



Henry George in London and Liverpool, December, 1888: verbatim report of the speeches at the great meeting at the Lambeth Baths : the questions and answers verbatim.

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HENRY GEORGE

IN

LONDON AND LIVERPOOL,

DECEMBER, 1888.

Verbatim Report of the Speeches at the GREAT MEETING AT
THE LAMBETH BATHS.

The Questions and Answers verbatim.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.  
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AT the close of the electoral campaign in the United States Mr. Henry George, on the invitation of Mr. Saunders, decided on taking a voyage to England for the purpose of obtaining a much needed rest, after the arduous work of the electoral struggle, in which he took a double part as speaker and writer. On arriving at Southampton and Waterloo, receptions awaited him which stirred his spirit, and induced him to enter with vigour on a short and effective educational campaign in this country.

Large and enthusiastic meetings in London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, and conferences with clergymen of the Church of England, and of Dissenting Churches, convinced him that public opinion has greatly advanced in this country. Mr. George, therefore, promised to return in March to enter upon a more extended campaign.

This campaign will be conducted by the Reception Committee appointed to carry out the arrangements during his recent visit. All are invited to join in this campaign who desire that the subject with which Mr. George's name is connected should be presented with that clearness and force for which he is distinguished.

Communications on the subject of the campaign, with subscriptions towards defraying the expenses, should be addressed to the Henry George Campaign Committee, 177 Palace Chambers, Westminster, London, S.W.

HENRY GEORGE IN LONDON.

GREAT MEETING OF THE MASSES.

(The following report is taken by permission from the New York Standard.)

LONDON, Tuesday, 27th November.

MR. GEORGE was advertised to speak on "The Land Question," at the Lambeth Baths on the south side of the Thames; the vast hall was crowded in every part, and many persons were obliged to stand around in the passages.

There was no outward excitement in the great expanse of London; for, a riot or even a revolution would make little "show" in this enormous expanse of bricks and mortar. Such a small affair as an election crawls along almost unseen. Yesterday a new School Board—a great Metropolitan council for the management of elementary education—was elected, but there was no popular excitement. Despite that apparent depression, the Radical candidates were generally successful, showing that this somewhat chaotic city is at last awakening.

If an election of this popular nature could be held without signs of it becoming visible, it is scarcely astonishing that it was only in Westminster Bridge Road and vicinity that one could discover to-night that an important event was going forward.

Here, however, considerable bustle was evident, and on Mr. George's arrival, punctually at eight o'clock, quite a sea of upturned faces greeted him from the bottom of the bath.

The Lambeth Swimming Bath is of very great extent. As the English people, or at least the London people, don't practice swimming in the winter, this bath is annually mopped out and turned into an assembly room. Accommodation is provided for about 2,000 people, and every night meetings of one sort or another are held in it. For twenty-seven years this has gone on, and the management during that long period has been such that although the committee would be glad to let it to a Conservative gathering they have never once been asked to do so. Lambeth Baths are therefore associated with cleanliness that is next to godliness and with the cause of freedom which is godliness itself.

Here then, to-night, came Henry George. On the entrance of the speaker, accompanied by his chairman and others, there was a great outburst of enthusiasm, the vast meeting rising, cheering, and waving hats and handkerchiefs.

Mr. William Saunders, who is to be the Liberal and Radical Candidate for Parliament for the Walworth division of London at the next election, took the chair.

Around him and Mr. George upon the platform were four Scotch Members of Parliament, Messrs. William McEwan (Edinburgh), Provand (Glasgow), Haldane (Haddington), and Dr. Clark (Caithness). One English member, Mr. Handel Cossham (Bristol), lent his countenance to the meeting. Among the others on the platform were T. Briggs, Esq.; Mr. Albert Spicer (Radical candidate); Rev. Fleming Williams and Rev. J. Garrett, Nonconformist ministers; Dr. Thomas, a local physician; Mr. Henry Hacon, of the Walworth Liberal and Radical Association; Messrs. T. Hunter and W. S. Brown, of the Southwark Radical Association; and Mr. Patrick Hennessy.

With these exceptions, and with the exception of Mr. Cuninghame Graham, another Scotch Member of Parliament,

THE CLASSES WERE ABSENT.

When the applause which greeted the appearance of Mr. George and the Chairman had subsided, Mr. Saunders struck at once the keynote of the meeting. He sarcastically alluded to the usual fashion of reading letters of apology from big-wigs excusing their inability to be present. "We have none such to read," he exclaimed, and the audience cheered as if it understood the ability of the people to do without the writers of apologies. For that class of person, whose names are the only things great about them, Mr. Saunders had one strong remark which they ought to read—and study. "We have determined one thing—not to put this movement under the thumb of capitalists and wealthy men." The audience rose as one man and roared themselves hoarse in approbation.

When at length Mr. George came to the front of the platform, on which was inscribed the word "Welcome," he was received with deafening cheers. He began, and point after point was followed and cheered to the echo. The speaker's every statement was immediately taken up and apparently found its way to the hearts and heads of his hearers.

TAX THEM OUT.

His way of dealing with the landlords was clearly to the mind of the meeting. It was not to buy them out or to confiscate what they called their's, but was "simply and easily to tax them out."

There were one or two interruptionists, evidently Socialists, at the further end of the hall, but they were silenced in the great mass of sympathisers.

MR. GEORGE CATCHES THE RADICALS.

On the question of Free Trade the speaker elicited the heartiest cheers that had resounded through the hall up till now. "We supported Cleveland" because his system logically carried out, meant absolute Free Trade. "We are Free Traders," he exclaimed, and the audience shouted with delight. "Not British Free Traders," he continued, "but something more. On this side of the water you have gone further than we. You have got to a tariff for revenue only, but a tariff for revenue only is not Free Trade." He then went on to give the programme of the future, which meant the

ABOLITION OF ALL CUSTOM-HOUSES.

Again there were loud cheers, but they continued long after what seemed appropriate to the occasion, great as it was. Mr. George was astonished, but the audience knew why they rose and cheered, and cheered, and cheered again. The demonstration marked the advent of a Member of Parliament, Mr. R. B. Cuninghame Graham, a Radical of the Radicals. A tall, slight, apparently slim, but really well-knit and essentially strong and vigorous man, Graham is one of the most popular and best known leaders of the democracy. He can claim an earldom if he likes, and might easily, it is said, assert his claim to the lordship of Airth in Scotland. Graham is the head of one of the branches of the sept of Grahams. He is in Scottish parlance, "Graham of Gartmore," and his ancestor, Sir John the Graham, fought by the side of Sir William Wallace for the liberty of Scotland and of Scotchmen. That great struggle for democratic power against aristocratic oppression failed then, but Graham continues the strife in which his ancestors engaged. At every meeting of the people, of the masses against the classes, his auburn locks and enthusiastic visage are to be seen. The people know him and so do the police, who have caused him to be sent to prison for speaking in a public place. The cheering which the entrance of this Scottish member caused having ceased, Mr. George went on. "Purchase the rights of the landlords!" he exclaimed. "Why should you purchase the rights of the landlords?" To this query there was of course a responsive outburst of cheering. "Why should you buy them out?"—and a reply, which was not quite a reply, came from the bottom of the bath, like truth from the bottom of a well—"They ought to buy us out!" and the audience cheered in appreciative response.

At nine o'clock, after having spoken fifty minutes, Mr. George paused and walked along the platform as the cheering worked itself out. He then said that as there were many persons who had shown their desire to ask questions, he would now give them the opportunity. "Go on; go on," cried the people. "Let them be heard," said Mr. George. "We can always hear them; go on!" replied the audience. "We don't often get the chance of hearing you," a voice shouted out, and the cordiality of the applause forced the speaker to resume, after the Chairman had announced that any question clearly written would be answered, "when Mr. George has finished his speech."

Having spoken for an hour and a half, raising every minute his hearers to higher and higher enthusiasm, Mr. George concluded, to allow of questions which had been sent to the Chairman being answered.

A number of questions pertaining more or less to the land questions were handed up, and the Chairman read them out in a loud voice. The answers of the orator raised even greater enthusiasm than his speech had done.

The answers are really little speeches themselves, and our report, which is verbatim, shows how pertinent most of the queries were, while others were quite impertinent. As an answerer of questions Mr. George is a thorough success, and vastly pleased the audience.

Planted throughout the hall were a number of Socialists, and though on the questions of the Chicago Dynamiters, and of Rent, Interest, and Taxes, they were disposed to raise disputes, the firmness

of the Chairman and the courage of the orator overcame them. At twenty minutes past ten, having spoken altogether for two hours and ten minutes, Mr. George concluded, still in good voice, and apparently in good form for another two hours.

The Meeting by an earnest resolution invited Mr. George to stay in England a week longer than he had intended, and to this invitation Mr. George ultimately assented.

Mr. Saunders then humorously proposed a vote of thanks to himself as Chairman, and one of the best meetings we have ever had in England broke up.

The following is a verbatim report of the speeches :—

The Chairman, who was received with loud cheers, said :—
Countrymen and women,—The proceedings of a meeting are usually begun by reading letters of apology for non-attendance. We have none such to read. (Applause.) Henry George was announced to speak on the "Land Question," and that announcement has drawn the large assembly that are here to-night. (Applause.) And let me say that everyone on the platform has contributed to the expense of this campaign. (Applause.) This, ladies and gentlemen, is a movement by the people and for the people. We are determined that we will not put this movement under the thumb of capitalists and wealthy men. (Cheers.) The people will support this movement, and the people will carry it on to victory. It must, I am sure, be gratifying to Henry George to see the great progress which this question has made since he last visited this country. A few years ago landlordism was regarded as something like a divine institution, and then we looked upon landlords as beneficent beings. Our only matter of regret being that if a man had fifty estates he could not live all the time on each one of them. (Laughter). Now, how very different a view is taken of the case. All parties are united so far as this—that landlordism has to be got rid of. (Cheers.) They do not, of course, put it exactly in that way, because practical politicians are usually more ingenious than ingenuous, and therefore, what they say is this, we must abolish dual ownership. I suppose that in proposing to abolish dual ownership of land, they do not propose to abolish the cultivator. Therefore, the abolition of the dual ownership means the abolition of the landlord. (Cheers.) We differ as to the method by which this object shall be accomplished. Some of us determine that the method shall be one which will prevent another crop of landlords springing up ; but still it is gratifying to us to know that even the Conservative party are progressing ; and so anxious at the present moment are they, that they have imperilled their own position in the country by passing a vote, to take £5,000,000 out of the public pocket for the abolition of a small handful of landlords. Now, as I said, while we agree with them as to the object, we wholly disagree as to their methods. (Cheers.) To-night we shall listen to an address on this important question from the man who of all others is the best calculated to address us with good effect. (Applause.) Every word that Mr. George will utter to-night will not only be worth listening to but worth remembering. And let me ask you to listen to him critically and make what he says your own, or else reply to it in a way which will be satisfactory to your own minds and consciences. I do not care a button for any man's opinions unless they are the result of his own

thought. (Applause.) And what Mr. George will do to-night will not be to attempt to supersede our thoughts but to assist them. (Applause.) When I asked Mr. George to come with me to London he kindly assented to do so, and I assured him that he would receive a hearty welcome, and *that* you are giving to him to-night. (Applause.) I will now ask Mr. George to address the meeting.

Mr. George, who was received with prolonged cheers, said:—Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am glad once again to have the greeting of an English audience. I am glad to stand before you to-night as the representative of men on the other side of the water who aim at an object, that all friends of progress wherever they may be ought to have at heart. I can say to you that in our country we are making speedy and rapid advances, and I am glad to find on coming back here that so much has already been gained. (Applause.) When I first visited this country, to say that the landlords must go, would have seemed almost treasonable. But I sat in the House of Commons the other night and I heard representatives of both parties agreeing that the Irish landlords, at least, must go. (Hear, hear). Proposing to buy them out! (A voice, "No, no; never." Another voice, "Not with our money." A third voice, "They do it at their own risk.") Whether that is the best way or not may be a question. But it is at least

AN ADVANCE WHEN EVEN THE CONSERVATIVES

recognise that there *is* a land question. (Cheers). There is no need of my talking to you to-night about the injustice of treating land as though it were intended to be the private property of but a part of the community. There is no need, I think, of my saying to you that all men by right of their birth have an equal right to the raw material of the universe—have an equal right to what the Creator has placed here for the sustenance of life. I think at last that this truth is beginning to be recognised—aye, more than that—that it is permeating all thought. The question to-day that we have to deal with is, it seems to me, rather of method than of ultimate aim. Let me say, therefore, something as to that. All men equally need the use of land, since men are land animals, living on land, and deriving their sustenance from land. It is clear that there is a national, inalienable, and equal right to the use of land. (Loud cheers.) It is likewise clear that security in the possession of land is necessary to the best use of land. No one will plough a field unless he have some assurance that he shall reap the crop; no one will open a mine unless he have some security that he shall profit by the labour he must expend in doing so; no one will build a house unless he may retain the possession of the site necessary to his enjoyment of the house. In recognising the equal right of all to the use of land we must therefore give security to the users of land, that they shall have such exclusive possession as is necessary to enable them to enjoy the reward of their labour.

Now, these two conditions can be easily recognised. To secure the equal right of all the people of a country to the use of the land of that country it is not necessary to divide the land in equal proportions among them. (Hear, hear.) It is not necessary to give up the security of possession that is indispensable to improvement. It is only necessary to make the whole people the landlords. (Cheers.) In short only necessary to fix the tenure of land upon such terms that those who enjoy peculiar privileges in the possession of land shall pay into a common fund a commensurate sum

which may be used for the benefit of the whole community. (Cheers.) The ideal state is that the whole people shall be the owners of the land, and that individual users of the land shall be their tenants. (Cheers.) That is not a new idea, but an old idea. (Hear, hear.) Theoretically, there is

NO ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP OF LAND

in England. It belongs to the Crown, as representative of the whole people. Nor is it a new idea that the rent of the land should go to the common benefit. Even so late as the feudal period that principle was roughly acknowledged. There was one portion of the land the rents of which maintained the Sovereign and the expenses of the Civil List; another portion of the land from the revenues of which the expenses of public worship, the maintenance of the sick, the poor, and of education were defrayed. There was a third portion of the land for the use of which those who enjoyed it were bound to do the fighting and to support the army; and a fourth portion of the land—the common, round every village and town—was free to the use of the villagers and townsmen. Absolute property in land has come in England, not by the direct appropriation of the land by a few individuals, but by their shaking off the taxes which they agreed to pay for the use of the land. (Cheers.) It seems to me, therefore, that the best way, and the easiest way by which we can get back again to the recognition of popular rights in the soil is to reverse the process—(cheers)—and neither by buying the landlords out, as some propose—(hear, hear)—nor yet by kicking them out, as I have heard some others propose; but by simply, easily, and quickly taxing them out—resume the enjoyment of national rights. (Cheers.)

We in the United States who aim at carrying out in its fulness the spirit of our Declaration of Independence—(cheers)—we who aim at securing for all American citizens an equal right in the land of the nation; we who aim at fully enfranchising labour and making wages what they ought to be—the whole earnings of labour—call ourselves “single-tax men,” for the reason that that title indicates the route by which we wish to attain our goal. (Cheers.) In the United States some taxes are already levied upon land values. What we propose to do as soon as we can is to

LEVY ALL TAXES ON LAND VALUES.

(Cheers.) Our national Government is supported by various indirect taxes, principal among which are the taxes which under the name of protection we levy upon goods brought into the country. Our State Governments are mainly supported by taxes levied upon the value of all kinds of property—the value of land, of improvements, and of everything else that is supposed to be valuable. Now, then, to get our single tax, what we have to do is to abolish all other taxes. (Cheers.) As we abolish one of these after another, heavier taxes will necessarily fall upon land values in our States, and as we can bring our general Government to abandon the indirect system of taxation, then we can propose that its revenue shall be raised by a direct tax upon the value of land. (Applause.)

What will be the effect of taxing the value of land up to the point of taking the annual value for the benefit of the whole community? Simply this, that the State will just as surely collect the revenue as if it let out land and collected the rent by a rent receiver. What will be the second effect? That the holding of land will then become unprofitable save to the man who wants to use the land. (Cheers.)

Therefore it is, in the campaign which has just closed, we single-tax men threw ourselves heart and soul into the fight for the election of President Cleveland, for the reason that he had thrown down the gauntlet to the spirit of Protection. Not that he was a Free Trader, but that he had proposed to reduce the protective tariff, and in proposing to reduce Protection he had to advance arguments that if logically carried out must lead to Free Trade. (Cheers).

We single-tax men *are* Free Traders. (Cheers). Not—as I have often said in the United States—not “British Free Traders;” but something more. On this side of the water you have moved further than we. You have gone as far as a tariff for revenue only. But a tariff for revenue only is not Free Trade. Free Trade means precisely what the words imply—trade without restriction. To secure Free Trade we must abolish all tariffs and do away with all Custom Houses. (Cheers.) But even then only one step is gained. Why is Free Trade good? Because it means, so far as it goes, free production; because trade is in reality a mode of production. It is stupid to levy tariffs to keep good things out of a country. That country is richest that has most of the things that we keep out by our tariffs, and it is the first requisite for the welfare of a country that the production of wealth should be large. We want all the wealth we can get. Why, then, keep it out? (Cheers).

(Mr. Cuninghame Graham, M.P., entered the hall at this moment, and was loudly cheered.)

But if it be stupid to keep good things out of the country, if it be stupid to levy taxes that make it more difficult to bring wealth into a country, is it not also stupid to levy taxes which repress the production of wealth within the country? (Cheers.) And for the very same reason that we ought to abolish all tariffs, for that same reason should we abolish all those taxes that fall on products of labour and reduce the production of wealth within the country. We want houses, therefore it is stupid to tax the men who build houses. (Hear, hear.) It is perfectly clear that he who makes two blades of grass to grow where one grew before, is a public benefactor, not a public enemy, and therefore we should not tax the farmer upon his improvements. (Cheers.) The man who erects a factory, the man who builds a ship, the man who by any exertion, whether of hand or of head, adds to the wealth of the country, is doing something not merely for himself, but for all. Therefore is it stupid to tax and fine him for having done so. (Applause.)

Moreover, we single-tax men say that such taxes are wrong. (Cheers.) We believe in the sacred rights of property. (Loud cheers.) So far from being deniers of the rights of property, we are defenders of the rights of property. We hold that there is a true right of property—a right of property that does not rest on human enactments, but has its sanction in the divine law. And obedience to that law—the recognition of this right of property—is essential to the advance of civilisation. We say that what a man produces is his. (Applause.) When by his labour anyone brings forth the raw materials from the reservoir of nature and moulds them into shapes adapted to the satisfaction of human wants, they ought to belong to him against all the world—(cheers)—his to use, his to sell, his to give, his to bequeath, his to do whatever he pleases with, so long as in his use he inflicts no injury on the equal rights of others. (Cheers.)

For that reason we say that when a man is taxed for having built a house, for having improved a farm, for having added to the wealth of a country, the right to property is impaired and denied. The community takes from him what belongs not to the community but to him. (Hear, hear.) But there is a value that does not spring from the exertion of any particular individual. That is the value that attaches to land, not by reason of improvements on it or in it, but by reason of the growth of the whole community. Take one of our great cities, such as New York. There you will find land of enormous value—a value which resides in the land and not in the buildings. Let a fire sweep over such a plot. All that the owner or improver has done is gone, but an enormous value remains in the land itself. Where does it come from? Who produced it? Clearly not the owner of the land,

BUT THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF THE CITY.

Every child that is born, and every immigrant that comes and settles there, every one that makes any public improvement adds to that value. It is not produced by any one individual but by the whole community, and, therefore, in taking that value for common purposes, we are taking for the community what belongs to the community. (Cheers.) That is what we aim at in the single tax—to take merely that value which attaches to land, not by reason of any human labour expended on that particular piece of ground, but by reason of the growth and improvement of the whole community. In other words—economic rent. (Cheers.) In taking that, we can release all other taxes that now hamper enterprise and fetter industry, and tend to build up monopolies. (Cheers.)

And in taking this value we are not merely taking for the community that which belongs to the community, we are not merely enabled to abolish taxes that tend to build up monopolies, but we are striking a death blow at the greatest and the deepest, and the widest of all monopolies—the monopoly of land. (Loud applause.) What does monopoly in land spring from? From the fact that we let individual owners take to themselves the values which the growth of the community adds to land. This tempts some men to get possession of more land than they can use, and compels others to go without. We can see this clearly in the United States. There we have, even now, but 65,000,000 people, scattered over an area that might maintain in comfort a thousand millions. Yet we have to-day beginning to show themselves, all the phenomena that are generally attributed to over-population; and our people are beginning to talk as if there were too many human beings in the United States. They want to keep out foreign goods in order to make more work at home. They want to prevent convicts doing labour in our State penitentiaries in order that the work may be saved for honest men. (A laugh.) One has but to look at facts to see

THAT THERE IS WORK ENOUGH.

What is the need for work? What does it come from? From the necessities and desires of the human being himself. Man is a working animal. Why? Because it is an ordinance of nature that it is only by his labour that the materials offered by nature can be fitted for his use. The animals find things ready for

them ; but man must make, he must produce, he must change in form or place the matter that he finds, before he can use it to satisfy his desires. Therefore it is that it is truly said labour is the producer of all wealth. (Great cheering.) And yet with a vast country such as we have to-day, there are thousands and thousands of men in the United States who find it difficult to get work. In times of industrial depression the thousands mount up to hundreds of thousands. Thus it appears to those who do not look below the surface as though work were scarce or labour were too plentiful ; and we talk of an excess in the supply of labour over the demand for labour. Yet, what is the supply of labour? In the powers of the human being—in the cunning of human brains, the strength of human muscle.

WHAT IS THE DEMAND FOR LABOUR?

The wants, the desires of the human being. How, then, can there be any such a thing as excess in the supply of labour over the demand for labour, when for every back that comes into the world to be clothed, and every stomach that comes into the world to be fed, there come two hands? (Great cheers.)

What is the reason, then, that in the United States there are thousands of men even in good times who find difficulty in obtaining work? Not that these men have no wants to be satisfied. Not that there is not natural opportunity for work. Work! What is productive work? It is but a working up of the raw material of nature—and that is everywhere with us in abundance. Go from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific. Everywhere you will find vast tracts of land untilled, mines unused, building sites on which there are no houses. What is the cause, then? This,

THAT LABOUR IS SHUT OUT

from the natural opportunities. (Cheers). Not that the land is in use ; but that wherever it is certain or suspected that men will go to utilise their labour upon land in the production of wealth, the speculator goes first. The land is not in use but it is fenced in. What is the incentive to that? Why does any man want more land than he can use? Simply in the expectation that someone else may come along who needs must use it, and who will agree to pay him a part of the wealth his labour produces for the privilege of going to work. (Cheers). As population increases, the one thing certain to go up is the value of land. Therefore men everywhere, who have had the opportunity and are shrewd enough to take advantage of their fellows, have not been contented with what they wanted to use, but have aimed to get what land they could, so that by and bye they might compel their fellow beings to pay them for the privilege of using it. Now then the single tax on land values, taking that value which attaches to land by reason of the growth and improvement of the community, will take away all the temptation that now exists for men to get land which they do not want to use. (Cheers.) The tax falling on the man who is holding unused land or land not put to its full use just as heavily as it does on the man who is using his land to the very best advantage, will completely crush out the dogs in the manger. That is what we mean by the single tax. (Cheers.)

However conditions may differ between the two countries, the problems presented are the same. There we have to confront the very same difficulties that are presenting themselves in this older country, and in this denser population, in severer and more acute forms. And I believe that the very method for you to advance to the point of securing to every child born in England its equal right to the use of the soil of England, is precisely in the same direction that we are going. (Hear, hear.) Purchase the rights of the landlords! Why should you purchase the rights of the landlords? (Cheers.) In the High Court of Equity what rights have they? (Cheers.) Because for generations they have lived without labour on the labour of others, does that give them any right to continue so to live? (No, no.) Should you buy out the landlords? (No.) What do you propose to do with what you get from the landlords? Create a still larger class of landlords?—landowners? (No.) That is precisely what these purchase schemes mean. If you were to carry them out, if you could buy up the lands of the three kingdoms from their present owners—the agricultural lands, as I believe that is all that it is proposed—and sell that land again on easy terms to the tenant farmers, what would you accomplish? Why you would get simply to where we started from in the United States. (Cheers.) And you would have the evils of land monopoly showing themselves in the same way that they are showing themselves with us. The men who talk about a settlement of the land question in that way

DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT

the land question is. (Cheers.) They seem to think that the land question is a question affecting agricultural land—a mere question between the agricultural landlord and the tenant. The land question is in truth another name for the labour question. (Cheers.) The land question is of the most vital concern to every man who lives on land or on the produce of land—and what man does not? (Cheers.) Buy out the landlords and sell again to the tenant farmers and you do nothing whatever for the class that most need help—(hear, hear)—for those masses who must be raised before there can be any permanent elevation! The man to consider, the man to take care of, the man whose condition must be improved, unless the gulf between rich and poor is to widen with all your reforms, is the mere unskilled labourer—the lowest man. And to help him you must go to the foundation. You must make it easier, not for some men to buy land, but for all men who want to work

TO BE ABLE TO GET THE USE OF LAND.

(Cheers.) This method of simply reversing the process by which the land of Great Britain has been made virtually the personal property of the classes is the direct and easy way to attain that goal. Just as you move forward in that direction, so will the opportunity for work increase, so will wages tend to rise; for, so will it become more and more difficult to monopolise land. (Applause.) And if you go on to theoretical perfection—till that value which attaches to land by reason of the growth and improvement of the community is fully taken for the benefit of the whole community—then will you have reached that ideal state in which the whole people will be the landlords of the soil of their country. (Cheers.) I believe that as the

discussion and the agitation go on here, opinion will concentrate upon this method of advance, and that you on this side and we on our side of the water will bend our energies to working in the same way towards the same end. (Cheers.)

I promised to answer questions, and some gentlemen at the outset of our proceedings asked me questions. I promised to answer them at the conclusion of my address. And as it is now nine o'clock, in order to give more ample time to reply to those gentlemen, I think I had better conclude at this point. (Cries of "Go on.")

Mr. George : I am perfectly willing to go on or to stop, according to your wish.

The Chairman here intimated that none but written questions would be answered. While they were being written, Mr. George might proceed with his address.

Mr. George, continuing, said : I think no one can examine the subject without coming to the conclusion that the way of which I have spoken—of what we call the "single tax"—is the way that nature has ordained, or as I prefer to say—the Creator has intended, (Cheers)—that the revenues of a country should be raised. (Cheers.) Our civilisation does not take us out of the creative scheme—our cities, our telegraphs, our railroads and inventions and discoveries—all that makes up what we call modern civilisation are as much within the order of nature—or, I believe, by divine intent, as were the modest beginnings of man. In the first stages of human development, ere men begin to come together in large societies and the arts to be developed, there is no value attaching to land. Neither in those rude states of society are there any public expenses. But just as men began to come closer and closer to each other in the development of society—just as the division of labour goes on, and the rude independence of the savage is exchanged for the interdependence of civilised men—so come social necessities, public necessities, the necessity of doing by authority the whole things that are needful and beneficial to all. (Cheers.)

In other words, just as mankind advances in civilisation the need for greater and greater public revenues begins to show itself. Now, here is a fund that grows as society grows, that increases as civilisation advances, a fund that no individual can claim as his own, a fund that can be taken without restricting enterprise, without discouraging industry, without taking from labour anything that rightfully belongs to labour, without in the slightest impairing the rights of property. Nay, here is a fund that *must* be taken for public uses, or what was intended for good will turn to evil—(hear, hear)—and the temptation arising from our leaving this fund in the hands of individuals is everywhere to encourage and to offer a premium to monopoly of the element absolutely necessary to man's existence. (Cheers.)

But let me explain a little why I speak of land values and tell what land values are. The primal factor in the value of land is the advantage which the use of that land will give to the application of labour and capital over what that same amount of labour and capital could produce on the best land open to occupation without the payment of any rent. This annual value fixes the capitalised value at which land will sell. But in a growing community the expectation of the future increase in value is discounted. Speculation is based upon it, and so in many cases the selling value of land is much greater

than the proper proportion which would arise from its annual or use value. Therefore it seems to me that at the beginning, at least, we should impose taxes not upon annual value

BUT UPON SELLING VALUE,

for the purpose of crushing out the speculators as quickly as possible. (Cheers.) To illustrate what I mean. Around our American cities you may see large tracts of land that are only needed for agricultural purposes and that cannot be rented at a higher than agricultural rent. But you cannot buy that land for an agricultural price—(applause)—because the expectation of the city's advance—the confident expectation that the people will need that land for building—gives it a speculative value. Land that will only rent for a few dollars an acre for agricultural purposes, you cannot buy for thousands of dollars an acre. So it is around your cities. (Cheers.) Therefore, if we were merely to tax the annual value, the speculators would come off much easier than if we taxed the selling value.

Now as a tax upon the land value is imposed, so necessarily the selling value of land must diminish. If you carried the tax to theoretical perfection—if you took the whole annual value of land and it were known that you intended to take in the future, as soon as it accrued, such an additional value as did accrue, land in the centre of London would have no more selling value than agricultural land in Wiltshire; land in New York would have no more selling value than land in Dakota. The annual or use value would, however, remain.

Let me illustrate. Here is a lot—let it be in New York—that is now worth to a user 10,000 dols. a year. Its selling value would therefore be at least 200,000 dols. If a tax were imposed that would take for the use of the community 5,000 dols. a year, the owner would only get 5,000 dols. of the 10,000 the user paid, and while the using value would remain the same, the selling value would diminish to 100,000 dols. As a matter of fact the selling value would not be that much, for if the community went so far as to take one-half of the annual value it would be pretty certain that it would soon go on to take the rest. So, as the tax was increased, the selling value would decrease, until, when the tax took the annual value of the land, it would cease to have any selling value at all. The using value would be the same as ever, and the man who before was willing to pay 10,000 dols. a year for the privilege of using it would be willing to pay that still. But the ownership, the landlordship of that piece of land, would not be worth

“ONE RED CENT,”

because 10,000 dols. would be taken by the community, and there would be no profit in being a landlord—no profit in the ownership of land. (Applause.) Therefore, as we got towards the point of forcing the selling value out of sight it would be necessary to assess our taxes on the rental or annual value. But that is a mere point of detail. The vital principle is to take the economic rent—the value brought out by the growth and improvement of the whole community for the benefit of the community. (Cheers.)

There are some, in this country at least, who say that that is not enough, and that you must go further than taking merely the economic rent, the value of land; that you must also take the direct control of land. Very well. If that be so, there is nothing to stop you after

you have taken the economic rent from taking the control. Landlords will then have no pecuniary interest in keeping it. (Cheers.) And just as you advance in that direction, so will it be easier for you to take the control if you want it. Do you want to buy the landlords out and make the land ostensibly and formally the property of the State? Then the more you tax them beforehand the cheaper you will ultimately buy. (Cheers.) At least go back to the old standards. Put on, in forms adapted to the times, the dues to the nation and to the community that landlords have thrown off. For my part, I do not believe it will be necessary for the community ever to take land and let it out to individuals; but if it is necessary, when the time comes, after the first steps have been made, then go ahead. What I want to do is to utterly abolish landlordism. (Cheers.)

What I want to do is to secure to every child born in any country an equal right to the use of the soil of that country. What I want to do is to utterly abolish all monopolies, to give to labour its full and true reward, and whatever steps may be necessary to that end I am sure that I for one will say nothing against. But what I ask you to do is to take in the first place the road that will lead you by the easiest and shortest route the longest march—and that I am confident is in this way. There are some who say that even if you take land values by taxation for the benefit of the community the landlord's power will still be unimpaired—that the landlords would simply add the taxes to their rent. There are, it seems to me, two different classes of people who entertain this fear. The first class are those who think of the landlords as though there were only one landlord. If one man owned the whole world, then he could make what charges he pleased. You could impose all the taxes you pleased without lessening his power. He could say to you, "You've got it all to pay or you leave my estate"—that is to say, leave the world. (Laughter and cheers.) If there were but one landlord in any country he would have the same power bounded only by the ability of the people to emigrate. But there is no country in which there is but one landlord. The real power of the landlords to exact rent where there are many of them .

DEPENDS UPON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

—upon general causes. Where the landlords are many they cannot exert that full power of monopoly and mastery that would come by the ownership by one man of the whole land of the country. Put your taxes on them, and any individual landlord must submit to the conditions that will be imposed upon him by the necessity which forces other landlords to get revenue or give up their land. Here is a landlord, let us say, who will let his land lie idle if he cannot find a tenant who will give him enough additional rent to make up the new taxes. What about the landlord next to him; the other landlords throughout the country who cannot afford to let their land lie idle—people who must get some revenue, or they cannot pay those taxes? That is the case with the vast majority of them. Now, in the second place, this notion that taxation imposed on land values can be shifted by the owner of the land on to the tenant arises from this idea—certain taxes are shifted from those who first pay them to those who ultimately use the things on which they are levied. For instance, a tax on tea increases the price of tea; a tax on buildings will

ultimately increase the rent of buildings ; a tax on cigars will increase the price of cigars, and so on. Why? Because every tax of that kind tends to diminish supply. Whoever has a thing to sell wants to get for it the highest price he can ; whoever wants to buy a thing wants to pay for it as little as he can. The prices, therefore, of things that must be constantly produced in order to meet demand are fixed by the equation between supply and demand, and anything that increases demand or reduces supply will tend to increase the price. Now then, a tax on buildings, a tax on tea, a tax on cigars, will increase prices because it tends to check the production of those things until the price rises high enough to give to those engaged in producing and selling them the ordinary profit, because a tax upon any of these things tends to reduce their production. But how can a tax upon land values tend to reduce the production of land? You might put such a tax for instance upon wheels and vans—(laughter and cheers)—that every van would be destroyed and every wheel would be broken up, and you would have neither wheels nor vans in the kingdom and would have to adopt the Chinese practice of carrying things on your backs. But you could tax land values all you pleased, and there would not be

AN INCH LESS LAND

—(cheers)—land would still be as useful to the man who wanted to use it. It would be less useful to the landlords, that is all. (Cheers.) That the tax on land values is a tax that cannot be shifted by the men who first pay on to the final user or consumer is the reason why the governing classes are always fond of indirect taxes, and why landlords and landowners always fight against any tax on land values. (Applause.) Is it not so in this country? It certainly is with us. Propose a tax that can be readily shifted and you will find—we certainly find it in the United States—that the men who first pay it are willing to pay it because they make a profit on it. During our war we imposed a tax on matches which enormously increased the price of matches. Did the match manufacturers fight it? Not at all. The time they fought was when it was proposed to abolish that tax. (Laughter.) The tax on whisky, instead of being objectionable to the whisky ring, was the very tax that made the whisky ring. (Cheers.) They opposed its reduction, and to-day they would spend millions to prevent its abolition—not that they are governed by any temperance principles. (Laughter and cheers.) The simple fact is that all these taxes by increasing prices necessarily concentrate business, require more capital for carrying on business in such articles, and therefore tend to the advantage of those who have capital, giving all sorts of opportunities for concentration and monopoly. But the tax on land values! Why, if it could be shifted by the landowners on to the land users, do you suppose that they would oppose it?

At this point of the proceedings there was a good deal of interruption caused by a few noisy people at the back of the hall, who wished to put questions to the lecturer.

The Chairman then intimated that he had received 15 or 16 written interrogations admirably framed, which he thought it would be interesting to the meeting if Mr. George replied to *seriatim*.

The first one was as follows :—“ Does the distribution of land to settlers in America prevent the evils which arise from landlordism in the old countries ? ”

Mr. George : It does not. By the bye, we have a lord in the United States—(laughter)—at least, a great many people think we have. We have a fashion in our country, especially in the western parts of it, of giving men handles to their names. You can take your choice between judge, doctor, senator, professor, colonel, or pretty much what you please, and so they have in the State of Illinois. They have a man there that they call Lord Scully. (Laughter.) He is not there ; he is an English subject who lives in London, I believe. Nevertheless, he has achieved a great deal of notoriety there by carrying on his large estate in Illinois in the most approved methods of Irish landlordism. He not only rack-rents his tenants—a high rent is a common thing ; he not only keeps them on short leases—a short lease is a common thing in America ; but what is particularly galling to them is that when they go to pay their rent in the place that he calls his “estate office,” he has a notice posted up that they must take off their hats. (Loud laughter.) And that man has excited so much ill-feeling that the State of Illinois has passed a law providing that after a certain time no one but an American citizen shall be allowed to hold land in the State of Illinois over a certain amount. (Cheers.) But whether our landlords are American or English subjects will make very little difference to the tenants or the people. This exhibition of Irish landlordism in the State of Illinois does not result from the badness of the laws of Ireland, but from the badness of the laws of the State of Illinois and of the United States of America. And that particular estate of “Lord Scully,” as they call him, has been formed, as have many other great American estates, of the piecing together of lots of land that were first distributed in tracts of 80 or 160 acres. All over the United States, and particularly in the Western States, the independent American farmer who owned his own land, and worked on his own land, using his own capital, is slowly, ostensibly, but in reality, rapidly, dying out. The mortgage, the first form of tenancy, is eating him out. In some of our Western States it is estimated that one-half, and some say two-thirds, of the farms are held under mortgage. The very same tendency to concentration is showing itself that has done its work here in England. Lord Macaulay, in his introduction to the “History of England,” states that at the time of the accession of James II. a majority of the English farmers were owners of their own land. Therefore, I say, that if you were to create a peasant proprietary in this country you could not keep it. You would be merely making a bulwark to landlordism. (Cheers, and a voice, “Curtail them.”)

The Chairman said that the next question was, “Can you state shortly why the revision of land taxation must and ought to take precedence of leasehold enfranchisement or free land schemes?”

Mr. George : Your leasehold enfranchisement, as I understand it, is of the same nature as your Irish land purchase bills. It merely aims at increasing the number of landowners, to strengthen the landlord class, and to put off the triumph of the people. What I understand by free trade in land is a simplification of the method of land transfer. That is, however, good—most good. The quicker you can simplify them the better. But of itself that will be of no general benefit. But when you come to taxing land values, then an easy mode of transfer will enable the users of land to become the nominal owners of the land all the quicker.

The Chairman read the next question, as follows :—“You say it is easy to impose a tax on land values. Show us how it is possible that two houses of law-makers composed of land thieves will do so?” (Laughter and cheers.)

Mr. George : When you get the public opinion of England up to the point of seeing the necessity of asserting equal rights in the land, when you get the public conscience educated—(cheers)—up to the point of realising the responsibility for the vice, and sin, and suffering, and degradation that are to be seen all over this country from the results of a national wrong—(cheers)—when you get the Christians of England—(hisses and cheers)—educated up to the point of feeling that when they call on the All Father to relieve crime and suffering that are not His fault but the fault of their own injustice, they are committing the worst of blasphemies, then neither two Houses of Parliament, nor two hundred Houses of Parliament can long stand in the way. (Cheers.)

The Chairman said the next question was, “How would you determine the amount of the land tax, and if the tax yielded more than you required for the national expenditure, how would you dispose of it?”

Mr. George : I would determine the amount of the tax upon any particular piece of land by an annual assessment of its value. There is no difficulty about an annual assessment. We make it in the United States every year—at least we are supposed to make it. And if it is not entirely just with us, that arises from two things. First, from that stupid notion, which we inherited from this side of the water—(laughter)—that a man ought to be taxed not on the value of his land, but only on the income that he is deriving from it. And so all over the United States that notion still so far lingers that the large speculator, the holder of vacant acres or sites, is taxed at a

COMPARATIVELY SMALL RATE

as compared with the farmer who is cultivating, or the builder who has put a house upon the land. In the next place, from the fact that we have other sources of revenue to look to. Concentrate public attention on the value of land, as a source of income, and public opinion will give you a fair valuation. And if you want something more—something to insure the fair working of the tax, it is very easy to insist that each lot, or each piece of land shall have on it a little monument or a little tin sign, saying, “This lot has such boundaries, is of such area, is assessed at so much.” And if you should deem it necessary to make some provision by which a man who wished to make use of land not now in use, or to apply to a higher use land being put to a lower use, he could have the privilege of going before the proper officer declaring, or perhaps giving bonds, that he intended to make this use of the land and to have it, as it were, condemned to him at something a little over the rate at which it is assessed to that owner.

The Chairman read the next question, as follows :—“Does Mr. George see in the restoration of the land in its limited economical sense any finality, or merely the first step towards nationalisation of all the means of production and distribution on socialistic lines?”

Mr. George : I see in the appropriation of rent to the uses of the community and the breaking up of land monopoly, not the only thing that it is necessary to do, but the first and the most important

thing. As we can only live on land and from land, so the monopoly of land is the worst monopoly. But there are other monopolies. I would not stop with abolishing monopoly in land. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I would abolish all monopolies, or, rather, when any business becomes a monopoly, when the law of competition in that business will not work, then to my mind it clearly passes over into the function of the State, and the community should manage it and control it. But it is to be observed, not merely that many other monopolies are the children of the parent monopoly, but that in breaking down land monopoly you open the way to and make easier the doing away with all other monopolies. This is perfectly clear, that as the development of society goes on there are more and more things that

MUST BE MANAGED BY THE PEOPLE

in common for the benefit of the people in common. Therefore it is that it is becoming more and more important that we everywhere simplify as we can the business of the State, that we do away with all unnecessary functions. Now just see how much simpler the single tax would make the collection of revenue and the administration of the laws, how much easier it would be to take land when needed for public uses, how much easier it would be to construct railways or telegraph lines, to open roads or do anything of that kind. And so, whatever way you look at it, you will see that not only does this plan do away with the fundamental monopoly, but it makes easier the dealing with all the other great social questions. I believe there is one question part of which I did not answer. A gentleman asked me whether I would confine the appropriation of land values for the use of the community to merely meet present expenses. In the first place I beg you to observe that it would very much simplify public expenses ; it would very

LARGELY REDUCE POLICE EXPENSES ;

it would very soon do away with all almshouse expenses, and I think with most of the prison expenses. But I would not stop at what are deemed necessary expenses. Here is a fund belonging to the whole community that ought to be used for the common benefit, and there could be no difficulty in finding good public use to put it to. We could certainly improve our schools, and provide our cities with light and heat and with public libraries and museums. We could run tram-cars and railways at the public expense, all these things mark you—all these things increasing in their turn the value of land and thus adding to the great fund that the community could draw on. And then, if you found no other way of using it (I don't know but what we ought to make it one of our first steps), after we have met the present expenses of the government we could give to every man and woman on attaining a certain age enough to support them for the rest of their lives. (Prolonged cheers.) We could take care of the sick and disabled—all those who fell by the wayside—not as a matter of niggardly and degrading alms, but as a matter of right. (Renewed cheers).

The Chairman put the next question as follows : "How would Mr. George provide against jobbery in the administration of his views?"

Mr. George : The danger of jobbery in the settling of the land question seems to me to come with the governmental distribution of the land, the parcelling it out among tenants, and the buying up of landlords. I think so far from any tendency in what we propose to increase jobbery, there will be a tendency to diminish it. (Hear, hear.) First by making government more simple, and, therefore, more under the public eye, and secondly by doing away with the danger of want, with its ever-present hell of poverty that men are constantly driven to try to escape, and with that reflection of it which shows itself in the admiration that we now entertain of riches, however gained. (Cheers.) Thus it is that we should have both a simpler government and an honester people, and I am one of those who believe that mankind are not naturally mean or dishonest. (Cheers.) I am one of those who believe that it is possible for a society that would pay the price for them to get the highest talent and the purest character for the administration of public functions, and the price that is necessary to pay for them is public regard and estimation. (Applause.)

The Chairman put the next question, in these words :—"Is it not a serious, almost a fatal objection to a single tax that it would still leave the administration of land cultivation in the hands of the apparent owners?"

Mr. George : I think I have gone over that ground before. I do not think it is. (Cheers.) The tendency under that system would be to make the user the nominal owner and do away with the middleman.

The Chairman next addressed to Mr. George the following question :—"You state none will build a house unless he is sure he can retain the title of the same. The navvies, bricklayers, plasterers, and other workers build the houses : how is it that they do not retain them?" (Loud cheers.)

Mr. George : They do not retain them because labour is robbed of its full reward. (Prolonged cheering.) They do not retain them because of the system having its origin and foundation in the appropriation as the property of a few of what is rightfully the opportunity for all. Wages are forced so low in most vocations as merely enable the labourer to live from year's end to year's end and accumulate nothing.

The Chairman put the next question, as follows :—"Do you not think that it is the monopoly of capital quite as much as the monopoly of land that is the cause of a large part of the distress now prevalent, not only in England but in the whole of the civilised world?"

Mr. George : No ; I do not. (Cheers.) The monopoly of capital is not, and never was, as important as the monopoly of land. Men did live before there was any capital. (Applause.) Men had to live in order that capital should come. But no human being ever did live or ever can live without land. Do away with the monopoly of land, and what is called the monopoly of capital will soon cease, for wherever it exists in forms that require further action, the way to take that action will be made easy.

The Chairman said that the next question was doubtful as being germane to the subject under discussion. He would give it the benefit of the doubt, however. It was as follows :—"Do you believe in the four great thieves of history—rent, profit, interest, and taxes?" (Laughter and cheers.)

Mr. George : To answer that categorically I must say that neither rent nor profit, neither interest nor taxes, are in their nature thieves. Rent in itself, so far from being a thief is to my mind the clearest indication that we have of the beneficence as well as of the intelligence of the power that framed the social as well as the physical laws. This value that attaches to land—this value created by the growth of the whole community ; that no one can justly claim as his own ; that increases and grows with every social advance, what does it mean ? This, that in the natural development of mankind, social advance, the march of civilisation, instead of being as we see it, a march towards more and more monstrous inequality in the distribution of wealth, ought to be, and was by the Almighty intended to be, a march towards a truer and truer equality. (Cheers.) For, consider ! In the beginning, in the rude state of Society, each individual depends upon his own powers, becomes relatively larger and larger as compared with what he can get from his own earnings. Therefore, rent instead of being in itself an evil, is in itself a good. (Applause.) Neither do I think that profits are an evil. Unjust profits are of course an evil, but all profits are not evil. Just profits in the last analysis are simply the earnings of labour. Neither in my opinion is interest an evil. (Cries of dissent and interruption.) Usury which men have to pay because of their necessities, may be an evil, but interest in itself is merely the reward of the abstinence and forethought which enormously adds to productive powers. (Applause.) Neither are taxes an evil. Taxes are the method of providing public revenues, and as I have tried to show to-night, while taxes upon the values created by individual effort are an evil and an injustice, the tax which takes for the use of the community what belongs to the community is a benefit and not an evil.

The Chairman : The next question is : " Would it not be unjust to ruin by land taxes a man who had invested his earnings in land ? If so, how would you deal with such a case ? "

Mr. George : I do not think anybody could be ruined in that way. I think that if we could to-morrow morning in such a country as this, or in such a country as the United States—if we could put on a tax on land values sufficient to take the whole economic rent, so great would be the general advantage that the great majority of those who might relatively lose would absolutely be gainers. There might be left some people, such as widows, or orphan children, or invalids depending on incomes derived from land values. Those, I think, in any such event, we ought to take ample care of. But though you and I and all of us would like to do this thing to-morrow morning, it cannot be done suddenly. People who are opposed to it will take care of that. All we can hope to do, pressing forward as rapidly as we can, is to do it by degrees. Thus people will adjust themselves to the change, and remember it is a change which brings an increasing general prosperity. But the great advantage of this plan is that every step we take makes easier the next step—every step we take gives so much relief. Therefore, it seems to me that people who propose to nationalise the land by creating peasant proprietors by schemes of allotment, or by buying out landlords, are beginning at the wrong end. (Cheers.) The moment such a plan is proposed, the idea of compensation arises. But if you take the way of taxation, where does the notion of compensation come in ? Who ever heard of compensating a man on account of a general tax ?

The Chairman said the next question he had to put was framed in these words : " How would it be possible to estimate the economic rent if the owner had to pay the whole into the coffers of the municipality or the State? For ascertaining the rent by means of competition is not the proper way to take 90 or 95 per cent."

Mr. George : You would ascertain it by the demand of the user as in the instance I cited—a lot of land worth 10,000 dols. a year—the willingness of any one to pay that. One more word I should like to add to that. It ought not to be the willingness of any one to pay, because then a man in possession of a certain piece of land might be injured by an enemy who might say, " I would pay more for that land than he." The assessment ought to be fixed by a fair estimate of what the land is worth. That estimate might be made by a board such as makes our assessments now, its proceedings being open to inspection.

The Chairman said the next question is :—" How does it follow that if you heavily tax the landowner he will be disposed to sell or let his land cheaper ?"

Mr. George : Simply because he cannot afford to hold it idle.

The Chairman : The next question is :—" What would be the position of workers in cities having to depend on speculators in labour for work ?"

Mr. George : Natural opportunities would be opened, and there would come into the labour market that demand for labour that is made by the wants of labour itself. Take it in any scale. Here in the City of London you have not houses enough for the population. They are not big enough nor good enough. (Cheers.) Why don't you have more? There is room all round London! Why in the first place the man who wants to build a house has to make an agreement with some owner of the land to pay him not the present value of the land—land which is used at present only for agricultural purposes—but a price, really a blackmail price, based upon the anticipation of future demands. And when the house is built, down comes the rate gatherer to fine the builder for having built the house. I am informed that the value of the land of London amounts to-day to something over 400 millions sterling; that the value of the buildings in London is not much above 200 millions; that under your present system the houses and improvements bear a tax of over seven millions sterling, and the land a tax of only £500,000 sterling. (Shame.) Now supposing you were to abolish the rates upon houses and improvements and put them on land values in the City of London—supposing you were not only to do that but in doing that were to give earnest of your intention to go ahead until you took the whole value of the ground of London for the use of the people, what would be the consequence? That landlords on the outskirts would be compelled either to sell their land or allow it to be used for building at far cheaper rates, and would not the abolition of all taxes on buildings that were to be put up, give an impetus to the construction of buildings, and by the law of competition cause those buildings to be rented for less than they are now? Why, in the City of London or New York apply such a principle as that, and houses would spring up as by magic. Not a labourer who could assist in building would need employment. Wages would go up to the highest notch, and, as in the building trades, so would all the other trades that depend on them find ample call for their production. And not with builders alone. The miners, the farmers, the men in

all primary vocations, as they went to work, and as they produced wealth for themselves, and kept it without paying this blackmail tax, would bring into all branches of production and exchange the most enormous demand, and every wheel of industry would be set in motion. (Cheers.)

The Chairman said the next question proposed was, "What would Mr. George do with mining rent and royalties with regard to the miner's wages?"

Mr. George: I would take them for the benefit of the State. I think if there is one thing more absurd than another in our treatment of land it is this thing of treating the coal implanted in the ground by the operation of nature during the long æons before man came upon the earth, stored up in the ground to furnish heat and light, and power—to treat that as though it were put in the ground for the benefit of my lord this or that! (Laughter and cheers.)

The Chairman said the next question was the following: "Does Mr. George pretend to say that there is no over-population in this country, and will the nationalisation of land in this country settle the population question?"

Mr. George: I pretend to say that there is no over-population in this country nor yet in any country in the world—(cheers)—and if we obey the law of justice there never can be any such thing as over-population. It is now getting late and I should like to say a few words in conclusion.

Here several persons arose and declared that a question had been sent up that the Chairman had not put.

The Chairman: I have put all the questions relating to the subject matter of the address that I have received. I have received one question which I have not, and shall not put, because it has no relation to the subject.

Mr. George: I am willing, however, in this case to depart from what is ordinarily a proper rule, and to gratify these gentlemen by answering the question they refer to, even if it does not relate to the subject. [To the questioner.] Please state your question verbally.

The Questioner: Why did you condemn the Chicago martyrs?

Mr. George, continuing, said: The gentleman probably means the five men who last year were hanged in Chicago, and he asks me whether I can give any reason why I condemned them. I did not condemn them. (A voice, "You did.") No, sir; they were condemned by a jury in the State of Illinois. Their case was carried to the highest court in that State. It was affirmed. I am not the court and the jury. I am not even a citizen of the State of Illinois. It is not for me to pass any judgment on them. I have never condemned them. (A voice, "You did.") Never. What seems to have excited the indignation of certain people here is what I refused to do—to demand as a matter of right their release. (Cheers.) (A voice, "Why did you do so?") Why did I do so? Because I cannot demand as a matter of right the release of anyone who has been condemned by the laws of his State as guilty of murder; because I have no sympathy whatever with people who appeal to dynamite. (Prolonged cheers, the audience rising to their feet and waving their hats and handkerchiefs.) I do not believe that force and violence are agencies of social redemption. (Renewed cheers.) Where there is one class oppressing the majority of the people then force might be a remedy, but certainly not in the United States, nor

yet do I believe in England. (Applause.) What enslaves the masses of the people everywhere is their own ignorance. (Renewed cheers.) The true appeal is the appeal to thought. When men begin to realise what hurts them and how it is to be cured, then and not till then can they apply the remedy, and in any country where public opinion rules that is all that is necessary. (Great applause.)

One or two words more. We single-tax men of the United States, as I have told you before, threw ourselves in this last campaign into the fight as Free Traders. Although the Democratic party only proposed tariff reform, and that a very little bit of tariff reform; nevertheless, when Mr. Cleveland turned his face towards freedom—when the Democratic party had to make a fight for tariff reduction, we found our opportunity to say something, to get an audience for Free Trade in its full meaning, and enormous gain was made in that way. The great thing that was done was the bringing up of the question, the enlisting to a large extent at least, the machinery and the politicians of the Democratic party on that side. They began looking for reasons to oppose Protection. Now, it seems to me that there is a very close analogy between that situation and the situation in this country to-day. Just as our Democratic party took a most illogical position against Protection, so your Liberal party has taken the same sort of position respecting buying out the landlords and selling to the tenants. Just as illogical and just as half-hearted. Nevertheless the standards of that party are borne in the right direction, and the same opportunity is opening to you as on our side of the water has opened to us. (Cheers.) Make the most of it. Advance boldly. Do not be afraid of your opinions. Urge them in season and out of season, wherever you find an opening, and as sure as we are here together to-night so surely will they win. (Cheers.) It will only be a little while before you see the forces that are now gathering, concentrating on a forward march. We are moving on our side of the water. We ask you by your advances here to help us there, and by our advances there we will do what we can to help you here and to help all over the world. This is a world-wide question, not a national one. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

MR. HENRY GEORGE'S GREAT SPEECH AT LIVERPOOL
ON FREE TRADE IN AMERICA AND THE LAND
QUESTION IN ENGLAND.

On the 30th November Mr. Henry George was presented with an address by the Council of the Financial Reform Association. The meeting was held in the Rotunda Lecture Hall, which was crowded to its utmost capacity, many being unable to obtain admission. Mr. Muspratt, the president of the Association, who occupied the chair, in his introductory remarks, said :—I am sure it is not necessary for me to say very much to introduce Mr. Henry George to a Liverpool

audience. (Hear, hear.) "But," I have been asked, "what has the Financial Reform Association to do with Land Nationalisation?" and I found it very easy to answer. Mr. George and the Financial Reform Association have been working on converging lines for a great number of years. Mr. George was first known in this country by his wonderful and stirring and eloquent book, "Progress and Poverty." (Applause.) In that book he showed, and I think conclusively showed, that the monopolisation of the land by a comparatively few individuals was the cause—at any rate a very large cause—of the misery amongst a large portion of the population. (Applause.) But he also in his economical studies found that the want of freedom of exchange was also another cause of the misery of the people. The Financial Reform Association started with these principles—Economic Government, Just Taxation, and Perfect Freedom of Trade; and they very soon found out that without direct taxation you could not have perfect freedom of trade, and that in order that taxation should be just it must be direct. (Hear, hear.) They were driven to this conclusion, that in order to obtain perfect freedom of trade and just taxation it was absolutely necessary that we should revert to a land tax. (Hear, hear.) If you tax the land you thereby practically get from the labour and industry of every individual a portion of the cost of government. (Hear, hear.) How can you have freedom of production when the first result of the labour of the people has to go into the pockets of the landlords in the shape of mining rents and royalties, and in the shape of rent for all the land in the immediate neighbourhood of large towns? Do you suppose that the rent of the land at Bootle and the neighbourhood of Liverpool is caused by any exertion of the Lords of Derby? (Laughter.) Why, the whole value of the land has been produced by the industry of the labouring population of this town! Therefore it is one of the principles of the Financial Reform Association, in order to have perfect freedom of trade, that we should have direct taxation, and a great portion of the direct taxation must take the form of a land tax. (Applause.)

Mr. Callie, the secretary, then read an address to Mr. George, which said:—In regard to the land question, although there may be some difference as to the means there is no difference as to the object we both seek to attain, viz., that the land be used for the benefit of the whole of the people, and we feel that the subject is so important and so pressing that it is our duty to look for the points of agreement, not of difference, between all engaged in land law reforms. When we study our question from the historical point of view we can trace a slow but constant transfer of taxation from land on to labour, and coincident with that the practical enslavement of an ever-increasing portion of the community. On the economic side we find that a few landholders have monopolised that which is intended for all, and that it is to this contravention of political economy that the terrible destitution of a great portion of the community can be traced.

Mr. Henry George, who on rising was received with loud cheers, said: Mr. Chairman, Members of the Council of the Financial Reform Association, and Englishmen—(applause)—I am both gratified and honoured by this address. There is in all the three Kingdoms no body of men from whom it would give me greater pleasure to receive the right hand of fellowship than from the Financial Reform Association of Liverpool. (Applause.)

To the man who really appreciates what free trade means, the man who really sees that the interests of mankind lie together and are not diverse, that we can only truly advance by the advance of others, that we can only truly profit when others have their just due—to him all the prejudices of nationality and race and religion, all the hopes, strifes, and the old hatreds sink into insignificance and are buried out of sight, and no matter where may be his birthplace he becomes in fulness and in truth a citizen of the world. (Loud applause.) I am an American free-trader—(applause)—in the full and the true sense of the term, and as an American free-trader I welcome and am grateful for the assistance of the free-traders of England. It is told of Richard Cobden that being with John Bright at a time when the latter had suffered the most grievous domestic affliction—when he had laid a loved one in the earth—Cobden said to him: "Come away with me. There are women and children in England to-day dying of starvation, of starvation made by the laws. Come with me, and we won't rest until we have abolished those laws." (Loud applause.) Cobden is dead and his work only begun. John Bright's life work is probably over. Many people call England a free-trade country, and yet in England women and children still die of starvation. (Hear, hear, and "Shame.") Is it not, must it not be starvation made by the laws? (Cries of "Yes.") Either by human law or by Divine law that is certain, and to my mind the man who says that it is the result of causes that are beyond control, that this dire poverty and misery are the result of natural laws, is worse—a thousand-fold worse—than any Atheist. (Loud applause.) The cause of that poverty, the cause of that starvation, the cause of this monstrous want in the very centres of wealth, of ignorance in the midst of enlightenment, of the direst abasement and embrutement surrounded by the highest civilisation, comes from the single fundamental fact that the masses of our people have been disinherited. (Loud applause.) Charity may contribute its thousands and tens of thousands, people may get up meetings, establish schools, make institutions, legislatures may appoint commissions and institute sanitary regulations, ministers of the gospel may go into the slums and try and preach the light and the glory of Christ's message, but all in vain. (Hear, hear.) It is baling the sea, so long as you do not go to the root of the evil. So long as the human being is a land animal, so long as man can only live on land and work on land, so long as all wealth is simply the raw material of the land worked up by human labour—then it is inevitable that if the land of any country be treated as the property of one class of that country, no matter how you advance, no matter what inventions may be made, no matter what improvements may be carried out, there must be at the bottom of the social scale brutishness and vice and ignorance. So rapidly has public opinion advanced in England that I don't think that it is necessary for me to stand here and attempt to prove the equal rights of man to land, to insist upon the obvious fact that every child that is born in this England of yours is at the moment of its birth seized with as equal a right to the use of the land of England as is the eldest son of your proudest duke. (Applause.) That truth has been forcing its way among the masses of your people. To-day, over a century after they were uttered, the truth of those words of the American Declaration of Independence is beginning to be recognised: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and are endowed by the Creator with certain

inalienable rights." (Applause.) If I rightly judge English opinions to-day, that perception has taken a hold upon the masses of your people that can never be lost. It is unnecessary for me to say that I don't believe in compensation. It is not necessary for me to say that, to my notion, if anybody is to be compensated it is those who have suffered from the system, not those who have gained by it. (Hear, hear.) People are used to paying taxes to the State: they are not used to paying rent to the State. Call your rent taxes, and the thing is done. (Applause.) There is everything in a name. I learned that lesson when I was a boy in the City of Philadelphia. I was educated in a very strict faith. My people and the people whom I knew in my childhood, the people who went to our church and other churches of the same kind, had a notion that the theatre was a very bad place, and they would not go to the theatre on any account. (Laughter.) There was a celebrated fellow citizen of mine of the name of Barnum—(laughter)—the man who came over here and bought Jumbo. (Laughter.) Barnum came to Philadelphia, and he recognised that prejudice, and he saw that, although there were a number of theatres running for the ungodly, a theatre he could get the godly to go to would pay extremely well. But he did not start a theatre. Oh, no! He started a lecture-room, and we had in that lecture-room theatrical representations, and it was crowded every night in the week, with two matinees in the afternoon. (Laughter.) Now it seems to me, and it has seemed to me from the beginning, that the easy way, the gentle way, the kindly way, the pleasant way of getting rid of the landlord was not by violently dispossessing him, but simply by taxing him out. And this method has enormous advantage to all Conservative people pointed out by your president. This is no Yankee notion, as some people said it was when I came over here some years ago. This is a going back to the good old English custom. (Hear, hear.) It is a matter of fact, as your president has pointed out, that absolute property in land, that treatment of land which accords you the same full right of ownership that by natural law attaches to the things produced by labour, came by a gradual series of usurpations. If it is stupid to keep things out of the country by taxes and fines, it is clearly as stupid to prevent their production in the country by taxes and fines. (Hear, hear.) If you tax houses you necessarily restrict the building of houses, and there will be fewer houses built. If you tax vans and wheels—(groans)—you will certainly have fewer vans and fewer wheels. (Laughter.) Therefore the principle of free trade condemns all such taxes. (Hear, hear.) Free trade means free production, and it is essential to free production that no man shall be taxed for having produced a thing. The spirit of free trade condemns all those taxes. This whole question of taxation is a moral question. The right to freely trade is just as essential as the right to freely speak. (Applause.) A man builds a house here, and under your system as under ours, your rate assessor comes round and says "How much is that house worth?" and the better the house the man has built the more he is fined for it. (Laughter.) I think of the absurdity of it. (Hear, hear.) Have you got houses enough? Why look at the 40,000 people living in Glasgow in one room; look at the crowded population of London and the slums of Liverpool, so with us over there. The man who builds a house ought to be considered a public benefactor, but by the system of taxation, which is the same on both sides of the

Atlantic, he is considered a malefactor, and the bigger the house he builds, and the better and the more houses he builds, the more he is fined for it. Every child that is born, every emigrant that comes, every public improvement that is made, adds not to the value of the house, but does add to the value of the ground. (Applause.) Take the value of land for public uses and then you could easily abolish all these other taxes that hamper and restrict production, that punish men of enterprise and industry and thrift. (Applause.) When you tax the vacant lot just as fully as the lot beside it, with the fine house erected thereon, when you take the full value that the growth of the community adds to the value of land, then the incentive for holding land without using it is gone. (Hear, hear.) Then, not only will the community get that fund that to my mind is clearly the natural basis and source of taxation, intended by the Creator for the social needs of civilisation, but you put all men on an equal level with regard to the use of land. The man who is then using land will only pay to his fellows a fair rate for using it, and the man who is not using land will have to give it up when anyone else wants to use it. There is the easy solution of this land question. (Applause.) It is a solution we cannot reach all at once. I, for one, would like to reach it to-morrow morning, but I know it is necessarily a series of steps. We must press forward as hard as we can. The other fellows will do the resisting. (Laughter.) But on this line every step that is gained makes easier the next step; on this line there is no point at which they can come in and claim compensation; on this line you get immediate relief in part, and every step you go on makes it easier, if you ultimately want all to resume the nominal control, if you want to. If you do intend sometime to buy the landlord out, the more you tax land values before you begin that bargain the cheaper it will be. (Laughter.) What reason is there that the working people of Great Britain should be taxed for the benefit either of the Irish landlords or of the Irish tenants? (Hear, hear.) If you begin there, where are you going to end? If you recognise the principle that one class is to be provided for at the expense of the public treasury or the public credit, you will find lots besides the landlords and the tenants to provide for—shoemakers, blacksmiths, and others. Why should you not use your public credit to provide your costermongers with larger donkeys and better carts, and so on. (Laughter.) The men who think that the land question can be settled in that way don't begin to appreciate what the land question is. The only class to look to is the lowest class. Raise any other class in the community, improve their condition, and you but widen the gulf. You cannot make any permanent improvement in social conditions until the lowest man is raised. The man to look to for the settlement of the Irish land question is not the Irish agricultural tenant; it is the Irish labourer. This land question is not a question between agricultural landlords and agricultural tenants. Land has other uses than the growing of potatoes or the fattening of sheep. How can a city exist without land? Can the manufacturer, can the operative, can the miner, can any human being live save on land and from land? Even the ships that go down to the sea—what would become of them if, while they were gone, the land were to disappear? (Laughter.) The land question is simply the labour question in another phase. It is not to be altered by buying out one class and making another class, by compensating landlords for something

that they don't really own, and then dividing that among their tenants, and creating a still larger class of landlords, and more difficult to deal with. It is not by benevolence that these questions are to be settled. You don't want charity; you don't want fine and complex adjustment; what you want, and the only thing, is simply justice. (Applause.) Do that. Recognise, not merely in the land of Ireland, but in the land of Great Britain as well, this public property of the whole people.

A vote of thanks to Mr. George, proposed by the Rev. Harold Rylett (Dudley) and seconded by Mr. Thomas Crossfield, having been carried by acclamation, the following questions were then asked and promptly answered:—

Q.—How would the shipowning millionaire be taxed by a tax only on land?

A.—Why should you tax the shipowning millionaire? Ships are good things, and the more you have the better. (Applause.) We have tried the taxing of ships and of materials that enter into the construction of ships, and we have taxed the American flag off the high seas. (Applause.)

Q.—Your tax on land would only tax landowners. How would you tax capitalists who are not landowners?

A.—We don't propose a tax on land: it is a tax on land values. All land would not be taxed, but only valuable land, and that in proportion to its value. A great many misapprehensions arise on that point. How would I tax capitalists who are not landowners? I would not tax them at all. Capital is a good thing, and the more capital we have the better. Don't be afraid of capital. There is really no quarrel between labour and capital. The enemy of labour is monopoly. Break down this fundamental monopoly. Take for the benefit of the State this enormous sum that now goes to make a few rich without labour; sweep away all other taxes; and you will break up these vast aggregations of capital, you will increase the power of labour; and you will unite labour and capital.

Q.—Would not an income tax, as well as a land tax, tax the landlord?

A.—I don't believe in an income tax.

Q.—In the nationalisation of American land, how about the American Indian, the rightful heir, according to your theory?

A.—The American Indian should have just as much right as any other man, and no more. He is entitled to no more. Wm. Penn gets great credit for having bought the land from the Indians. What right had the Indians to sell the land? Supposing they had sold Wm. Penn the sun. (Laughter.)

Q.—We know that all landlords have a happy knack of shirking all their responsibilities. What is to prevent the landlord, in the event of the land being taxed on its value, imposing the tax on the occupier?

A.—There is everything to prevent him. He could not do it. The landlord now, it is fair to say, gets all the rent that the occupier, or any other occupier, is willing to pay. There is nothing in the tax on land value to give him power to get more. If you tax houses, the landlord can get more; if you tax cigars, the seller can get more; if you tax clothing, the clothier and tailor can get more. Why? For this reason. Taxes on articles of human production tend to check the supply, and therefore to raise the price, and prices must rise until you

can go on at the ordinary level of profit. That is the reason why a tax on a house adds to the rent, why a tax on cigars adds to the price of cigars, why the duty on tea adds to the price of tea. But land is not a thing of human production. The tax upon land values, so far from giving the owner any power of getting a larger price, in fact diminishes that power; for this reason—that it prevents other people holding land idle. Taxes that can be imposed on others you generally find the people who first pay them perfectly willing to pay, but the tax on land values the landowner always fights against.

Mr. George, in responding to the vote of thanks, said: My friend, in making that proposition, has said the thing that is nearest to my heart. There is work in this great cause for every man and every woman. It needs no special ability, and I believe that if a man will address himself to it he will find his power increasing and opportunities extending. There is before us to-day the noblest work in which men can engage. It is something more than a mere fiscal reform. It is something more than merely increasing wealth. What we propose to do is to liberate bodies, to liberate minds, to destroy what our friend has said is a soul-debasing serfdom; and this is a work in which there is but one power that can be successfully appealed to, and that is the power of thought and of public opinion. If every man who feels in his heart the stir of this cause, if every man to whom that appeal which Richard Cobden made to John Bright comes home, will go forth from this hall to do what he can to clear his own heart, and to clear the minds of those he comes in contact with, it will not be long before he will see his influence extending; it will not be long before public opinion will be gathering in a resistless wave that will sweep everything before it. (Applause.) I want to see something in my time. (Hear, hear.) I work for my children and those who come after, but for heaven's sake what is the use of our going on year after year working and slaving as men do now, when there is no earthly reason for it? There is a great movement beginning in England. Start in and help it. Urge it on your leaders. Give such men as Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain the assurance that you are behind them, that they cannot go forward too rapidly for you, and that if they do want you to follow they must go forward, else you will be ahead of them, and asking for new representatives. (Applause.) And now I want to perform the pleasant duty that, according to your English custom, devolves upon me, of moving a vote of thanks to our Chairman, the President of the Financial Reform Association of Liverpool. In doing that I wish to express my sense of the good work which that Association has done and has yet to do, and my cordial good wishes and hope for its prosperity and strength. (Hear, hear.) Let us get in all we can and strengthen this Association, push its publications, and make its work tell. It is telling in this country; it is telling all over the world. It indeed has lifted the standard of true free trade. Let us follow it. (Loud applause.)

Mr. T. Briggs, in seconding the vote of thanks to the Chairman, said: Why should there not be a state of things wherein every man can make himself happy in doing a fair day's work for a fair day's wages, seeing clearly from the laws of the land which he has to obey that he is safe from poverty? That is what we want in this country—that a man shall not die in the workhouse. (A voice: "We don't want any workhouses.")

The proposition having been put by Mr. George, and carried, The Chairman, in acknowledging it, said: I am sure that what Mr. George has said this evening will make an impression on the working-men of Liverpool, and I hope that they will now see that the work of the Financial Reform Association has been in their interest, and that they ought to support it. (Applause.)

On Saturday, December 1st, Mr. George returned to London, and in the evening was entertained at a complimentary banquet at the Duval Restaurant. When the proceedings began, the large hall was well filled with an audience that included many whose names are well known in connection with various social reforms. The Rev. Stewart D. Headlam occupied the chair, and was supported by the guest of the evening, Mr. George, Dr. G. B. Clark, M.P., Messrs. Michael Davitt, Albert Spicer, S. N. Burroughs, William Saunders, F. Verinder, E. Dillon Lewis, Rev. Fleming Williams, Rev. F. Hastings, Mr. Cuninghame Graham, M.P., and others.

The first sentiment "Free trade, free land, free men," coupled with the name of Mr. Henry George, was proposed by the chairman, and supported by Dr. Clark, M.P., Mr. Cuninghame Graham, M.P., and Albert Spicer, Esq., J.P.

Mr. George, in responding, said that the sentiment, "Free trade, free land, free men," was the motto of those who, like himself, were single-tax men. He was a Free Trader to the backbone, because he believed in the brotherhood of man, and because no ocean, no mountain, no river could transform those on the other side into our natural rivals and enemies, as Protectionists imagined they could. He went for absolute free trade without restriction, not merely because he wished to take that step, and then stop. He believed it would lead much further; it would after a while enable labour to get its righteous return, and would prevent the growing up of monopolies. In order to make production free, land must be made free, without labour having to pay tribute or blackmail to anyone. Only this would lead to the uprearing of a world of free men.

On Tuesday, December 3rd, Mr. George attended the annual meeting of the United Committee for the Taxation of Ground Rents and Values, held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, at which Lord Hobhouse presided.

Mr. Henry George, on being called upon to speak, said he saw in the programme advocated by the United Committee the germ of a system that would adjust social injustices, and would provide every man who was willing to work with the opportunities of fulfilling his desire. He ascribed the social condition of the people to the land laws, which drove men into fierce competition to obtain the means of living.

On Wednesday afternoon Mr. George attended a meeting at Sion College, under the auspices of the Guild of St. Matthew, and a large number of the London clergy and prominent laymen were present; and in the evening attended an informal conference at the Westminster Palace Hotel. On December 6th, by invitation from Dr. Parker, Mr. George was present at the City Temple and addressed a large congregation. In the afternoon he attended a meeting of Nonconformist ministers, and in the evening visited the Streatham Parliament, where he inaugurated the debate on the land question, and replied to objectors with good effect. On Friday Mr. George spoke at Smethwick to a large and enthusiastic gathering of the Knights of Labour. On Saturday he sailed for New York.

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