

**LABOR SAVING  
MACHINERY  
AND PROGRESS**

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Labor Saving Machinery and Progress by Dingman Versteeg

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BY  
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"THE FOLLY OF TARIFFS"

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IN PREPARATION:  
"COMMERCE AND TRANSPORTATION."

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## INTRODUCTION.

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One of the principal forms in which capital appears and is used in the production of commodities is in the shape of tools and implements. The more efficient tools and implements one uses, the easier his task will be, and the greater, also, will be the product of his labor. Upon this simple principle rests the usefulness of labor saving machinery, which is nothing but greatly improved tools and implements.

All productive labor is carried on for the purpose of satisfying human wants, and consequently, the more commodities the labor of the members of a society produces, the better the wants of those members can be satisfied. If, in a less developed state of agriculture, for instance, it requires ten men to produce a thousand bushels of wheat, while in a more developed state with the same number of laborers ten thousand bushels can be produced, it is plain that wheat will cost little more than one-tenth as much as formerly, thus enabling the members of that society to expend a large part of their earnings in the purchase of other commodities.

It is the same in building. When, owing to the absence of efficient tools in cutting and preparing lumber, making brick and producing other building materials, it costs five times as much to build a house as it would cost if efficient tools were used, it is plain that most people will have to be satisfied with sorry apologies for houses, where otherwise they might have large, airy dwellings at the same cost, especially

in the country or in smaller cities where ground rents are low.

Turning to printing, we shall see the same. Before labor saving machinery was extensively utilized in printing, very few people could own many books, read newspapers, buy magazines or possess engravings and other products of the printer's industry. Their cost was too high. But since the general introduction of labor saving machinery in the printing business, the output of the printing presses has been increased ten thousand fold and over; several times more people than ever before are employed in the production and distribution of books, newspapers, magazines, circulars, etc., etc., while thousands of others find employment in type foundries, ink factories, paper mills, printing press factories, binderies, and the many other occupations which are either directly or indirectly dependent upon a large output of the printing presses.

Labor saving appliances, together with chemical and other discoveries, also lead to a decrease of agricultural rents, because, by rendering the soil more productive, and therefore making it yield larger returns, these have the same effect as if more land were used, and thus either throw some land out of the market, or else make it practicable to use it for other purposes, as building lots, meadows, parks, flower gardens, etc. It is on this account that scientific farming, fruit and vegetable raising, etc., are of the greatest benefit, not only to individual producers, but to society as well.

It is customary with many people to very much belittle the services, labor saving inventions have rendered, and are daily yet rendering, not only to society, but to every individual member of it. Every cut in wages, every stagnation in business, every scar-

city of employment is, in the absence of a more conspicuous scapegoat, charged to labor saving machinery. Yet, nothing is less true, and the aim of the following pages will be, to try to show the beneficial influence it has exercised upon individual prosperity as well as social progress. For this purpose these pages will treat of LABOR SAVING MACHINERY IN ITS RELATION TO Cities, Civilization, Political Supremacy, The Good Old Times, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Commerce, Art, Stores, Employment, Woman and Child Labor, Difference in Wages, Overproduction, The Labor Question.