correspondent, procured an interview with Admiral Dewey, who criticized the German navy unfavorably. In 1898 Miller visited Samoa when Germany, Great Britain and the United States were in difficulties over these islands. He wrote an article in which he told how the German government had deported King Maataafa and declared it was behind the scheme to place young Maliteao on the throne.

The natives rebelled against this scheme. During the Boxer trouble in China Miller also offended the German government by writing an account of the difficulty between Field Marshal Count von Waldersee and General Chaffee over the division of rations of the forces. This article reflected on General von Waldersee.

Harvester Trust to Invade New Zealand

London, Sept. 7.—The Times correspondent at Wellington, New Zealand, says:

"The operations of the American Harvester trust are seriously menacing the prosperity of New Zealand implement makers. The manufacturers recognize that even a protective tariff of 20 per cent would be unavailing. A deputation today asked the government to prevent the trust from doing business. The premier intimated that the government would proceed with the monopolies prevention bill.