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**EDITORIAL** 

## LIBERIA WANTS CAPITAL.

## By DANIEL DE LEON

HE homing United States Consul from the Republic of Liberia, is yelling:
"Capital!" "Capital!" "Liberia wants capital!"

What! Liberia with a territory larger than Texas New York Ohio and

What! Liberia, with a territory larger than Texas, New York, Ohio and Massachusetts combined! What, Liberia, capable of plentifully yielding such staples as rubber, cotton, coffee, sugar, rice, to say nothing of ginger, arrow-root and cocoa! What, Liberia with a population of over 1,500,000 inhabitants, landowners, at that,—what, that country needs capital?

What becomes of the Single Tax theory concerning the all-sufficiency of land to "live, love and enjoy life"? Here we have a vast tract of land, not barren rocks, but with her womb teeming with the necessaries of life; with an ample population owning the land; with every bit of 500,000 pairs of arms able to apply the 5,000,000 nails at the extremities of the same to the said land;—in short, according to all the canons of Single Taxism, here we have in that Liberia the ideal spot for realization of the Single Tax ideal "Land and Labor." And yet Liberia "wants capital"!?! What's the matter with Liberia, anyhow? Is the United States Consul lying? No; he is uttering a pregnant truth.

It is with no expectation of making the slightest impression upon the monomaniacal Single Taxer that the above paradox is recorded. The paradox is, however, of deep interest to those who realize that the evils of the present regime are not to be removed by a sort of social "trick," and perceive an evolutionary fact, which to grasp is a condition precedent for getting out of the present social wilderness.

Liberia is "land poor." Ownership of land and poverty was one time in man's history a contradiction in terms. He who owned land was all-sufficient unto himself. From the direct embrace of Man and Nature sprung at least a sufficiency. That

state of things exists no more. Nature has, as it were, receded from Man. His arms can no longer reach her. What has happened? A physical landslide? A successful conspiracy of rascals? Nothing of the sort.

The silent, steady operation of an Economic Law, without the grasping of which social evolution presents only chaos, slowly wrought its effect, finally raising between Man and Nature that without which Nature is unavailable—as unavailable as the cry from Liberia denotes. That Economic Law is the Law of Value; that growth that now separates Man from Nature is Capital, that is, the upto-date improved mechanism of production—agricultural as well as urban.

Isaiah may have urged the unity of the world's peoples; Plato may have philosophized in the same direction; Jesus may have suffered execution in pursuit of the same ideal—all in vain. The Law of Value wrought the miracle. The peoples of the world are, by that law, hooped to-day into one—the World's Market. As impossible as the operation of the Law of Value renders access to Nature on the part of the Man without Capital, and subjects him to the Man with Capital, just so impossible does the operation of the same Law render the access to Nature on the part of a Capital-less nation, and sets her howling, as Liberia is now doing, for the needed intermediary wherewith to reach the Land to a purpose.

The Law of Value has hooped the peoples of the world together, and yet the state of war, decried by Prophet, Philosopher and Martyr, prevails; the state of peace, urged by all, still is absent. It remains for Socialism, profiting by the Law and the possibilities it has encompassed, to turn the hoop, now a galling iron band, into a bond of fraternity. The Economic Law of Value tells how—by the collective ownership of the intermediary without which Nature is no longer to be reached. Until that day, both the individual Capital-less Man, and the Liberias must remain the dependents of the Capitalist.

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