

At the Sign of the Cat and the Fiddle

CONDUCTED BY E. WYE

IT is the sign of the vitality of a movement when songs that can be sung begin to appear. The English dearly love a song—as well as a Duke. In England at election time mass singing is a great feature of public meetings, increasing the interest immensely. Following we have a good song recently written by J. W. Graham Peace for the Commonwealth Land Party:

UP THEN! CLAIM YOUR BIRTHRIGHT!

AIR: Onward Christian Soldiers!

Rouse then, all ye people,
And your land restore;
Nature's bounty open,
Then shall none be poor.
Ever unto labour
Earth her fullness yields,
Claim by right, not favour,
Access to your fields.

CHORUS:

Claim your land, ye people,
Bid all Land Lords go!
Henceforth live as free men
And no master know.

Why remain in bondage
Seeing loved ones die
Lacking food and shelter
Your labour could supply?
Gladly would you serve them
By your brain and hand;
Up then, claim your birthright,
Free access to land!

CHORUS:

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THE PLOW — A FABLE

A superannuated, disintegrating old Plow stood in a corner of the barnyard, and lately as we were walking past that way we heard above the cackling of hens an unusual sound from the corner, and stopping to listen caught the following words: "What's the use?" bemoaned the Plow. "After all, to be or not to be, that is the question. Rust to dust—the way of all flesh, and of us simple minded, iron-hearted friends of man too. Oh well, never mind." "Aha, here is philosophy at last," we exclaimed. There was silence for a moment, and then the Plow, seeing that we had stopped and were listening, continued: "But I do take it as downright hard that those Economist fellows hoodwink us Plows as they do. One of them, a Professor named

Dowdy, came one day to look me over, tho I could never tell why, for I was that much out of joint that even a junkshop wouldn't have me." "See here, Plow," says he, "I want to tell you something. You're Capital." "Cut that out," says I, "what's the idea?" "Being Capital," says he, "you're Wealth used to create more Wealth and as such you are entitled to Interest." "I want to know!" says I, incredulous like. "Certainly," says he, quite positively, "there is an Increment inhering in you termed Interest, by reason," says he, "of the power we have (in Political Economy) of exchanging you for the Reproductive energies of nature," says he. "Do tell," says I, "I am certainly obliged to you for the information—well, what of it?" "Why", says he, after thinking a while, "the Ownership of you carried with it an annual increase called Interest, which, *in rerum natura*," says he, "belonged to your owner the capitalist, because"—"I thought as much," I says interrupting, "just what happens to all of us Plows, a lot of boobs and slaves, who do nothing for ourselves, only slave for others. But how about that increase?" says I, "Do you mean that my metal parts expanded when I got hot grinding thro gravel, or my wooden arms grew longer or my bolts took on a larger thread?" "Well, hardly that," says he, "I'm only giving you the accepted Reason for Interest." I answered him back pretty tartly, "I don't like your proposition. With the natural increase you speak of I should have grown too heavy for efficient work. My greatest desire," I says, "was to continue as fit as when I first left the shop. Self-preservation, I've been told, is the first law of nature. What I always abhorred was deterioration. I should say that disintegration is the first law of nature. Just look at me, a pretty specimen for you to be talking to about natural Increase. My old joints are that sore with articular rheumatism that I am nigh falling to pieces. Heigho, pretty soon I'll be gone entirely. Oh, what's the use?" "And then," said the Plow, "the Professor shook his head and left me." "Friend," said we, "we have listened to all you have related. Some day we are coming back to express to you our own views on this subject."

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Some days after we had made the acquaintance of the old Plow we returned to the barnyard and took up the conversation where we had left off. "What the Professor was trying to tell you in his academic parrot fashion and what you are trying to deny in your enfeebled way," we said, "is a division of Economics in the fourth dimension, turned inside out. Some call it the Pons asinorum of the Single Tax. It is a subject anathema to many and abracadabra to a greater number—the subject, namely, of the justification of Interest." "Oh, that old thing again," muttered the

Plow. "Our friend Dowdy meant that before you became a broken-down old Plow, with none so poor to do you reverence, you were continuously returning and presenting yourself to your master as a new Plow, full paid and non-assessible, as we say, with six per cent. of additional plow-shares attached. As to the manner in which this came about, it was very simple, they say. You had merely to exchange yourself or wait for your master to exchange you for the growing crop, say in yonder field, which being left to itself would by its very nature increase sufficiently not only to counterbalance your deterioration but to provide for your master an interest of six per cent. to boot. "Hold on! 'left to itself,' do you say?" interrupted the Plow, much to our surprise, for we did not think the old fellow capable of thought. "I have been in the agricultural business too long not to know what happens to a growing crop when left to itself. It's just at a time like that that the farm hands used to hitch me on to old Broad and Dime, my master's oxen, and start to sweating and gee-hawing in order to keep the weeds under, cultivate the rows, break the crust and preserve the crop. Left to itself! That's good, by Heck!" And the old Plow shook with laughter. "Leave things to themselves, that's the way to have them wear out and disappear. I have the greatest respect for my human friends," continued the Plow, with the not unnatural garrulousness of old age. "They have always treated me with consideration. Yet they could not keep me from growing old and wearing out, and believe me, they too will all do the same thing—if passing the village graveyard, many's the time, has taught me to know what I'm talking about."

Note. The Conductor begs to state that the continuation of the Fable is reserved for a future issue of the REVIEW.

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SHOP TALK

Characters: Two new Single Tax Party workers.

Scene: At the Sign of the Cat and the Fiddle.

Young Mr. Strong: I'm tired, but am I downhearted?

Strong Mr. Young: I'm ready to drop—still I'm game.

Strong: I've been speaking every night for a week.

Young: I spoke eighteen times during the campaign.

Strong: I talk single tax in my sleep.

Young: I have become a nightmare to my friends.

Strong: I eat with emotion and have indigestion.

Young: I have to resort to Bellans to keep going.

Strong: Doesn't your family say you're a crank?

Young: Doesn't your father call you a bonehead?

Strong: My business future is problematical.

Young: I scent financial embarrassment in the offing.

(A pause.)

Strong: I adore a crowd.

Young: I play with the mob.

Strong: An audience thrills me.

Young: During my flights I feel my heart beating.

Strong: I trust in the good nature of the throng.

Young: My faith in Man does not desert me!

Strong: I try to remember the arts of oratory.

Young: My college text-book on Rhetoric comes back to me.

Strong: I eschew every reference bordering on the highbrow.

Young: I discard all hifalutin'.

Strong: I get down to brass tacks.

Young: I roll up my sleeves, as it were.

Strong: When I say a good thing I let them laugh and enjoy themselves.

Young: I too give them time to recover their equilibrium.

Strong: My hot shot I reserve for the man who interrupts.

Young: My coldest sarcasm is levelled against the smart one who knows it all.

Strong: I find that by repetition I make some impression upon their minds.

Young: By continuous suggestion and illustration I lead them to see the point.

Strong: Their questions and doubts are ever the same.

Young: I am ready for their stock objections, for I know that they are bound to come.

Strong: I believe mine is a rational way of putting it over.

Young: I am convinced I have found the correct formula.

Strong: Between ourselves, I find much to criticise in the elderly leaders of the movement.

Young: They strike me as inferior to us younger workers.

Strong: Maybe I am prejudiced.

Young: I too may be super-critical.

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Dear Sir: I was much interested in the letter of Joseph Reynolds printed in the last issue of the SINGLE TAX REVIEW, in which he stated that we should never fail to make the limitation that the laborer is entitled to the full product of his labor after the payment of economic rent, and warned us not to fall into the habit of the Socialist, who always asserts that labor is entitled to the full product, taking no note of such a thing as economic rent as a factor. Albert Rhys Williams in his "Through the Russian Revolution" tells the following story, which bears upon this question. When he was in Vladivostok the Union of Miners organized the unemployed into little soviets of 50 and 100, equipped them and sent them out to the mines along the great Amur. These enterprises were highly successful. Each man was panning out from 50 to 100 rubles of gold a day. The question of pay arose. One of the miners unearthed the slogan: "To every man the full product of his labor." It at once achieved tremendous popularity with the miners, who declared their loyalty to