

CHAS. FREDERICK ADAMS IN SAN FRANCISCO.

Charles Frederick Adams, the eminent thinker and speaker of New York, was greeted by an enthusiastic audience at the Y. M. C. A. hall in San Francisco on the evening of Tuesday, June 20, and inspired by the memories and associations of the city in which the Prophet of San Francisco wrought his first great work, the speaker delivered an eloquent address on "Henry George and His Teachings."

Mr. Adams touched a responsive chord when he drew attention to the tremendous progress made within the past few years by the cause for which Henry George battled, for which in the end he sacrificed his life.

There was a gleam of fire, like the sudden glow of an electric flame, just before the close of the meeting, when one of the auditors offered an interrogatory which contained the suggestion that the speaker of the evening in affirming belief in the philosophy of Henry George was setting his individual opinion against the deliberate conclusions of the professors of political economy in the universities and colleges of the country.

"Is it not true that the eminent men who occupy these chairs of philosophy and political economy challenge the soundness of the theory of Henry George?" asked the auditor.

The question was put in a courteous manner, and most courteously it was answered by Mr. Adams.

It is not true, the speaker declared, that all the learned professors are opposed to the teachings of Henry George; it is not true that all of them challenge the theory and philosophy underlying the fiscal system that has come to be known as the Single Tax. Mr. Adams said that he knows a score of learned professors, the most eminent in their calling, who are practically in accord with the Single Tax philosophy. Among these he mentioned Professor Seligman, Professor Bemis and others, who are recognized as leaders in the modern world of thought and practical philosophy.

"But even if all the chairs of all the universities and colleges did oppose the soundness of Henry George's argument,

their mere assertions and declarations could not stand as valid until they have answered that argument," exclaimed Mr. Adams. "Look among them for a man who is able to meet the logic and overthrow the position that Henry George established and you will look in vain. Those who have made the attempt in most instances have abandoned the task. Of the superficial and supercilious critics who have attacked the works of Henry George the majority on being pinned to the point, have been compelled to confess that they had not read the books they had condemned. A few earnest men had offered what they at first believed to be ample replies, but none of these are now recognized or quoted in refutation of the Henry George philosophy.

"A notable instance is that of the careful student who upon the first reading of 'Progress and Poverty' made marginal notes of his objections. During the second reading he erased about half of these notations, and when the third reading was completed all of them were rubbed out and disappeared.

"The familiar story of the late Tom L. Johnson's experience with Lawyer Russell was referred to, in which Johnson offered to pay Russell a big fee if he would formulate a sound reply to Henry George's argument in support of the Single Tax theory. Russell started on the task with alacrity, but after a month of hard work, gave up the job, and declared himself thoroughly convinced that Henry George was right, and ever after remained a devoted disciple of the Prophet of San Francisco.

"In this connection it is worthy of mention that the Duke of Argyle made the attempt, but after the publication of Henry George's rejoinder the work of the noble landlord of Scotland was withdrawn from publication, and it is difficult at this time to get a copy unless you procure it from a Single Taxer, bound in with Henry George's crushing answer.

Touching on the question of justice of the proposed Single Tax plan the speaker said that it might be illustrated by the case of a Bedouin Arab who should come to California and begin the study of law in the office of James G. Maguire (the chairman of the evening) and there should learn

from his Blackstone and other great authorities that the origin of private ownership in land is "appropriation." This is not a very pretty word, the speaker said, but it is the word employed by the original investigators of the history of titles, and it expresses the exact truth. This young Arab might say to himself: "Appropriation the basis of private ownership in land? If that's so in England and America why not in my own country? I know some pretty good spots that I can reap a profit from when I complete my process of appropriation."

So this energetic Arab would go back to the desert and would proceed to "appropriate" the oases that are found in the great desert of Sahara. After being comfortably established in his new home on the principal oasis he would look over the sands some day and behold the approach of a caravan. Meeting the visitors at the edge of his newly "appropriated" land he would say, "Welcome, gentlemen. Glad to see you. You are welcome to the use of my land and water—on proper conditions." And he as landlord would fix what he considered the proper conditions, all the traffic would bear, say at half the caravan, or if he had his nerve fully developed, he might demand it all, and the thirsty travelers, spent with toil and oppressed by heat, would be compelled to yield to his demands under the usual rules of land ownership as interpreted by the courts of England and America, unless it happened that the caravan contained a few cowboys such as they have on our western plains—men who are impatient of red tape and parchment restrictions, in which event there might be some strange fruit dangling from the date palms roundabout.

"Now objection might be made that the action of the cowboy would not be ethical, and such objection is subject to support, yet there are people who believe that as between the two, the method of the cowboys is more ethical than that of the Arab," said the speaker.

It was Herbert Spencer who pointed out that violence or fraud formed the original basis of private property in land. He declared it to be usurpation on the part of the land owners, and this usurpation has

continued until the present. Here in California, where the people are restoring to themselves the right to self-government it is proper that some practical move be made to restore the rights of the people to the land of the country. Owing to the horrible failure of the so-called upper classes to honestly and ably govern our country, the common people, whom Lincoln said God loves because he made so many of them, have been compelled to consider the right rules of government, and everywhere they are coming into their own, and will continue to do so more and more as the years go by. When you hear people of the alleged upper classes uttering warnings against mob rule and all that, don't be bluffed, the speaker said. The so-called upper classes have had their turn and have failed, and it requires no prophet to foresee that no matter what mistakes the people make, they will not be so monstrous as the mistakes of those who have for so many years misgoverned the nation and the States. They have allowed the great public revenues, which as Henry George pointed out, ought to go for the support of public affairs, to be diverted to private pockets. It is time to restore this to the rightful owner, the people, and this can be done as George has proved in a manner that is ethical and practical.

Mr. Adams asserted that the object to be attained through the introduction of the fiscal system known as the Single Tax is not confiscation, but in fact is to stop the present method of confiscation that is practiced by a certain fraction of the population as against the masses of humanity. In the days of chattel slavery in America there were plenty of northern people who were very tender to the "rights and prerogatives," so-called, of the slave owners. They thought it would be outrageous to abolish slavery without paying the "owners" and Ralph Waldo Emerson, a true prophet of the times, exclaimed:

"Pay ransom to the owner?

Aye, fill the bag to the brim.

Who is the owner? The slave is owner

And ever was. Pay him."

"It would be well for opponents of the Single Tax philosophy to rest on their legal titles and precedents, and not bring into

discussion any ethical considerations, for as sure as fate if they venture into the field of ethics they are doomed to defeat. But they are also doomed if they rely on strict construction and legal interpretations, for jurisprudence is full of declarations and decisions showing the radical difference between the two kinds of property, namely things that come into existence through the activity and the operation of human beings and those things that do not come into being through such operation. History proves that the feudal barons acquired a jurisdiction, not an ownership of the land. They exercised administration, not possession. They did splendid service to the people, and the land paid for it all. The feudal nobles received their pay for their service in dignity and honor, and in the products of the land which they helped to protect, but there was no thought that they owned the land. After becoming powerful they welched on their rent and seized the land. That is the true history of land titles, conclusively established by indisputable historical evidence. Some landlords may be good members of society, and may render service that entitles them to respect, but as landlords, merely, they are vampires, parasites, and their oppression of the people must be ended. That it will be ended is evidenced by the progress of the world in accepting the views and the rules of action laid down by Henry George in his books. It is true that our lives ought to be made easier and happier by reason of other people being about us, but the reverse is the fact, and this must be remedied.

"In a striking Sunday school address before his class John D. Rockefeller, Jr., sought to illustrate his meaning of the development of the human race by referring to the manner in which the marvelous flower, the American Beauty Rose, has been evolved. He said that in order to secure this delightful product the florist had been compelled to clip out and cut off thousands of little buds that otherwise would have tended to diminish its growth and the fullness of its sweet perfection. In our own country we see this theory manifest in the blighting of thousands of tender buds, baby boys and girls, gentle women

and honest men to bring about the development of our own American Beauty Rose, the Standard Oil Company.

"That great federalist, Judge Marshall, declared that the power to tax is the power to destroy. But some of our critics point to written parchments and say that our proposed plan is unconstitutional. Who made these constitutions? The people. They are the acts of the sovereign people, and may be changed by the power that made them. We, the people, can alter them at will. There have been many clever lawyers and judges who have been exceedingly ingenious in inventing plans to thwart the popular will, but they are soon to learn that their course is about run. If necessary there will be a constitutional convention for the amendment of rules that are opposed to the popular welfare. It must come to that unless redress is speedily given.

"There is a public fund that arises with the forming of the community and disappears when the community disappears. It is a fund that belongs to the people, and ought to be used by the people. It deprives no one of right, but restores the right to all. We must make land common property by the fiscal device advocated by Henry George, and this without revolution or disturbance. As for myself I want to be free from the responsibility for the blighting of the tender buds of humanity. In our great cities I have seen little girls on the cold streets amid snow and sleet at 1 o'clock in the morning trying to sell a penny paper, when they ought to have been at home with their mothers. That would not occur if they and their fathers and mothers had been given a fair opportunity in the struggle for life. We men may waive our own rights to equal opportunity, but we cannot waive the rights of the women and children of today, of the babies to be born next week or next year."

Mr. Adams told of the splendid success that has attended even a partial application of the Single Tax system in Vancouver, B. C., but he warned against the danger that lies in this partial application. Speculation in land values is still rampant in Vancouver, and the inevitable reaction and bursting of the real estate bubble must

be looked for, and when it comes Single Taxers must expect to hear people say that their plan has proved a failure, but that will not be true, because it is not a true enforcement of Single Tax principles that is being tried in Vancouver. There is a wide margin left for the landlord, and this is the evil that will bring ruin to that community, unless the people wake up and demand that the full rental value shall be taken by the community, the rightful owner. The taking of the full rental value for public purposes would destroy speculation in land, would destroy the selling price, but would not impair the use value of the land. We must protect our doctrine from the effects of the slump that is bound to come. A partial introduction of the Single Tax has boomed business immensely in British Columbia, but unless it is thoroughly applied it will foster gambling and lead to ruin and devastation."

By a rising vote the audience tendered to Mr. Adams a resolution of thanks for his interesting, eloquent and instructive address.

WELLS DRURY.

J. L. CALDWELL'S pen has not lost its lightness and keen penetration with the years, as witness a reply to a Mr. Brown in an Amarillo, Texas paper on the Menace of Machinery:

"If Mr. Brown, in asking how men are to 'exist who are deprived of their incomes by the rapid concentration of machinery and capital', he had added: 'and deprived of free access to land,' then would he have matched the riddle of the sphinx. God even couldn't answer that question any more than He could answer how he could help the poor by raining down food and raiment for them on another man's land—the man, himself, under our present laws, would appropriate the goods, and leave the poor as destitute as ever."

THERE is great inequality among mankind, and this accounts for the inequality of fortune; so no one ought to complain. Nevertheless, see what charitable beneficence has done to mitigate such inequality. How presumptuous then is charitable beneficence!

NEWS—DOMESTIC.

RHODE ISLAND.

HOW TAXES FALL ON ELEVEN ESTATES IN PROVIDENCE—COMPUTATIONS IN OTHER CITIES—TRANSLATING THE ETHICS OF THE SINGLE TAX INTO DOLLARS AND CENTS

The assessors of Providence value land and improvements separately, but their figures are not open to the public. Last fall, through the courtesy of a member of the city council, we got the figures for eleven estates, situated in the very heart of the city.

Estimating the total land value of Providence to be no more than one-half of the total assessed value of the real estate, a rate of \$4.50 per \$100 on the land would yield about four and one quarter millions, the amount now yielded by the general property tax. The eleven estates referred to would pay an aggregate of upwards of \$85,000 more than they paid in 1910.

Upon the assumption that this value of the land is the only correct measure of the value of the services furnished by the city government, we were able to show that the owners of these eleven estates are receiving every year at least \$85,000 worth of public services in excess of what they are paying for, and consequently, somebody, or a number of somebodies, must be paying every year for at least \$85,000 worth of public services in excess of what they are receiving.

This is not only a "pocket-book" argument, but it appeals very strongly to the average sense of fair play. Nobody relishes having to pay for all that he gets and then having to help pay for what other persons get, especially persons who may be very far from needing any assistance in meeting their liabilities. There is, and always has been, a widely prevalent feeling that the rich don't pay their fair share of public expenses, but under the present system of taxation the size of their share, the actual amount that they ought to pay, is and always must be very largely a matter of conjecture. But we know the method of ascertaining with reasonable correctness what everybody ought to pay,