

ONE SHILLING a year, Post
The Manchester Land Val

6594

The Dingle, Chester
Hazel Grove, nr. Man

THE PORCUPIN

(WITH SOME TELLING POINTS)

No. 205.

July & August

A SILLY TALE ABOUT AN ASS.

A story is told of Demosthenes who, finding the mob in-
to the dangers confronting them, exclaimed "Oh men of Athen
speak to you of the dangers threatening your country you wi
listen. But how you press about me if I tell you a silly
about an ass!"

Not all silly tales are about asses nor are they all i
to amuse. Modern examples are generally designed to pacif
or to excuse the shortcomings of their rulers. It is a dis
(ought that two thousand years after the time of Demosthen
still listen readily to silly tales and turn a deaf ear to
explain the way to economic salvation.

Some of them.

When the Minister of Health (Mr. Bevan) said he confid
expected that every family in Great Britain would have a se
home before the next election he was probably sincere. Bu
'tale' was silly because he ignored the underlying cause of
housing problea and did not propose to remove it.

Another silly tale is that employment depends on spend
"Everybody's job depends on someone else's outlay," says Ba
Wootton, and Sir Wm. Beveridge and his followers urge us to
lavishly to provide employment. As in the natural order sp
is made possible by the production of wealth, and outlay do
on employment and not employment on outlay, this silly tale
have been invented by people ignorant of the elementary pri
of economics, or was intended to distract attention from th
Monopoly which prevents employment and causes involuntary p

Among the silly tales told by politicians and other le
of public opinion are those which misrepresent and condem
ful human desires and actions. One of these is that deliv
(rom poverty and strife can be achieved by man changing his

instincts and motives, and that if he does not de-humanise a central authority can do it for him. He must suppress instinct to make greater efforts to obtain desirable things they are scarce (by paying more for them) and must abandon very natural desire for advantage or gain in his employment business activities. This tale is in the form of critical condemnation of what are known as the Law of Supply and Demand and the Profit Motive; it serves to obscure the real cause of ills and tends to perpetuate the unjust distribution of wealth. Poverty is not due to defects in human nature, but to iniquitous human institutions which deprive the people of their natural right to employ themselves in producing their requirements by using natural resources - land. The first step towards restoring right must be the removal of the Land Monopoly: the privatisation and control of Mother Earth.

The most mischievous-

Perhaps the most mischievous of silly tales is that it gives the advantages of civilised life to the individuals of the community; that they are therefore indebted to the State and are in duty bound to obey whatever orders the government makes. A dictionary definition of the State is "a whole people united into one body; a commonwealth." The State therefore includes all individual members, and the benefits of communal life enjoyed by each individual must be conferred by all of them, including themselves. Not only does every man receive these benefits but he also owes them to others, and consequently his debt for what his fellow citizens for him is discharged by what he does for them - his own contributions to the common well-being.

It is said there was once a Professor who was so stupid after a time other professors noticed it. Silly tales such as above have been told to the people for generations, but few notice their stupidity. The real character of such tried slogans will be noticed when people take an interest in their own affairs. The output of policies guaranteed to 'do something' without disturbing vested interests is endless, and they are all headed by 'reformers' who learn nothing from experience and who apply radical remedies as out-of-date. Only through Equality of Opportunity can progress towards Freedom and Justice be made, and George has shown in "Progress & Poverty" that this can be achieved by means of Land Values Taxation and the Untaxing of Industry.

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WHY LAND SPECULATION?

The death of the Marquess of Bute recalls the story of the purchase of half of the city of Cardiff in 1938 for £20,000,000.

Property included 20,000 houses, 1,000 shops, 250 public-houses and theatres and cinemas.

What did the purchasers get for their money? They did pay £20,000,000 to get possession of the place and turn out the population. On the contrary, it was the population that made the investment attractive; in effect, the investors bought the people as well as the houses and shops. Without the people, the build-up (being immovable) would have been practically worthless, whereas the people (being mobile) would be valuable wherever situated - a swarm of bees. When land is bought for speculation, as in the case of Cardiff, the price paid is mainly for a legal right to be transferred from the original owner to the purchaser. It is a right which levies a private tax on the industry of the people living and working on the land, and the probability that they will continue to work there gives this right a market-value. The 'tax' is called ground-rent, and the purchase price of the right to collect its estimated annual yield, capitalised. Investments of this kind are regarded as safe and sound, not because land is immovable and indestructible, but because the people are accustomed to be exploited and are easily side-tracked.

How it began.

"The first person who enclosed a piece of land and both himself to say 'This is mine', and found people foolish enough to believe him, was the real founder of our social system. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would have been spared to mankind if somebody had torn down the stakes or filled up the ditch, and had warned his fellows: 'Beware of listening to this imposter.'" (Rousseau)

How to end it.

The Great Robbery began when land was first treated as property, and it has continued, annually, until the present. It can be brought to an end by transferring the ground-rents (and their values) from the pockets of the land-lords to the public authorities and using them to finance the public services. And the simple and practical method by which this can be done is the Taxation and Rating of all the land on its selling value, and the un-taxing and un-rating of homes and industry of all kinds.

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"DID YOU EVER SEE a pail of swill given to a pen of hungry hogs? That is human society as it is. Did you ever see a company of well-bred men and women sitting down to a good dinner, without scolding or jostling or gluttony, each knowing that his own appetite is satisfied, deferring to and helping the others? That is human society as it might be." (Henry George in "Social Problems")

"GATECRASHING" INTO EMPLOYMENT.

Replying to a question on the employment of aliens, Mr Edwards, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, May 20th that aliens who came to this country on compassion grounds ought not to "gatecrash into employment." In view present shortage of man-power and the Ministry's search for foreign labour, the "Manchester Guardian" was justified in ascribing Mr. Edwards' remark as "a burst of ignorant spleen." "Closed shop" mentality.

Another example of the 'closed shop' mentality was the of Bolton bricklayers to work with trainees, i.e. men learn lay bricks. But foolish and un-brotherly as this attitude is a result of fear - a fear of unemployment. Work is to be a boon. This fear is always before the workers and it will persist until the cause of unemployment is understood and removed. In a world overflowing with natural opportunities for production and populations clamouring for commodities and services of all kinds, unemployment is a tragic absurdity.

The "Right to Work."

Work is neither a right nor a privilege. It is a duty and an opportunity to work which is a right. But this right is denied and land is treated as the property of a few privileged people. Where this privilege is cancelled and Nature's provision for human enjoyment by all, a new era of abundance and peace will have

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NATURAL RIGHTS.

"The natural right which each man has, is not that of demanding employment or wages from another man, but that of employing himself - that of applying by his own labour to the inexhaustible storehouse which the Creator has in the land provided for a people. Were that storehouse open, as by the single tax (Taxation on the Unimproved Value) we would open it, the natural demand for labour would be in perfect pace with the supply; the man who sold labour and the man who bought it would become free exchangers for mutual advantage and all cause for dispute between workman and employer would be removed. For then, all being free to employ themselves, the mere opportunity to labour would cease to seem a boon. And since no-one would be forced to work for another for less, all things considered, than he could be working for himself, wages would necessarily rise to their full value, and the relations of workman and employer be regulated by mutual interest and convenience." (From "The Condition of the Working Classes in Great Britain" by Henry George).

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