A Report on Land Reform.

Delivered Nov. 2nd. 1852.

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Mr. Pdt. Ladies & Gentlemen:

The Subject which I wish to present before your minds this evening is one of great importance. To my mind, no other subject has greater claims to our consideration and action than Land Reform. And for very many reasons, some of which however shall make a part of this report. I would then, in the first place consider the relations which exist between Land & Labor; & offer this as one reason why a reform is needed. No one will deny the right to labor; while on the other hand few will maintain that we are under no obligation to do so. It is the first great duty of all ablebodied men and women, & there is none which is more solemn. Man is a consuming animal. He does not only need food for the sustenance of the body; but he also needs clothing to protect him from exposure, and the inclemencies of the weather. But how

does he obtain these necessaries, & from whence do they come? It requires but a moments consideration for us to determine the fact that they all come from the soil. Is man a begetarian? Every species of grain, edible plant or whatsoever he spreads upon his table, grows out of the soil, & matures in the light of the sun which warms them into life, The dews & the more abundant showers are necessary to satisfy their thirst, while the air is no less so in the composition of its several parts all of which are assimilated from the soil. Is man carniverous? Every kind of food which is prepared for his consumption, is furnished by the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, or the beasts of the field. None of these however can exist, without, either directly or indirectly, drawing their support from the earth itself. — But it is not only necessary that man ~~is~~ Should be supplied with food, & that he Should be obliged to look to the soil for its production;

but he must also have a habitation; and where shall this be, if not on the soil? The fact here presses itself on the mind of every man, that he cannot exist without the use of the elements of nature,—the air, the light, the water and the land. On coming into the world, man must breathe, & the air presses freely upon his lungs; & though we may endeavor to escape from the atmosphere in which we are immersed, by shutting ourselves up in poorly ventilated rooms in crowded villages & cities, yet we cannot escape from it: however much we may poison it by such a course of procedure. ——

The next want which presents itself to the new-born stranger is food, & lo! the fruits hang in clusters in the Eden of God until man has had an opportunity to sow & reap for himself. All he has to do in the beginning is to pluck & eat. Nature is so lavish of her stores that she withholds not one of the

richest of her gifts if they be needed by man. All are free & unconfined in their ministration to the necessities of man. ——— ———

In those tropical regions where food was cultivated by the industrious hand of nature Man first appeared naked; but being moved by the strong muscles & restless energies with which he was endowed, he soon clothed himself & migrated to other climes. As he advanced in civilization, his connection with the products of the soil became more intimate: so much so, that it was absolutely necessary that he should individually possess a certain spot of ground, & settle in a permanent habitation so soon as he forsook the barbarian or migratory life. Previous to this civilization, he could roam with almost as much freedom as the beast which he hunted down for his food & raiment. But now, after he had settled in a permanent home he was thrown more directly upon the

resources of that labor which he might expend in the cultivation of the soil. It was then that the question of individual possession of the soil arose. It was then that every one felt the necessity of having a portion of the earth set apart for his own use, & recognized as such exclusively. Man's connection with the soil therefore, is as intimate as the connection of the different organs of his own body. Separate but one vital organ, & the whole must perish. Sever man from the soil, make him an outcast from the earth, without a space that he can call his own & he dies at once; for he cannot survive such violence unless he be taken under the roof of charity & bountifully fed from the products of another man's labor. ——— Thus we have found two great channels through which flow all the necessaries of life. These are Land & Labor. The former produces all things

when the latter is made freely to operate upon it. It therefore shows us that the most intimate relations exist between them. They are the two vital agents of production for the sustenance of human life. It is most evident then, that the most destructive consequences must follow the least disturbance of these relations. —— Naturally the utmost harmony exists between them. The land lies before us, inviting the hand of the cultivator, welcoming the seed of the sower, & promising an abundant harvest to the reaper. Naturally too, labor is ever ready to engage in the cultivation of the earth, & rejoices in expanding its energies as it feels itself impelled by the elastic springs of the human body. Man is naturally active, & not indolent. This is seen in the young infant after its physical powers have somewhat developed themselves. See! with what continual motion of the hands & feet it

shows to all around that it is made an active working being. Its bones & muscles tire by inaction, & spontaneously move, without scarcely a command from the will, except perhaps as to the direction in which it will apply its efforts. It requires the violent force of the will to put the body in motion, only when the law of action has been satisfied, & rest is demanded. In the state of nature & justice no one would be compelled to force himself to labor; for in her there is no compulsion, no force. All things are free. But how very different is the actual condition of labor! Not an individual who is free from constraint. Every man & woman, under a false legal & educational system, is governed more by force, & is made to act more by the compulsion of circumstances, than by the freedom of his own nature. With all compulsion there is pain & unhappiness; on the contrary every movement which is free & natural is attend-

ed with ~~the most exquisite~~ pleasure. This may have been fairly illustrated in the experience of every one present in some period of life when the body was uncontrolled by outward circumstances. ——— ———

What is the cause then, of this almost universal constraint, this general painfulness of exertion, this absence of natural freedom & pleasure? Is not the primary cause found in the sundered relation of Land & Labor? The soil should be dedicated to labor & held sacred to its use alone. This I think is self evident. It meets the response of every head & every heart. The Land calls for Labor, & Labor cries out for Land on which it is to expend its energies for a useful purpose. But, amidst all the falsehoods which are received among men, & practiced so generally; none can take the precedence of that which rejects this great truth, that the earth belongs to human toil. The Land does not belong to Labor under the laws of man. Those who are desirous to work upon it, are not permitte

to do so according to the promptings & unmistakeable suggestions of Nature & Justice. A price is put upon that which should be as free as the air we breathe, the light we look through, or the water we drink. The naked man as he comes from the hand of his Creator has no price to pay, or the means of doing so, consequently he is cut off from his natural connection with the soil. He cannot be admitted to the bosom of his mother earth, nor permitted to labor on the soil until he has first hired out his bones & muscles for a price, — until he has sold their use to a landlord or Capitalist for a consideration. Then, if he has accumulated enough through this forced labor, to pay the price which the law & false circumstances demand, he may become an owner of the soil. A right on a morsel of parchment is made out for & given to him! O what a condescension on the part of the Despots & tyrants of the world! Republics as well as Monarchies. ——— ———

From this exclusion of man from the soil, flow

all servitude & slavery, all poverty & ignorance, all crime & misery, that can proceed from the violation of so fundamental a principle of humanity & justice. It is the most violent breach that can be made in the System of Nature & of God. The people are cast out from the earth & made pensioners on the bounty of heartless monopolists, who wield their power by the force of legal wrong, of shrewd capacity, of unscrupulous conscience, & of the competition among those who must have bread at their hands or starve. I know hundreds of acres of soil in the interior of Pennsylvania that are held by monopolists who will not sell under a given price, while hundreds of poor men in the immediate vicinity are obliged to toil day & night almost, for bread, while at the same time they are utterly destitute of a home. Situated as they are, with a forest of many miles in extent before & behind them, they are very far removed from the comforts of a more highly cultivated & civilized state of

society. Thus we have a race of semi Barbarians in the midst of civilized life. ——————

As the land is not dedicated to labor, to what is it consecrated? (I had almost said desecrated.) As it is not held sacred to those who wish to expend their labor upon it, to what uses is it devoted? There must be something wrong in taking a natural element of production from those human energies that are ever anxious to engage in useful effort. But to what purposes is the land devoted. The land which man had no hand in forming; but which God made for the use of mankind; not for a part of mankind, but for all mankind without distinction of persons? No sex, no condition, nor color, was designed by God to be excluded from the possession of the soil which he created. This is the conclusion of the natural man, the unsophisticated reason & the unperverted feelings with which he is endowed. They deem it impossible to take the land out of

the hands of the Creator & devote it to purposes which he never designed it should be devoted to. But to whom & to what is the earth assigned? It is set apart by the laws of the land to the ambitious the avaricious & the proud. Those who have the most money can control the larger portion of the earth. The manufacturer in a distant city or country may hold thousands of acres of Land with a despotic sway, simply because he has a few hundred thousand dollars at his command which he does not need in the furtherance of his business or ease at home. There he can repose in all the ease, elegance & luxury of life; while the poor operative in his mill is dragging out a miserable existence for the present, to enable him to procure a home in the future. But, while he is thus indulging in beautiful anticipations of the future one monopolist after the other steps in to take possession of the uncultivated wilds of a new world for the mere purposes of speculation & extortion. Thousands of men have gone to

realize their long cherished hopes & desires, who have possessed little besides their healthy bones & muscles, & their resolute wills; & when they have arrived ~~to~~ at the place where they had hoped to rear their humble mansion how have their hearts sunk within them when they found the vast wilderness all around, already in the possession of the gormandizer of earth. Here they are, anxious to clear the forest, turn the sod & cast in the seed & reap the harvest, but this monster in the shape of a man forbids it by a penalty of exorbitancy which the law gives him power to claim & recover. He will not, nor can he use this land himself; yet he prevents the landless, the homeless & the anxious to be industrious, from entering & improving for themselves. If they would have a home, they must necessarily go very much farther into the wilderness to secure it. But, it may be, that their means for proceeding farther are exhausted. There while the rich capitalist is revelling in the

aggrandizement which the possession of his broad acres has thrown around him in ministering to his own pride, the heart of his fellowman on the very verge of the wilderness is crushed. He feels that the privation & labor of many years are lost. Hence he sits down & gives himself up to despair, until his wants press him to forget his sorrows for the present, & go to obtain their satisfaction. He may do it properly, rightfully & honestly: but how great are the inducements to do otherwise? And may this not be adduced as a reason why selfishness exists to a greater extent in the west than anywhere else, if you except our large towns & cities in the East? And may it not also be a reason why mental & moral culture receive so little attention comparatively with other portions of our country? Such is the purpose to which the earth is devoted, & such is the manner in which the relations of Land & Labor are sundered. Man is not more disabled by cutting off his right arm, than by depriving him of the free use of the

soil. It is not death necessarily, to destroy the right arm, but it is death to prevent free access to the earth, should those who control it do as they have a perfect right to do, refuse to extend the hand of charity to the outcast. It is true, that those who possess the soil must have it cultivated & hence are necessarily obliged to procure the services of the laborer. But who does not know that in the present state of society it is deemed a matter of charity to give a place to a poor laborer at ten or twelve dollars per month to do all the work about the house & eat the bread of carefulness ~~[illegible]~~ as a part of the kind & charitable donation. The landless & penniless poor would perish if it were not for this species of charity, because they cannot live without the produce of the soil, to which they are denied access. How palpable then, is the truth, that labor has a natural & inalienable right to the soil! It is inalienable, because no one has a right to cripple his own energies; though

it does not forbid any one to change his locality. Here is a point which I wish distinctly to be understood; that however much I would favor a permanency of abode so as to make the endearments of home lasting as they should be, yet I would not confine any one to a particular portion of land & forbid his exchanging it for another when it no longer suited his convenience or answered his purposes I have now considered the relations of Land & Labor; the next point to which I would direct your attention is Property in Land. ——

~~Property in a general sense should be well defined~~ & understood so far as its rights & boundaries are concerned; for there is no fibre of Society either social, religious or political that it not reached by it in one way or the other. The accumulation of property is the great business of life. Few are ever satisfied with what they have, as their appetite seem to be increased by the very thing it feeds upon The holiest emotions & purest thoughts are suppressed

by this allabsorbing passion. ——

Political Economists too, have overlooked this matter: for had they clearly defined the nature, uses & obligations of property much, if not all of the present evil of which we feel called upon to complain, would be removed. One writer upon this subject says that "Political Economy regards the right of property solely as the most powerful of all encouragements to the multiplication of wealth, & is satisfied with its actual Stability, without inquiring about its origin or its safeguards." Thus you see National wealth in the aggregate only is taken into the account, while the means by which it may be distributed justly among the people as an essential condition of general plenty & happiness is overlooked. The passion for wealth is extolled, & aggrandizement founded on vast accumulations sacrilegiously consecrated. Another writer says that "property is the nourisher of mankind, incentive to industry & cement of human society."

But when we consider that the masses of mankind toil only for their daily bread, had he not better said that property was the leech of mankind, which drew out the lifeblood of the laboring classes? & instead of property being an incentive to industry, is it not rather the fear of Starvation? Does property impel the Three millions of Slaves to labor industriously, & as far as they are concerned, does it cement Society? Does the unjust distribution of the rewards of labor among the operatives & dependents of the free States impel to industry & a more compact union of Society? I answer unhesitatingly, No! It discourages industry & disorganizes Society, so that in every village you find a set of idlers & loungers who hold labor in contempt, & look down upon those who are engaged in it. Yea more than this! it has even an influence upon otherwise good men, who make the distinction between themselves & their hirelings as though they were not created out of the same material, nor destined to occupy the same heaven with themselves: just as

if God had created a heaven for the Aristocracy, & another for the workocracy of mankind.— But another author of Political Economy says: "The perpetuation of property in our families is the most valuable & interesting circumstance attending it; that which demonstrates most of a benevolent disposition in its owners, & that which tends most to the perpetuation of Society itself." This is what I would call a narrowing down of the principle already laid down by these Economists. Here we are to forget all, outside of our own kith & kin, in the accumulation & distribution of property. Who can blame individuals for overlooking everything that is truly great & noble, when they have imbibed such teachings as these? No wonder that the energies of soul & body are devoted to Slave-driving, Gold digging, & little business of an overreaching character; so that nothing is left in which to sow the seed of the word of God, that it may spring up & grow, bearing fruit unto

eternal life. Instead of perpetuating property in our families we should endeavor to perpetuate the memory of goodness & truth "as the most interesting circumstances attending it." Restore to all their natural rights & every one will rejoice in earning his own living, desiring no aid from, & owing no thanks to Ancestral estates.

Property then, I contend is all which a man produces by his own toil against the world: & this is sanctioned by all authors upon the subject. "For say they" according to natural law, Labor is the only original way of acquiring Property." But as this only regards personal property, or that which is so termed, what will, or can we say of property in Land? This, I answer, is one of the elements of production, indispensable to the efficiency of labor, & therefore is the original & natural property of Labor. By this then, we are obliged to come to the conclusion that no one can, or ought to possess a single foot of ground more than he is able to cultivate.

So soon as he ceases to labor upon the soil, it naturally & justly ceases to be his & becomes the lawful property of him who is willing to expend his strength upon it. This is the only true relation of man to the earth, & a recognition of this great principle is the only means of securing the use of the soil to all the people. This will make the earth the abode & nourisher of all mankind. — The writers of the Declaration announced among the natural & unalienable rights of man, Life, Liberty & the pursuit of happiness; but how can either of these be enjoyed if you cut off man from the earth by depriving him of all the necessaries of life; first by making his labor unavailable, & secondly by making him dependent upon the landlord for a home & land to cultivate? And if these two be effected what I ask, can make him happy, unless cutting off the means of God's free bounty be said? And who dare assume such a false hypothesis?

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I will now invite your attention to another

point of consideration; namely, Land Monopoly. And in the first place we might ask how did it originate? It is plain, if we give any credence to history that Despotism & the Right of Might are its legitimate Authors. It may be said that the people ceded their right to the soil to those whom they feared, or of whom they demanded something in return: but can one generation give away the property of another? By no means. But such a cession never was made. Before mankind had learned how to restrain the ambitions, & before they were schooled in the arts of peace, war commanded their attention, & they were led forth to battle by their chieftain leaders. The vanquished were enslaved and their land taken by the victorious general & divided among his followers as suited his own caprice. This is the mode of commencement of Land Monopoly. A very illegitimate birth you will say; but when you consider it as the offspring of war what better could you expect? Not it is a legitimate child of foulness & atrocity & as such must be hated & despised.

Much as has been said & written about the wastefulness of war itself; nothing can be brought to compare with that wastefulness which has been occasioned by this accursed offspring. Were all nations to engage in perpetual war, yet would its waste sink into comparative insignificance with that which is being constantly made by Land Monopoly. Think of the wholesale Robbery of nine tenths of the human family — not only of their land & homes, but their very bone and muscle, & consequently their happiness. In war the poor are fed & slaughtered, this is business like & humane in one sense of the word: but in peace, the monopoly-system increases the number who produce for the monopolist, & starves them under their laborious burden. For a proof of this, look at poor, monopolized, starved, out, wretched Ireland. In 1841 out of an Area of soil amounting to 20,808,271 Acres but 13,464,300 were cultivated. In 1847 but 5,238,575 acres were cultivated for food a little more than one fourth of the whole area. In the whole population of

Ireland there are but 994,188 agricultural families. All the rest are Merchants, Mechanics, Landholders & poor starved-out beggars. There are now upwards of six millions of acres of waste marshy land on that little Island, which would be turned into a garden of Eden within ten years, if the soil were given to its rightful owners. But, Land Monopoly will give the people no permanent abiding place, nor allow them to feel an interest in improvement. No wonder that the memorial of the Starving, to the guardians of the poor in Ballingarry on the 3d. Oct. (47), concluded thus: "There is a God above all, & to his righteous judgement we appeal, against your cruel & unnatural neglect of our interests & vested rights." They plead for their rights to the benefits of the Poor Law! but little did they think that the monopoly of the soil was the cause of their beggary, & that their vested rights were rather in the soil than in the Law made by the hand of despotism & tyranny.

But, the Emerald Isle is not alone accursed with this monster evil! England, proud & noble though she be, & boasting of her freedom & philanthropy, is accursed

even worse if possible than the place we have already been considering. The Duke of Sutherland alone holds 4 Millions of Acres & upwards as his sole possession. His numerous tenants dare not so much as build a church, in which they can worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, on all this vast domain of God's earth, falsely called the Duke of Sutherland's estates. He is a High churchman, while his tenants are dissenters: & in this we see that Land Monopoly not only invades life & liberty, but freedom of thought & speech also. How much less degrading is this than the worst forms of American Slavery? Judge ye! O! ye faultfinders with America & her institutions. England has an Area of 32,342,400 Acres: two thirds of that which is under cultivation is made subject entirely to the use of beasts rather than man, while nearly 7 millions of acres are not touched at all by productive labor. Sporting-grounds for the aristocratic & criminal

monopolists, & animals kept for the pleasure of the idle, shut out the famishing people from the soil! Glorious England! with your numerous Kennels filled with dogs, extensive parks filled with deer & other wild animals, affording cruel sport to your spurred & booted Aristocrat mounted upon his swift charger; while the great mass of your population are a set of unwashed, uncombed operatives in dark, dingy mines & manufactories, who, when they emerge from their dairy workhouses to return to their families, drag their slow length along with countenances lengthened out into the infinity of sadness & despair! Glorious England I say! Well may you make amends for the overwhelming sin of your Empire, by allotting a few square inches of your most northern possessions for the reception of the poor "fugitive" that he may have the glorious privilege of either starving or freezing to death! — ———————

Let it not be said, however, that America is free from this injurious Land Monopoly. She too has

a Stain upon her national escutcheon Besides that of Negro Slavery & that is; that her public lands are sold for a price, not to the actual settler, he who would cultivate it & make it fruitful, but sold to the Land Aristocrat, the speculator. One who not only speculates in the land itself, but in the bone & muscle of his fellowman, by taking advantage of his necessity. But he does not stop here; with the power & influence he possesses he seeks to buy the most sacred & holiest privileges are trodden under foot & destroyed. There are men in this country who hold from one to thirty thousand acres of Land & who will not sell under a certain price, neither will they improve it themselves. The law of nature says, "give it to them that want it to expend their physical strength upon it," God says they should have it, & every true & generous sentiment of the head & heart echoes with imperative tones that they should have it. All the hardy pioneers, who take their energies, comforts & lives in their

hands, & make their way into our western wilds, find themselves continually on the track of the Land monopolist. Go where they may he has preceded them. They will find his Agent who has already secured the best soil there, to speculate out of their hard toil & heroic self-sacrifice in clearing & civilizing the country, while he, like a drone, remains at home in a distant city in luxurious ease, living on the produce of anothers toil. In cities this is seen in a compact ~~scale~~ form. In Cincinati alone more than forty millions of dollars have been poured by the hand of toil into the laps of ~~a few monopolists of city~~ lots. In these large places most people are obliged to live without homes, paying for this privilege, from six to ten per cent on the estimated value of the property they occupy. This will not do. An end must be put to it for justice demands it, aye! Virtue & happiness demand it, Independence & the sacredness of home demand it, Heaven & Earth & all the truth & love of God demand it.

Land Limitation.

This has already been partially considered. I shall therefore pass this part of the subject by, with simply giving the opinion of Locke, one of our best Philosophers, & a statement of a few special reasons without the arguments as time will not permit me to enter into the latter.

Locke says "Whether we consider natural reason, (which tells us, that men being once born, have a right to their preservation & consequently to meat & drink & such other things as Nature affords for their subsistence;) or Revelation that gives us an account of those grants of God which He made to the world, to Adam, to Noah & his sons, it is very clear that God, (who as King David says,) "has given the earth to the children of men;") gave it to mankind in common. God has given us all things richly, is the voice of reason, confirmed by inspiration. But how far has he given us to enjoy? As much as any one can make use of before it spoils. As much as a man tills, plants, improves & cultivates, & can use the products of, so much & no more is his property."

Three Special Reasons I shall give for Land Limitation: they may be suggestive of others. First: Man has no use for more than is necessary to supply his natural wants; nor would he desire it, were it not for a false education which he receives in a false state of Society. Secondly: That all men cannot enjoy an equality of Right in the soil unless this limitation is adopted: & thirdly: That all which can be accounted good to mankind demands it.

Turn to the 313th. page and commence at the 4th. paragraph.

Which was not read

What is the natural & just limit to a man's right in the soil? This is the next question to be inquired into. God has given every man free scope to use all his powers. No man is cramped in any direction of beneficial effort by the arrangements of ~~the~~ Providence. ~~of land~~. This is clearly indicated by the free relations of things. Then, as much as is necessary for the exercise of all his powers is all that he has a right to require or possess, & the product of so much land is his property against the world. This is no new doctrine of modern Reformers, but it is the doctrine of our wisest & best Philosophers. Clear what Locke says upon it. "Whether we consider natural reason which tells us, that men being once born, have a right to their preservation & consequently to meat, drink, & such other things as nature affords for their subsistence; or Revelation, that gives us an account of those grants of God which he made to the world, to Adam, Noah & his sons, it is very clear that God, who as king David says" has given the earth to the children of

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of man," gave it to mankind in common. God has given us all things richly, is the voice of reason confirmed by inspiration. But how far has he given us to enjoy? As much as any one can make use of before it spoils. So much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, & can use the products of, so much & no more is his property. God gave it to the use of the industrious & rational, & labor was to be his title to it. Nature has well set the measure of property by the extent of man's labor, & the conveniencies of life; nor could his enjoyment consume more than a small part; so that it was impossible for any man, in this way, to intrench upon the right of another; or acquire to himself a property to the prejudice of his neighbors, who would still have room for as good & as large a possession, after the other had taken out his, as before it was appropriated." Such is the limit prescribed by Reason, Nature & Revelation. This also accords with Wheirelles idea of property as laid down in his Moral Philosophy.

But let us inquire for a moment into the more special reasons for this limitation which we have spoken of. First, then, Man has no use for more; nor, would he desire it, were it not for a false education which he receives from the world around him. A part of this education consists in Avarice, which is a perversion of accumulation, Selfishness or the desire to surpass his fellows in influence & magnificence, an undue consequence which he places on large fortunes, making them the great objects of human enterprise, & the fearfulness of a contingency, that would bring with it want & misfortune. Now under the Order of Nature, Avarice only of good would be sought in the improvement in excellence, Selfishness in a common good; no one would desire the highest elevation, knowing that his own spiritual developement depended upon his benevolence. Truth & goodness would alone be valued, & all accumulation of wealth at the expense of others would be despised. There would be no contingencies to fear; for, we would know that our children were

provided for by the magnanimous hand of nature so soon as they came to manhood. She would say to them, "the land is open to you, waiting for the expenditure of your strength upon it in labor which it shall not only yield you an abundant harvest, but also a home of peace." There would be no misfortune to fear, for it is the ministry of fraternity to sustain the unfortunate; & reverses are only sent to improve our knowledge & call out & increase our brotherly love.

But a second reason for this limitation is, that all cannot enjoy an equal right to the earth without it. If one man is permitted to own a State, Millions are robbed of homes & independence. The plea that there is more land in the West, wont do. By & by there will be no more land in the west & what then? Moreover a man should not be compelled to emigrate until Nature herself compels him to do so. ——————

A third reason for this limitation is, that all

which can be accounted good to mankind demands it. All must have homes to be free from the exactions of the Landlord. All must be enabled to procure a livelihood without being made subject to repulsive toil, in order that they be intelligent & virtuous: which cannot be when they are deprived of the natural source of all subsistence, & made dependent upon the avarice, selfishness & pride of their fellowmen. ——— ——— ———

¶ The system then, which we have examined, we find to be founded on the great Law of Nature. Every one can occupy the soil where it is not already appropriated, to the extent of his use, but no farther. Every one shall enjoy a fulness says Nature, & as much as he needs he shall have. There is ample provision for all, & enough is the natural limit. Our great writers on human law say that they should be the consequents of Natural Law; that they should be founded upon it. Says Blackstone "all human Laws which violate a law

of Nature or Revelation should be declared null and void from the beginning. What will the advocate of the Fugitive Slave Law say to this? ——

We have already demonstrated the Law of Nature in regard to the division of Land; that all shall have Land, & such a limit fixed, as will secure homes to the Mechanics, & farms to the Agriculturists. If this be so, what shall be said of the Land System by which Monopoly is justified & encouraged, & the people compelled to serve the Speculator, for the sake of enjoying a privilege which must be purchased at a price: that privilege too a natural right. The one System is directly opposed to the other. One is the Natural System, the other is the Artificial System. If so, then according to Blackstone, one must be null & void to all intents & purposes. But an argument is sometimes used in favor of Monopoly which it is perhaps well to consider in this place: viz. that it has been unfolded by civilization, that at one time when all held an equal right man was in state of

Barbarism. How is this? Let us go back to the Middle Ages & see what state mankind were in, in those dark times? The answer must be Crude Barbarism. Then the Land was entirely held by the Royal family, the Nobility & the Clergy. The people were a set of Serfs bought & sold with the Land. History teaches us that the great & severe struggle on the part of the people has been to secure political privileges & a firmer foothold on the soil. The Law of Entailment, which thus disposed of men as chattels, instead of being more & more unfolded by & with the progress of civilization, has been abolished, to the end that vast estates have been broken up, & larger portions of the people enabled to enjoy an ownership in the earth. This is one Land Reform that has been secured by the light of civilization; and as truth advances other Land Reforms are demanded, & must & will be obtained. It is demanded now, & has been; & although a Congress of the Nation false to herself, her country, & the great

cause of humanity & Right have neglected to act upon this great question of Reform; yet the time must soon come when it will have to be accomplished. The people know their rights & will have them. As civilization & christianization advance, so will the people throw off the shackles of servitude which they have thus long worn at the bidding of despots & tyrants. They will arise in the power & majesty of their might & claim that equality which is now denied them. All men will then be God's children so far as an inheritance & possession of the soil all concerned. And when this is the case, there will be no unwilling servitude, or irksome toil; neither will Labor or the Laborer be looked upon with contempt & scorn. Both will come in for a full share of respect; the latter will be taken to our bosoms as a Brother or a Sister; yea! our children will be made to look upon them with Reverence as they sit side by side around the board of

Refreshment, or at the fireside in our neat Parlors or Sittingrooms. Yes! next to God man has a claim to our veneration & awe! & no man more So, than he who labors & toils for the production of the necessaries & comforts of life. He may be truly called the Bone & Sinew of our Land.

II^ly I shall now in conclusion make a few comparisons of the Results of Land Monopoly & Land Limitation. In comparing the true with the false I shall not begin in Europe where the Ghosts of Starved humanity stalk abroad amid the luxury, revelry & wastefulness of stupendous Monopoly; but I shall find my illustration in the Far West of our own Republic, the most favored & least oppressed portion of the Globe. In the language of another let us calculate what the West would now be, under the Land System of Nature. Let us look at the Progress of the last half Century. There were in 1800 five & one third millions of people in the United States, most

of whom dwelt in the Atlantic States & East of the Allegheny Range. We see by an examination of the Census that the West including a portion of Pa. & New York, contained but 435. 647 inhabitants, while the portion East of the Alleghany mountains contained 4.871. 292 inhabitants. In 1850 the population of the West alone is 11,216.000. Thus you see that half the population of the Union is now in the West: & if you take into the account Oregon & California you have still more at the present time. This is regarded as an astonishing increase of population: yet that progress has not been made under the Monopoly System that would have been made under the System of Nature. Instead of 12 or 12 millions we would now have thirty millions of people West of the Alleghenies! All these would have their own homes, while now not more than two thirds of the population dwell in their own habitations! A far larger proportion have their own homes in the West, than in

any other portion of our country; yea even on the whole face of the Earth. Why? Because of the cheapness of the land — because the people being cast out of their own countries & States by Monopoly, have crowded to the West for the sake of homes. Had the System of Nature prevailed, & every one been freely permitted to occupy where no one was in possession, how many more would now rejoice under their own vine & figtree, & cultivate virtue in the bowers of their own homesteads? Let us examine a few reasons why this would be so. First: Multitudes who have been unable to save the purchasemoney from their hard Labor, & Support their families, besides the expense of travelling, would have come West under the Free System, instead of remaining under the chilling & blighting monopoly of the Old States. I know of one striking instance. It is that of an industrious young man who has an aged mother & invalid sister depending upon him for

support. For years has this poor family struggled with poverty & disease to accumulate sufficient to go West & procure a home. The close of each year has found them with means sufficient to take them out, but no more! They knew there were comforts needed after their arrival & that a price was put upon that which should be free. Besides this, they feared the clutches of the Speculator, or if they escaped him, it would be to dwell far in the wilderness out of the reach of humanity & civilization. Thus years passed on until the young man told me with tears in his eyes that he had given up, & concluded that his living would have to be hard & reluctantly earned in a place where no home nor social endearments were exclusively his. ——

Secondly! Not a foot of Land would have been held by a non Resident; & instead of a whole territory being Sparsely settled — instead of emigrants being compelled to settle down Solitary & alone under the Monopoly System, they would

have settled together, & constantly enjoyed good Society. The whole country, then, would gradually have been occupied. Every good lot in a township, county, or State would have been taken up, before invading the wilderness of another; so that no one would have been compelled to live the life of a Barbarian for years before civilization could smile in upon him. Hence the inducements to emigrants would have been tenfold stronger. The Horrors of a wilderness life, & educational & social destitution have kept away millions of people. These privations are all chargeable to the Monopolist, who has reposed at ease & waited for the toilers to increase his vast possessions in the west by an increase of their value. But another reason why Emigration has not been so great as it otherwise would have been, is the want of a Market. ~~Lick has kept multitudes~~ this want ~~would~~ Now under the Natural System, ~~there would~~ would not exist. ~~constantly have been a good market~~. Had the people been permitted to settle freely upon the

public domain, they would have kept up all the necessary public improvements; so that no greedy & extorting companies, Legal monopolies, would have been required to construct & keep up Canals, Rail-Roads, Plank Roads &c. for the advancing tide of population moving Westward. A good market would have been at every man's door — & hence, another great inducement to emigration. —

A fourth Reason why the population of the West would be threefold what it is, may be found in the fact that Slavery would not exist within her bounds. Under the System which we have been considering there is no chance for human slavery or servitude of any description. Every man is to live on his own soil, & not cultivate that of a Lord or Master. No man is to have any land that he cannot cultivate with his own hands; & there being no demand for slaves or hired laborers of course none of these will exist. Every one will be his own Master & his own Employer. Large Farms which are now a nuisance to Society & a burden to those who are necessarily their owners, will be cut

up into smaller ones; which will need no Slaves nor laborers to till them, thus making every man a freeman & a better Agriculturist. Slavery is a discouragement to emigration. This can be plainly seen in the improvement of the Southern States. How very slow has it been in comparison with that of the free States? Compare Kentucky with Ohio, Wisconsin with Mississippi as an example. Many of us here, are no doubt strongly desiring to go South when we shall have finished our course; but how are we hesitating & doubting because of this ~~blighting~~ institution of the South. Our best men in the North will not usually go there. It is only the filth & offscouring who go ~~there~~ to amass wealth at the expense of the Brain & Muscle, Soul & Body of the poor degraded Negro: And these are the men too, who in our National Congress dictate the measures of compromise to our Northern Doughfaces. Do you still doubt that instead of Eleven Millions, there would have been Thirty, if this Land System of Nature had been adopted rather than the Monopoly System? There would not, if the Eastern States also had adopted this free system; because there

would not have been the same inducements to do so. But had this system been adopted in regard to our public domain in the beginning of this century, the fifty years that have passed would present a scene of incomparable sublimity in human progress. Think of Thirty millions in the West alone, living in easy independence, engaged in labor for mere pleasure & the benefit it affords to the body, & spending one half their time in the cultivation of their minds & hearts in mental & social pursuits. ~~Much~~ has been said of Western Literature; but this also would now stand preeminently higher than it does, so that every house would be a College, & every neighborhood a community of brethren. —

One more result I would consider before I close this Report. Agitation on the subject of Slavery, & a Dissolution of the Union, are the exciting topics of the day. They have become part & parcel of the Political Petifogger himself, so that he cannot deliver ~~himself in~~ any speech before the people, without making it the great burden of his theme.

The schoolboy on our streets has caught the infatuation & he must needs show, whether he be Whig or Democrat, or that he is opposed to both; how consistently let the great Stump Orators of the day determine. The Preacher too, when he would make use of an apt & powerful illustration, has recurrence to this powerfully exciting subject, so that it finds its way into almost every sermon he writes. Yes! even, the young Theological Student, when engaged in the discussion of a subject, (no matter what,) when he would be eloquent, touches upon this harp of a thousand strings & makes music to delight his own ears if not those of others. It has entered into every thing, & become a part of us in public & in private, notwithstanding the interdict which has been issued that there shall be no agitation in or out of Congress on this great subject. Ye servile slaves to abomination & fear, what will ye say now, when your masters in the South shall inquire of you why this great tumult in the North has not ceased? Will you

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again cringe & cower, lick up the very dust beneath their feet, & make renewed promises of equal or superior baseness; which you ought to know by this time you cannot enforce? Or, will you come out like men, & meet those Southern Soul-drivers & tell them, "we have done more than we ought to have done, & all that we intend to do: do your worst.

"Had nature been permitted to reign in the West, Slavery would not have found a foothold in the whole Republic: for it would have confined Slavery to so narrow a compass that it would have died out altogether. How grand would have been this Result! A whole Session of Congress would not then have been worse than wasted in the discussion of the extensions of Slavery; but freedom, knowledge & virtue would have been its absorbing topics.

"Then would our Land have become the home of the free & the asylum for the oppressed of every nation, kindred, tongue & color. The news would have gone forth to the utmost limits of the earth

that here in America, the land is free for all who will till or abide upon it, & the oppressed of all lands would have leaped with joy, & hastened here to strike hands with us & call us brethren & enjoy their God-given rights. Fundamental truths possess almost an omnipotent power: & had this truth with regard to the relation of man to the earth been known fifty years ago, it is impossible to estimate the glorious results that would have blessed our country & the world. The fact that fertile land, in the midst of good Society, adorned by all the virtues of true fraternity & dignified by the high intelligence that would have followed this truth, could here be had free of charge, would have filled stricken humanity abroad with hope, & millions who remained to suffer & to Starve, would have come hither to enjoy the true life. In our land it would have modified the passion for money making, which has been & is now the all absorbing business of every man. The efforts of the people would have

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been directed to the highest good of each & all.
A system of universal education, & the establishment
of those institutions which advance the intellectual
& moral developement of man would have been
~~revised~~ adopted throughout our whole land.
"Under the influence of this great truth, the nation
of Europe would now be free, & gray bearded Mo-
nopoly would have been stricken down. ~~This~~. Britain would have broken up her manorial
estates, the people would have homes, & a Republic
would have long since dethroned the Royalty of the
Realm." In a word, the whole World would
now be on the eve of resolving itself into a
Republic, & would thus declare all persons by Law, what
they are by Nature, God's Noblemen and
Noble Women.

"To the Philanthropic Society of the Meadville
Theological School this is respectfully dedicated
by Benjamin F. Stamm.

P. do not wish to deliver this until Two weeks from to night, which will be on the 2nd day of November A.D. 1852.