

## Fabians and Land Value

By Alexander Greene

The name of Frederick Verinder may not be well known in this country, but American readers of LAND AND LIBERTY of London know him as the Secretary of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values and the author of "Land and Freedom" and "My Neighbour's Landmark." The latter book has received the commendation of many persons, among whom is the late Archbishop of Canterbury.

On May 7th, last, Mr. Verinder reached the 60th anniversary of his election as secretary. Under date of August 2nd, he wrote me:

"I am, in my old age, one of the diminishing number of those who enjoyed the great privilege of knowing Henry George and his wife and all his children. Alas! the only survivor of them is Anna George deMille, whom I still count as one of my dearest friends. . . . I still sadly miss the great [Anglo-] Catholic priest, Stewart Headlam who went to his rest twenty years ago."

Some years ago, Mr. Verinder gave me a copy of a rare pamphlet entitled "Fabianism and Land Values," a lecture delivered in 1908 by the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam before the Fabian Society, the group of famous Socialists—Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb amongst others. Headlam belonged to the Society, not that he was a Socialist, but in order to attack them in their meetings. It seems that in their "Basis," the Society's original declaration of principles, they emphasized the necessity of taxing land values. Headlam told them:

"The Fabians of the present generation would do well, if they want to understand the first principles on which their Society is founded, to read "Progress and Poverty" . . . The real organizer of the coming revolution is Mr. Verinder, and the first step towards it is a Land Valuation Bill, or some other simple means to ascertain the Value of Land. . . . Those of you who

first step towards it is a Land Valuation Bill, or some other simple means to ascertain the Value of Land. . . . Those of you who read the Gospels will remember how Jesus Christ complained that the good people were often so very stupid—it is the same with the Fabian Society. Truly, the children of this world (in the House of Lords) are wiser in their generation than the children of Light (in the Fabian Society). The House of Lords will never be afraid of the suggestion to tax Ability value; it won't hit them—but they are wild at the merest suggestion even to