

in rhyming prose, embodying, or concluding with, one or more stanzas of rhymed and metrical verse. The translator has not attempted to reproduce the form of the original. A brief example of such a reproduction, taking only the ordinary liberties with the text, may be given for illustration. The exordium of the quack, for instance, goes somewhat thus:

"I am he that cometh from the days of old—that hath escaped from dangers dire and manifold—from howling tempest and raging wave—perils numberless to daunt the heart of the brave \* \* \* From the land of Elam I set forth—to journey unto the very ends of the earth—seeking out all the sages of highest worth—" etc., etc.

Unlike most of the famous Hebrew writers of Moorish Spain and Africa, Charizi was not a physician, but purely a man of letters. There is no indication of any desire for technically accurate terminology in this "skit," and indeed there is no call for it. The peculiar groupings of diseases in the quack's discourse are apparently associations of rhyme, rather than reason.

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### UNTAXING INDUSTRY.\*

BY CHAS. G. MERRELL.

I have often wondered why it was that when a machine is first invented, it is always complicated with cams, springs and numerous other parts that are afterwards eliminated in the improvements that follow.

Nearly every invention, when finally perfected, is simplicity itself as compared with the original complicated and cumbersome affair that constituted the original expression of the inventor's ideas.

Once in a while, a simple and really useful invention appears and everybody wonders why he did not think of it before. So it is with our taxation machine. Now that the new census is about to be taken, we are coming to realize that we have been using very cumbersome and expensive methods for collecting the decennial statistics of the progress and growth of our country. The simplicity of the draft machinery has thrown a new light on the possibilities of simplifying the census.

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Our taxation machinery from the very beginning has been cumbersome, expensive and terribly wasteful and has been wrong in almost every particular, largely because the subject was not approached from the right point of view.

Taxation, according to the ability to pay, is wrong in principle, and strange as it may seem, it results in taxes falling heaviest upon those least able to pay and, at the same time, it penalizes industry and thrift and encourages idleness on the part of the wealthy, who find it more profitable under the present system to exploit the industry of others, and on the part of the poor, who become so discouraged with efforts to secure a competency by honest toil, that many throw up their hands and give up the fight with the exclamation "What's the use?"

Anyone who will consider the subject for a moment, without prejudice and out of the rut of old conceptions, will assent at once to the fundamental idea that taxes are necessary for the support of the Government and should, therefore, be

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\* From *Ohio Site Taxer*, June, 1919. See Mr. Merrell's letter under Correspondence in this issue of the JOURNAL.

paid out of the values created by the Government, in proportion as the individual citizen utilizes those values to the exclusion of his neighbor. But how different this simple formula of taxation from the complicated systems of the past or present.

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In the last century they taxed windows in houses in England because windows were looked upon as luxuries, and it was supposed the people who could afford them could also afford taxation. The actual result was an increase of tuberculosis, because the poor who could not afford both windows and the taxes which went with them, had to do without them and they and their children suffered from lack of light and air; and so it is with other taxes of a similar kind and so it is with the taxes today in the drug trade.

Medicines which are sold by the druggist to those who are too poor to have a physician, are taxed; these represent the modern phase of household remedies, such as our grandparents used to such good purpose in treating the simple ailments, which even the physician of today regards as beneath his attention. Cosmetics for the toilet, to aid in the external appearance, which modern civilization has encouraged, are all taxed as though they were something that ought to be shunned, for we must not forget that taxation discourages use. This is recognized even by those who framed the present excise tax laws, where they have excluded inexpensive wearing apparel from taxation and have taxed the same articles when sold above a certain price, because of superior quality or added beauty.

We spend thousands of dollars every year for boards of health, sanitary measures, public health service, and yet the wisdom of our legislators at Washington can go no farther than to select the drug trade as a special object of taxation, as there have been imposed on articles handled by the druggist some nine or ten different taxes that do not apply to other lines of business.

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The stifling effect on industry of any of the present forms of taxation is illustrated in a news item, which tells us that in the British empire it is now proposed to establish preferential rates on British goods. Japan is contemplating government subsidies and immunity from taxation on certain industries that are to be encouraged. If immunity from taxation encourages industry, the converse must be true—that taxation discourages industry, and I need not tell anyone that this is just the thing we do not want to do. The one thing above all others that is necessary at this time in this reconstruction period is to encourage industry. Therefore, let us take the taxes from industry.

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But if we discard all of our present taxes, you ask where can we raise the revenue for supporting the Government? We come then to the simplified machinery of taxation (and it is simplicity itself) as outlined in the writings of Henry George. He proposed that instead of taxing industry or the products of industry, and it is the same thing, whichever way we do it, to levy one tax on land values and on these alone. Land is not the product of labor or industry. It is the common gift of the Creator to all mankind. But land has no value, except as it is made by the community and as we would preserve inviolate the products

of labor to the laborer so we would preserve to the community the values which it creates.

It is a remarkable fact that these community values or site values of land increase in proportion as the needs of the community develop and it would seem to be a provision of Providence that this site value or community value was created to meet the needs of a growing community, such as city government with its fire and police protection and multiplicity of other governmental functions.

Another advantage of this single tax on land values is that it does not increase the price of land to those who wish to use it as is the case when we tax any other commodity, but it decreases the cost of land, whether it be employed for farms, for homes or for business, because it brings more land into use instead of keeping more than half of it held out of use; it increases industrial opportunities and at the same time lowers prices on the basic needs of the people.

The drug trade has spent thousands of dollars and years of the time of its active members in trying to protect itself against the unjust taxation which has been levied upon this particular industry. In fact, the fight at Washington and often in our state legislatures has been to shift the burden of taxation from one point to another, affecting one industry after another in an adverse manner.

Why not let us all get together and work for a simplified, just and equitable form of taxation, which will free industry from the burden under which it has labored these many years, which will be of benefit to everyone in the community seeking to earn an honest livelihood by honest efforts and will affect no one but the land speculator, who is, after all, but an obstruction in the progress of our country and a burden upon industry as a whole?

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It is significant that in the platform of four great labor parties is found practically the same plank, which is quoted below from one of the declarations of the so-called "Labor's fourteen points:"

"Payment of the current expenses of government by a system of taxation of land values which will stimulate rather than retard production."

The simple plan of Henry George, which, twenty years ago, was regarded as the theory of a dreamer, is now adopted as a principle by the leading representatives of labor in this country, and, on the other hand, is being recognized by an increasing number of manufacturers and merchants as the only way out of the difficulties that have hampered industry in the years gone by. Not only is the plan simple but its execution would be more economical than any other form of taxation and less subject to chicanery and bribery, because the records would be so simple and open any inequality would be obvious.

Every thinking citizen who wishes to be free of the eternal squabble over new forms of taxation should study the teachings of Henry George. If he does this with an open and intelligent mind, he will, I am convinced, become an ardent disciple of the single tax and should also become one of its apostles, preaching to others what he himself believes, that in the single tax will be the best solution of the problem of taxation.

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