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EDITORIAL

## BERGER'S MISS NO. 10.

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**O**N June 10 the Single Tax was on exhibition in the House. In justice to Representative Henry George, Jr., from New York, it must be said that it was none of his fault the exhibition was not complete. He did his part well. The exhibition fell short of perfection due to Victor L. Berger's wholly failing in his part.

So far as Henry George, Jr., was concerned, the speech he delivered on that day unveiled the leading beauty-spots of Single-Taxism. Nothing worth mentioning, on that head, was withheld from the spectators:—

Single Tax duplicity was exhibited in the claim that the Single Tax did not “propose to change titles”—as tho' the landlord was a title-lord—as tho' what moved the landlord was the theoretic enjoyment of title to, and not the material rental yield of the land—as though the “land values,” so-called, being taxed away from, there was anything worth keeping left to the landlord. Single Tax duplicity, hence conscious weakness, was well exhibited.

Single Tax comical economics came out strong in the statement that “value proceeds not only from labor, but from a power to exact labor”—like saying that a race horse's speed proceeds not from the horse's sinews and muscles, but from the whip in the hand of the jockey on his back.

Single Tax patent-medicine-drummer's characteristics stood out in bold relief in the lengthy passages about wonderful progress made by the Single Tax in far away lands—just as drummers of quack nostrums declaim of wonderful cures effected there and yonder, everywhere—except in the place where the drummer happens to be holding forth.

Single Tax half-truth was displayed in the instancing of the raising of the tax on land in many localities as evidences of Single Taxism—as though the periodical

raising of the tax on land were not a well known fiscal move, disconnected from and free of all Single Tax sociologic pretensions.

Single Tax shallowness leaped to sight in the belief that the howls of the British feudal lords at the Lloyd George budget—the immediate effect of which is the revaluation of land which now “stood valued as it was in the days when the Norman William crossed the Channel and took the crown from the Saxon Harold”—was an evidence of Single Tax up-to-dateness in social demands, whereas what the howls do demonstrate is the Socialist tenet to the effect that the Single Tax is a sociologic back-number, a weapon borrowed from the arsenal of the French bourgeois, resorted to by him when, in the days of his revolution, he fought to overthrow his feudal masters and to subject the proletariat to himself.

To the exhibition of all these and kindred Single Tax features, such as Recklessness and Sweepiness of statement, as also Cocksurenness, Representative Henry George, Jr., attended to to perfection, himself. When he was through the Single Tax stood out, well defined, as one of the plants spoken of in the Bible that spring up rank because they have no deepness of earth.

It was thereupon the cue, it was the duty, of Representative Victor L. Berger to put the finishing touch to the picture, so far drawn so well. That finishing touch could have been put with one short question. Nor would there have been any difficulty to put the same, seeing that Mr. George, Jr., was the pink of courtesy towards questioners, in fact, panted after questions. The question would have been:

“The, Single Tax claims, as its central virtue, that it will render access to land, that is, to natural opportunities, equal to all. In what way will the land become more accessible to the proletariat, the class that has nothing to work with but its finger nails?”

Many a lovable man and woman there are in the Single Tax. To them no offense is meant by saying that the above question invariably transforms the Single Tax into a rat in a trap when the lid has clicked fast.

Endeavoring to escape, the Single Tax rat rushes in one direction, and bumps its nose against the bar of the principle of political economy to the effect that, between Man and Nature (Land or Natural Opportunities), there has risen a Social creature, the Machinery of Production, with which Land becomes accessible, with-

out which Land remains inaccessible.

His nose being bumped against that bar, the Single Tax rat scurries in the opposite direction, only to thump his nose against another bar—the principle of sociology to the effect that, the Machinery of Production being private property, that is, Capital, the proletariat can exercise its labor functions only with the consent of the private owners of the said Machinery, that is, of the Capitalist Class, and that the consent is not granted but upon condition that the proletariat sell itself into wage slavery.

Thumped against that second bar the Single Tax rat ricochets with his nose in some other direction only again to go smack against another bar—the bar of another economic principle to the effect that, even if, under capitalism, access be allowed to broader areas of land, such is, on the one hand, the concentration of economic power now at the capitalist's command, and, on the other hand, the hugeness of the unemployed, that conditions will remain practically unimproved for these, and the status of wage slavery unchanged.

A third time jolted against a bar of the trap he is in, the Single Tax rat will dart elsewhere, only to dash his nose against still another bar, the bar of economic logic, a bar into which not the slightest dent can be effected, the logic according to which, upon the same principle that if, of two wolves which were in the habit of sharing between them the lamb they jointly caught, one is killed off, the surviving wolf will not content himself with half a lamb: he will devour the whole lamb himself. To-day the hide of the proletariat is shared between Capitalist and Landlord. Suppress the Landlord wolf, and the Capitalist wolf will appropriate the whole proletarian hide.

Furious at the bump his nose received at this last bar, the Single Tax rat will plunge with a bang against still another bar, the philologic bar which, through the modern term “land poor,” brings home to him the fact that things have wholly changed since the archaic times when “white parasols and elephants mad with pride” were the fruits of a deed of land.

And so our Single Tax rat will make the rounds of the bars of the cage in which the above stated question confines him. With increasing rage will he bump himself from bar to bar. Until, at last, demented, and his nose all swollen and bloody, he

will sit, as at bay, on his haunches, show his teeth, and, grinding them, spit out:

“Socialist!”

“Tyranny!”

“I don’t want the State to dictate to me what color of handkerchief I shall blow my nose in!”

By failing to put to Representative Henry George, Jr., the question—“In what way will the land become more accessible to the proletariat under the Single Tax?”—the “first and only Socialist” in Congress fell blameworthy short of his duty to exhibit the Single Tax bourgeois anachronism upon the stage and with the settings of Congress; expose it in all the fullness of its features; show it off in the completeness of its image; and unveil it in its tell-tale form and pressure.

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