

Under the Hammer.

INTERESTING DETAILS OF AUCTIONEERING UP-TO-DATE.

The first evening meeting of the session of the Auctioneers' Institute was held last night at the rooms in Chancery Lane, when the president, Mr. James F. Field, delivered his inaugural address. Referring to the land market, he said the returns showed that better times were dawning. There was a greater demand for agricultural land, and in some favourite counties, such as Devon, land had sold extremely well.

SMALL HOLDINGS FETCHED

quite fancy prices, twenty-five or thirty years' purchase, and in certain localities even fifty or sixty years' purchase had been given; whilst the Ebrington estate in South Devon, offered in small lots, sold at prices amounting in the aggregate to about £50,000, in the majority of instances the sitting tenants becoming the purchasers. With regard to freehold ground rents, the general volume of business during the past year had been satisfactory, and the total sales when the year was ended would show an immense improvement over 1895, and an appreciable betterment of 1896. Although all kinds of property had found a readier market, ground rents, building estates, and licensed properties had been the most keenly competed for. With regard to the latter, the competitors were generally brewers.

FACTS FOR LONDONERS.

Of noticeable sales in the metropolis during the past year, that in Piccadilly of an area of 3,210ft. for £115,000, or £35 per foot; the site of St. Michael's Church in Wood Street, with an area of 3,700ft., £31,500; of part of the Lombard Street post office, with an area of 734ft., for £30,100, or £41 per foot; of a house and eight and a quarter acres of land at Balham, for £29,550; of a similar property at Putney, for £25,000; of a building estate of eleven and three-quarter acres at Wandsworth, for £25,000, were perhaps some of the most conspicuous. In every direction it was noticeable that building estates near the metropolis, or any great and growing town, had readily sold, whilst ordinary building plots had not lacked purchasers. The sales of the Liberator Estates confirmed his opinion as to the revival of speculation in land. The second section of the Ilford Park Estate was sold in October for £70,000, or from £1,000 to £1,200 per acre; the Chingford Rise Estate of 90 acres, including some twenty-seven villas, for £62,000; and the Tilbury Docks Estate of building land and houses, for £40,000.—*London Daily Chronicle.*

Another Important Advance.

At a meeting of the Associations of Municipal Corporations, held at the Guildhall, London, on March 26th, Mr. Alfred Billson, M. P. for Halifax, carried a resolution, by an overwhelming majority, in favour of seeking powers for local bodies to rate land values. Mr. Billson stated the case boldly, and showed how such a rate, besides providing a much needed revenue, would destroy land monopoly. We hope to publish Mr. Billson's speech next month. Commenting on this victory, the *London Daily News* says:—

It should by no means escape notice that the movement for the taxation of ground values has received the powerful support of the Association of Municipal Corporations. At the annual meeting, apparently without opposition, the representatives of 266 towns in the United Kingdom, including all the county boroughs and all the non-county boroughs of over 15,000 inhabitants, except one, declared that the growing burdens upon ratepayers made it urgent that "some means should be provided by which owners of land (whether occupied or vacant) should contribute to the local revenue." The meeting, it should be noticed, was presided over by a well-known supporter of Lord Salisbury, Sir Albert Rollit, and can certainly be considered eminently respectable. The Municipal Corporations in the United Kingdom represent a very strong and perhaps the best Conservative element in the country, and now they are found supporting a measure which when put forward

by the Progressives on the London County Council was characterised as revolutionary, and at least impracticable. Yet the London County Council was only following the example of a great Unionist Corporation, Glasgow, and now its policy is endorsed by all the important boroughs in the land. The inference is obvious. The demand that the owners of land shall be taxed for local improvements from which they largely benefit, is now made by the whole of the large urban communities in Great Britain and Ireland, and it cannot much longer be resisted. The Commission now sitting upon local taxation will have to pay some attention to this expression of opinion by the Association of Municipal Corporations.—*The Daily News, 29th March, 1898.*

In Memoriam.

The Rev. J. M. Cruickshank.



Just a few months ago we were privileged to hear the Rev. J. M. Cruickshank in his own church pay an eloquent tribute to our dead leader, Henry George. Few eyes were dry that Sunday afternoon, as he traced that career of Christ-like sacrifice unto death.

On going up to speak to the minister some of the elders were surprised to find that he was lying back, his eyes filled with tears. What an eloquent tribute that was to the power of Henry George. And now, he too, the eloquent preacher, the kind-hearted, open-handed minister of St. Rollox has gone from us to his eternal rest.

His body lies in Sighthill Cemetery, amid a garden of flowers, close to the church he built, in the midst of the people to whose service he devoted his life.

The Single Tax has lost a devoted friend, and we have lost a noble comrade. In the battle against human wrongs Mr. Cruickshank was ever in the front: though his health was not the most robust, he never shrunk from the call of duty. We will not speak of his work as a Christian minister in St. Rollox, although to him the problems of individual and social life were inseparable. The Christian Consolator and the Christian Emancipator were different sides of the same spirit. The work of consolation was fittingly spoken to in the crowds of sorrowing people who filled the church at the Funeral Service, who lined the roads as the funeral cortege passed into the cemetery, and filled the cemetery to look at the place where they laid him to rest.

He was the son of a crofter, and the hard battle which the crofters had with insufficient land and exorbitant rents must have borne early to his mind the significance of the land question. Just when he began to think, and write, and speak on this question, we do not know—the land question seems almost to have been part of his nature. In the midst of his work as school teacher and master, and amid his duties as pastor in Orkney, he yet found time to write to the *Highland papers* on the wrongs of the people in relation to the land.

We know his work since he came to Glasgow; how in the midst of hard uphill battling in a church situated among the very poorest of the poor, he yet found time to work for the relief of the starving crofters.

When a meeting of the citizens of Glasgow was called in the middle of the day, to consider the question of emigrating the crofters, he,

alone among the ministers of Glasgow, had the courage to beard the lion in its den, and move an amendment to the emigration proposal.

With the advent of Henry George, he threw himself heart and soul into the wider movement of the Single Tax or Land Restoration. The great meeting which Henry George addressed in the City Hall on a Sunday evening, on "Thy Kingdom Come," owed not a little of its success to Mr. Cruickshank, who presided over it.

His work for the Land Question hurt him not a little in getting up funds for his new church. Many a subscription was point-blank refused because of his Radicalism on the Land Question. We shall miss him greatly for his counsel and his comradeship; and if his death gives sorrow to us, how much more must it give to her who was his wife and helpmeet for so many years. Our heart goes out in sympathy to her, and we trust she may be somewhat consoled with the idea that he did so much in his lifetime for the poor and the oppressed, and that his spirit still working with us will aid us in the accomplishment of much until freedom come.

The Ground Landlord.

HIS CLOVEN HOOF IN THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

At the late County Council Election the civic life of the metropolis was most seriously menaced. The strongest Conservative Government of the century lent its powerful aid to the forces of municipal reaction only to make itself ridiculous. The electors rose manfully to the occasion and routed the enemy, horse, foot, and artillery. They shrewdly recognised that they were face to face with a nefarious conspiracy of monopolists, and that among these bloodsuckers the most obnoxious by far was the untaxed ground landlord. This unique malefactor, at nearly every Progressive gathering, was roundly denounced as a robber, and it was unanimously agreed that he should, without ceremony, be stripped of his booty by taxation whenever opportunity offered. London's imperative mandate to every Progressive Councillor was—**TAX THE GROUND LANDLORD**; and a more righteous command was assuredly never laid on representatives of the people.

Why? It is hardly necessary, at this time of the day, to ask *why*; but never have I heard the case for the Taxation of Land Values so deftly put as in the following

PARABLE.

A certain man, who hailed from Australia, turned up at the small struggling town of —, his father's birth-place. He was fairly well equipped with this world's goods, and signified his intention of doing something for the town, in memory of his father. He soon discovered that the people needed a Public Hall, which he decided to build and present to them. Of course, he could not build the hall in the air, and so he looked about for a ground site. Having found a suitable vacant lot he next proceeded to interview the owner:—

Colonial—"Well, how much do you want for this piece of ground?"

Landlord—"£20 a year."

Col.—"Wh-a-t! £20 a year? Why, where I come from, you could get it for five shillings."

Lan.—"Yes, no doubt you could, and the ground here may not be worth more than that; but look at the advantages you have—a splendid railway service, nice paved streets, roads well kept and well lit, good drainage, gas and water laid on, free education, a workhouse for the poor, and a gaol for the offender."

Col.—"Well, there is something in all that, to be sure, and I suppose all the other lots here, having the same advantages, will figure out the same way. I'll take the land."

In due time the building was finished and the unsophisticated Australian was one day complacently surveying it, when a self-satisfied, official-looking personage, book and pencil in hand, presented himself.

Official—"At how much do you value this building?"

Colonial—"Oh, I ain't going to sell, so there will be no deal, stranger."

Off.—"I don't want to purchase, my friend; its rates I'm after."

Col.—"What rates? What do you mean?"

Off.—"Well, you *are* green, and no mistake. There is the Poor Rate, the Sanitary Rate, the Road Rate, the School Rate (you can't expect the members of the School Board to keep up the schools out of their own pockets), then there's the Police Rate, and—"

Col.—"Ah! I see, I see, stranger, how it is. *It's the other fellow you're after!* I am paying a man £20 a year for these things. Go to him, my friend. Go to him. *He is your man.*"

Well, what the citizens of London did at the late County Council Election was to instruct their representatives to send the Rate Assessor

The Single Tax is the Key to Open it.