

the towns, while hundreds of thousands tramp about from place to place unable to find employment. Not work enough! Why, what is work? It is simply the application of human labour to natural opportunities. Are there not opportunities enough for work in this country? Supposing we could send a deputation to the High Court of Heaven to represent the misery of our unemployed, the answer would certainly be, "Are your lands all in use? Are your mines worked out? Have you no natural opportunities for labour?" What could we ask the Creator to furnish us with that we have not already in abundance? If there is scarcity, if there are men idle, if there are people hungry in the midst of plenty, it is only because what the Creator intended for all has been made the property of the few.

In destroying this great wrong, which denies to labour access to natural opportunity, we shall destroy the cause of poverty. We propose to abolish it, to tear it up by the roots. We attack not just right of property; we are defenders of the rights of property—the right of the producer to his product. That is the sacred right of property which we maintain against the world, and that right is denied while private property in land exists.

Natural religion and revealed religion alike tell us that God is no respecter of persons. He did not make this planet for a few individuals, neither did He entrust the disposal of it to any generation of men; but He gave the use of it, during their lives, to each successive generation of the children of men. The poorest child born to-night in the slums of New-York holds equal right to the land of its birth with any Astor or Vanderbilt.

It is not by God's will that poverty exists. We know it because He has said, "Thou shalt not steal," and we know that the poverty that exists to-day in the midst of abundant wealth is the result of a law which legalises theft!

The women who by thousands are bending over their needles and sewing machines—thirteen, fourteen, sixteen hours a day; these widows straining and striving to bring up their little ones deprived of their natural breadwinner; these children growing up in squalor, in wretchedness, under-fed, under-clothed, under-educated, condemned in advance to the penitentiary or the brothel—they suffer, they die, because we permit them to be robbed—robbed of their birthright—robbed by a system that disinherits them and dooms them to poverty from their birth.

These things are the result of legalised theft—the fruits of a denial of the Commandment which says, "Thou shalt not steal." That does not merely mean that you shall not pick pockets, rob tills, or commit burglary. It also means that we shall not take, to the injury of others, that to which we are not entitled.

Now, here is a desert; here is a caravan crossing the desert; here is a gang of robbers. They say, "Look! here comes a rich caravan; let us go and rob it, kill the men if necessary, take their goods from them, their camels and horses, and walk off." But one of the robbers says, "Oh, no; that is dangerous, and, besides, it would be stealing! Let us, instead of doing that, go ahead of the caravan and fence in the camping-ground, where alone they can obtain water and rest. Let us wall it round, and call it 'ours,' and when the caravan arrives and wants water and rest, we can make them hand over all their wealth before we let them have water or rest. That would, perhaps, be more polite and respectable, but would it not be theft all the same? And is it not theft of the same kind when men go in advance of the population and take up the land, and fence it in with parchment fences, and as the need for it increases raise the tribute they exact for the use of it? That is the theft on which our "first families" are founded.

"Thou shalt not steal" means that we ourselves must not steal, but it also means that we must not suffer anybody else to steal if we can help it. It means, thou shalt not suffer thyself or anyone else to be stolen from, and therefore we are all alike responsible for this social crime which causes this world-wide poverty. Not merely the men who monopolise land—they are not to blame above anyone else—but we, who permit them to monopolise land—are also parties to the theft.

The Christianity that ignores this social responsibility has really forgotten the teachings of Christ. He says not, "Did you praise Me? Did you pray to Me? Did you believe this? Did you believe that?" But he says, "What did you do to relieve distress—to abolish poverty?" To the condemned the Judge says, "Inasmuch as ye failed to do it unto the least of these, ye failed to do it unto Me; depart—!" And to the accepted He says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

"Thou shalt not steal." It is theft, it is robbery that is producing poverty and disease and vice and crime among us.

There is no need for poverty in this world.

Did you ever consider the full meaning of the significant fact that, as progress goes on, as population increases, as civilisation develops, the one thing and the only thing that constantly increases in value is *land*? Speculators all the world over are fully alive to that fact. Now, it is by virtue of a natural law that land steadily increases in value with the growth of population, that invention adds to it, that every improvement and adaptation of the powers God has given us adds to the value of the *land*, and not to the value of anything else. This natural fact is as much a law of the Creator as is the law of gravitation. What does it mean? Can we not see in it a natural provision for social needs? That land values grow greater and greater as social needs increase—is this not a manifest provision for social needs—a fund belonging to society as a whole, with which to provide for the widow and the orphan, and those who fall by the wayside, and secure public education and all those things which an advancing civilisation makes it more and more necessary for society to do on behalf of its members?

A good Catholic Bishop (Bishop Nulty, of Meath, Ireland) says in a letter to his clergy that this provision of the Creator, by which the value of the land increases as the community grows, seems to him the most beautiful of all social adjustments, while the violation of it is not only a social crime but an impious outrage of the benevolent intention of the Creator. Then Bishop Nulty goes on to show that the way to secure equal rights to land is not by cutting it up into equal pieces, but by appropriating by taxation for public use the values attaching to land by reason of the presence of the public and the making of public improvements. That is the method this society proposes. I wish we could get that into the heads of the editors in this city. We can leave all land titles just as they are. We need interfere with no owner nor occupier. All we want is the annual value of the land—not, mark you, any value which the owner has given to it by his labour or capital, but simply the annual value which the bare land derives from the fact that we are all here, and which is caused by the presence of the people and by nothing else. And when we take that, then all inducement to monopolise land will be gone, and nine-tenths of the poverty, misery, disease, and crime which disgrace the world to-day and make men doubt God's goodness—if not His very existence—will be gone too.

It is this system of land monopoly, which dishonours God and curses man, which the Anti-Poverty has banded together to fight against, and it invites you, each one of you, to join its ranks. We have a long fight and a hard fight before us. Possibly, probably, many of us may not live to see the triumph of truth and justice. But what of that? It is a privilege to be engaged in such a struggle. This much we do know, that it is a part of that great world-wide long-continued struggle in which the just and the good of every age have been engaged, and that we, in taking part in it, are doing something in our humble way to bring on earth the Kingdom of God and to make the conditions of life of those who are to come after us those which we trust will prevail in heaven.

"The English landlord system, so far from having any moral basis, is founded upon a supercilious contempt of the only moral principle that can afford any justification for private property in land."—*Prof. W. A. Hunter, M.A., LL.D.*

THE SINGLE TAX IN THE COLONIES AND AT HOME.

LETTER FROM ARTHUR WITBY.

To the Editor of the Single Tax.

SIR,—Your excellent paper reached me last week, and I must congratulate you on the straightforward vigour of its style, and excellence of its "get up." I enclose P.O.O. for my subscription to the paper for one year. I have lived 7½ years in New Zealand myself, returning home about two years ago. While there I took great interest in social questions and have since kept in touch with them. The following facts and figures may prove of interest to your readers, not only as showing the cause of the wave of depression that has recently swept over Australasia, but as showing the wend of land reform out there.

In South Australia for instance, taking value and not acreage as the basis, some 703 persons practically own half the Colony—own, that is to say, half the land values of the Colony. In New Zealand, out of 19,000,000 acres alienated from the Crown, upwards of 17,000,000 are controlled by some 1,600 individuals, four of whom own 600,000 acres between them; while 17,000 families, containing about 80,000 souls, have to grub along as best they can on a beggarly 300,000 acres.

In New South Wales, to more than half of the 30 or 40 million acres alienated from the Crown, is owned by some 600 individuals. The proportions in the other Colonies are much the same, and when it is remembered that the best land always goes first, great significance of these figures will be obvious. I am happy to say, however, that the Single Tax has already got a foothold in most of the Colonies.

In South Australia a tax of ½d. in the £ on land values (capital value) was imposed 9 or 10 years ago, and it has admittedly done much to check land speculation, and force unused land into the market. A strong agitation is afoot to treble the tax, and the results of the recent elections are full of hope for Single Taxers.

In New Zealand a tax of 1d. per £ on the capital value of land, steeply graduated, against large estates, was imposed some two years ago, and last year the Lower House passed a Bill giving Local Option in Single Tax to municipalities, highway boards, &c., but the "House of Lords" rejected it. However, at the ensuing elections the Government was returned with a majority of 52 to 18, and the Bill may now be considered safe.

In Queensland they have had a tax of 2d. in the £ on land values for local purposes for some time past. No taxes are now levied on improvements for local purposes, and the change has proved a great boon to the workers, and to small farmers, &c., &c.

In New South Wales, the present Government has promised to abolish several of the customs taxes imposed by the late Government, and to substitute a tax on land and incomes on the New Zealand model, while in Victoria, a strong growing body of Single Taxers is fighting the protection fetish. In Canada also they have Local Option in Single Tax from the 40th Parallel to the Pacific. In Manitoba, the North West Territory, Assinboina, Laskatchewan, &c., and in British Columbia.

I think an agitation for Local Option in Single Tax would do much to bring the question to the front here, also. I see that in Glasgow, the ground rent amounts to about £2,000,000 per annum, and the rates to some £600,000. Now if the same ratio holds good in Glasgow between land values and improvement values as in London—viz., 3 to 5—and if the rates are levied proportionately on land improvements, ⅔ of the £600,000 or £225,000 will now be levied on land, and £375,000 on improvements. Under Local Option in Single Tax this £375,000 would of course be shifted from improvements to land values, and would be paid out of what the labour and capital of Glasgow now pay to the landlords as ground rent. That would mean a clear saving of £375,000 per annum to say nothing of the fact that, owing to the rate being levied on the full annual value of the land, whether the land were put to use or not, all unused land would

Ask all Candidates for Municipal Honours this Question—

now be forced into the market and rents would fall.

In London, the gross rental is estimated at £40,000,000—£15,000,000 being land value, and £25,000,000 improvement value; and the rates are estimated at £8,000,000. Under Local Option in Single Tax there would therefore be a saving of $\frac{5}{8}$ of about £5,000,000. Portsmouth is an excellent example of the growth of land values. In the year 1700, the valuation of the Parish of Portsea (including Portsmouth and its environs) was only some £1,100. In 1800 it had risen to £15,000, and to-day it is some £665,000, with a gross rental of £750,000, and a land value of about £275,000, while a vacant block in Granada Road, Southsea, about 60 ft. by 100 ft. is priced at £1,000, nearly the value of the whole Island of Portsea in 1700. The whole of Southsea was field and marsh land from 25 to 30 years ago, but now you see grand streets of shops, and rows of big houses. The rates are: Poor Rate, £97,000; Urban Rate, £67,000; Portsmouth (proper) Poor Rate, about £6,000; total, £170,000. Under Local Option in Single Tax, $\frac{5}{8}$ of this, or about £107,000 could be saved. No inconsiderable item to a population of some 160,000.

I think that if similar facts could be given for other towns and cities in the United Kingdom, it would bring the Single Tax much closer home to the people, and touch them in what is, perhaps, their tenderest spot—their pockets.—Ever yours for the cause,

ARTHUR WITBY, S.T.

31 Great Southsea St.,
Southsea, 30th Sept., 1894.

By the Way.

AS OTHERS SEE US.—An English correspondent to the *St. Louis Single Tax Courier* says:—"There are a great many clever men in connection with the Glasgow Single Tax Movement."

Says a writer in the *Scottish Review*:—"The impractical nature of some of Mr. Ruskin's teachings, especially in Political Economy, his startling assertions, and vigorous protests against received opinions, and his apparent eccentric criticisms have, in times past, been often the cause of regret to his friends, and the subject of severe animadversion of his opponents."

In a recent number of the *Clarion* Nunquam asked: "Who made the I.L.P.? It is a question well worth considering. The answer to it would be as beneficial as a week at the seaside to people with swelled heads and weak memories." And Keir Hardie in the *Labour Leader* "wants Nunquam to explain—in the interests of peace—who are the people referred to with the swelled heads and weak memories."

Mr. John Burns denies that the I.L.P. captured the Trades' Union Congress. "Tom Mann," he says, "lost the Secretaryship not because he was a Socialist but because he had shown himself a man with a tidal intellect. One of the I.L.P. leaders was starting a Labour Army to work the Parish Councils Act which another leader described as a fraud. It was not 'young men in a hurry' they had to fear but 'bounders on the bounce.'"

The *Labour Leader* has lampooned John Burns a second time, and the affair reflects discredit, without showing any degree of smartness, on all concerned.

"Let me put the position before my readers as it appears to me. Here is a cartoon in Keir Hardie's paper which every Socialist I have met has blushed for. As a Democrat—and not as editor of the *Clarion*—I now feel obliged to say that in my opinion our comrade, J. Keir Hardie, ought never to have been made President of the Independent Labour Party. I say this for two reasons:—(1) That the party would be much better without a President. (2) Because the editor of a newspaper ought not to hold a position of such prominence. As a lecturer, as a worker, Keir Hardie is a good man. As a captain he can do good service; but as an editor he ought never to have been made the General

—even if The Party wanted a general at all, which I think they do not. Next, as to the cartoon in the *Leader*. The speech in which John Burns attacked Socialists and the I.L.P. was unjust, unwise, and vulgar. The *Leader* cartoon is all these things, and worse. Burns did wrong; but that does not justify Keir Hardie in doing wrong. Burns hit below the belt. Hardie ought not to have hit back below the belt. Burns allowed personal rancour and personal prejudice to lead him into an attack upon the cause he ought to live and die for. Hardie replies by an insinuation which has made his friends hang their heads with shame.—*Nunquam*.

Mr. John Wilson of Broxburn renews his challenge to Mr. Chisholm Robertson. In the course of a letter he says:—"Now that the Strike is ended and lost, you cannot have any fair objection to square accounts, at least on the ground that it will injure the miners' cause. By nature and conviction there cannot be anything but war between us. Some one of the two parties should be dismissed for ever from the Labour movement. I am willing to go if the Trades' Unionists of Great Britain decide that I have been the Judas Iscariot."

Whence all this mistrust and recrimination from men who claim to voice before the world the holy cause of the suffering poor?

Lord Rosebery is willing to meet a deputation of the Trades' Union Congress on the subject of payment of Members of Parliament.

Mr. Henry George expects to finish his treatise on Political Economy—the work he is at present engaged on—some time in the spring, and after he gets it into the hands of the printer he intends to pay a visit to this country to see old friends here. The book would have been completed ere this had not so much of his time recently, been taken up with lecturing engagements and other work to which he has been urgently called.

Says Louis F. Post, one of the foremost Single Tax leaders in America:—"I do not think that in all the time that has elapsed since Mr. George set the Single Tax movement on foot I have felt so hopeful of early success as now."

Mr. Bernard Shaw, one of the most intellectual of Socialists, soundly rates the Independent Labour party for their denunciation of Liberals. Why, he asks, are we to call Liberals treacherous, false, and dishonest? Because they will not immediately carry out a revolution at the bidding of a handful of Labour men?

"Up to the present moment," said Mr. Asquith, at Tayport, "they had only one representative of the Independent Labour party in the House of Commons, and he was not often with them. . . . An Independent organisation of this kind could only lead to one result. Not in the return of a Liberal—he clearly would be defeated; not in the return of an Independent Labour candidate—who would stand far less chance—but in the return of a Conservative."

IN OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW.

OVERHEARD IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE

Mr. Bull—Nay, Cousin Jonathan, none of your revolutionary ideas for us. Why, they would upset our glorious constitution.

Cousin Jonathan—Aye maybe they would.
Mr. B.—And that would never do. You see, we are a law-abiding people we Britishers; we love our Queen, our Country, and our Constitution, and would never dream of rebelling against the law of the land, in the making of which each of us has a voice, proportionate, of course, to his stake in the country.

Cousin J.—Proportionate to his stake in the country. Y-e-s; I think I like that; for maybe I shall settle down here myself; at all events for part of the year.

Mr. B.—Then, Sir, when you do so, you may learn to appreciate our venerable laws and ancient customs.

Cousin J.—I shall have much to learn. But say now, friend John, suppose I bought land in this country, according to your British laws and customs, would it be mine then?

Mr. B.—Yes; yours against all the world. There is nothing more sacred or more secure than a British freehold.

Cousin J.—Aye; I like that—I think I do. And I could do what I liked with it?

Mr. B.—Why, certainly. England is a free country in which every man can do what he likes with his own.

Cousin J.—A free country. Y-e-s. And I could let my land to others?

Mr. B.—If you wanted to.

Cousin J.—Or give my tenants notice to quit?

Mr. B.—Of course, of course.

Cousin J.—And they would have to go?

Mr. B.—At the very hour the notice expired.

Cousin J.—And I could buy as much as I liked?

Mr. B.—Why not? You could buy the whole country for that matter, if you only had money enough.

Cousin J.—Well now, friend John, suppose I did buy this little island of yours, and I chose to give all my tenants notice to quit, then of course, the whole British Nation would have to clear out the very hour the notice expired.

Mr. B.—Eh! What?

Cousin J.—They would have to clear out, I say.

Mr. B.—Clear out! From where?

Cousin J.—Out of my country.

Mr. B.—But England is not your country.

Cousin J.—No, but it would be if I bought it.

Mr. B.—Well I'm—. No, I won't get angry. But the idea of the free British people having to clear out of England at the bidding of a—er—a—er—a nincompoop Yankee.

Cousin J.—Softly, softly, my friend; you wouldn't dare call me that if I were your landlord, or I'd soon make you shut up.

Mr. B.—Make me shut up; me, a free Englishman?

Cousin J.—Free Englishman? Waal, perhaps not; but I'd make you clear out.

Mr. B.—Clear out! Do you think I'm a fool?

Cousin J.—Oh, no! Not a fool; simply a law abiding Britisher, who loves his Queen, his country, and the English Constitution; and who would never dream of rebelling against the law of the land. But this very law would compel you to clear out at my bidding, if only I happened to own all the land.

Mr. B.—But you don't, you see.

Cousin J.—No, I don't. But a mere handful of men, like me, do, and all the rest of you free Britishers are but trespassers in your own country, out of which these few men could turn you all. And they do turn you out when it suits them; when they find it pays them better to run sheep or deer over it than to allow men to use it.

Mr. B.—That's all very well. But those who do own England are not Americans, but our old nobility, Sir; and allow me to tell you that they are never actuated by sordid, but by patriotic motives. Yes, Yes; as one of them so beautifully expresses it:—

Let learning, laws, and commerce die,
But leave us still our old nobility.

Cousin J.—Well, John, I'm glad you appreciate them. You ought to, for they cost you dear enough.

Mr. B.—It's no use talking, Cousin Jonathan. We Englishmen don't expect you Americans to appreciate the feelings that inspire the race whose proud boast it is that "Britons never, never shall be slaves."

Cousin J.—Well, Well; what force might not be able to achieve, ignorance and custom may make easy. However, if you are satisfied, I shouldn't complain. But if I did own this little island, I would make you sing that somewhere else, and not on my land; and I shouldn't be the first American who has done so.

Left talking.

"All lands or tenements in England, in the hands of subjects, are holden mediately or immediately of the King. For, in the law of England, we have not any subjects' land that is not holden."—*Sir Edward Coke*.

"The first thing which the democracy will write upon the slate will be the Nationalisation of the Land."—*Judge Hughes*.

"Are you in favour of making Land Values the basis of Local Taxation?"