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## TRADES' UNIONISTS AND LAND NATIONALISATION.

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At a Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Land Nationalisation Society, held at the Society's Office, 57, Charing Cross, on Wednesday, September 12th, it was unanimously resolved :—

“ That this Executive tenders to Mr. S. Shaftoe, President  
“ of the recent Trades' Union Congress at Bradford,  
“ its heartiest congratulations on the fact that a  
“ Resolution, insisting on Land Nationalisation, was  
“ carried at that Congress by the splendid majority of  
“ 66 votes against 5. It, further, assures him of the  
“ full co-operation of this Society with any effort the  
“ Trades' Unions may contemplate to bring the question  
“ of Land Nationalisation before Parliament as a  
“ distinct issue.”

In response to the above Resolution, Mr. Shaftoe forwarded the following letter to the Hon. Secretary of the Society, of which he has also become a member.

7, RIPLEY TERRACE, RIPLEY VILLE,  
BRADFORD,

*September 20th, 1888.*

DEAR SIR,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of Resolution passed by the Executive Committee of the Land Nationalisation Society on September 12th.

No resolution passed at the recent Trades' Union Congress gave me greater pleasure than that which nearly unanimously affirmed the principle of Land Nationalisation. The fact that a body of over 160 representative men, drawn from all parts of Great Britain and Ireland, representing every trade, and industry, and holding diversified opinions on nearly every other subject, should practically with one voice declare in favour of the State ownership of land, is a striking evidence of the progress made among the people with respect to the land problem.

During the last few years, education has enabled the workers to enquire into the history of private property in land. The conclusions they have drawn are that the system is unsound in principle, injurious in practice, and fraught with gigantic social evils for the future. So far as my experience goes, no half-way measure will satisfy the people. They will not tolerate land tinkering, but will make up their minds to settle the question speedily once for all, by giving the land to the people.

A very brief survey of the operation of peasant proprietary on the continent, shows them that this principle belongs to the past. They see that the Hindoo ryot in raising his corn at a wage of twopence a day, is even now the remorseless competitor with the French or German peasant proprietor; and they know that not many years must elapse, before the barbarian corn grower will elbow his civilised competitor out of the markets, unless the latter holds his land under the easiest tenure, and on the most economic conditions. The landlord belongs to the past: There can be no room for him in the future.

It is these considerations which are making Trades Unionists and all sections of labour so enthusiastic in advocating Land Nationalisation, and I believe if these principles were pushed forward with vigour throughout the country, they would not only receive the most active support, but would become burning political questions in a very short time.

Assuring you of my interest in your Society, and wishing you God speed in your advocacy,

Believe me to remain,

Yours very truly,

S. SHAFTOE.

To W. JAMESON, Esq.,

*Hon. Secretary Land Nationalisation Society.*

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## LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY.

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### OBJECTS:

To affirm that the STATE holds the LAND in trust for each generation.  
To restore to all their natural right to use and enjoy their native land.  
To obtain for the NATION the revenue derived from its LAND.

(See the Society's Literature.)

*President*—ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, LL.D., F.R.G.S.

*Treasurer*—FRANCIS L. SOPER, F.L.S., 5, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, and 7, Cholmesley Villas, Highgate.

*Hon. Secretary*—WILLIAM JAMESON

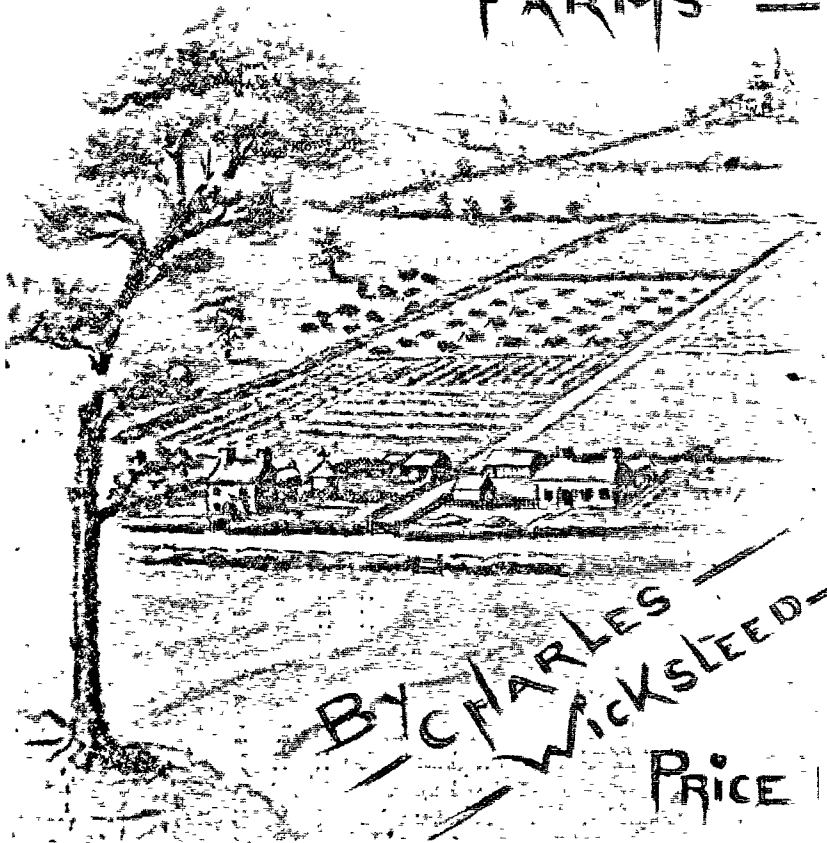
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VILLAGE  
AND POLITICS  
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FARMS



BY CHARLES  
WICKSLEED  
PRICE

# LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,

Office: 11, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, W.C.

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*Hon Secretary* · WILLIAM JAMESON  
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Being a comparison of the system of Landlord and Tenant with that of Occupying Ownership in their influence on the Well-being of the People By

**ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, LL.D.,**

*Author of the "Malay Archipelago," "Island Life," &c., &c.,*

**LAND FOR THE PEOPLE; How to obtain it, how to Manage it, 1s.**

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All who agree with the objects of the Society are invited to become members:—  
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# VILLAGE POLITICS

AN ADDRESS TO AGRICULTURAL LABORERS. \*UN

" Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay,  
Princes and lords may flourish or may fade,  
A breath can make them as a breath has made,  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride  
When once destroyed can never be suppld "

Goldsmith—"The Deserted Village "

## Your Political Duty and Power

I am writing this address to you, because I think I can help you to use your political power in a way which will make you richer, happier, and better men. When Mr. Gladstone extended the franchise he did the greatest thing that has yet been done for you. By that act he put your destinies in your own hands. In the vote you have a weapon that, if properly used, will put an end once and for ever to all those unjust laws which have degraded and impoverished your countrymen. *Don't play with it.* You have a splendid opportunity; you have an awful responsibility.

Take care not to allow the present hour to slip away unused. The masses in the town are daily becoming more helpless and dispirited; the country is becoming daily depopulated. If you don't strike now and strike like men, you and your children will live to rue the day. The longer you delay, the more difficult will be your task, until at last it will become impossible.

Working-men! you are the natural standard-bearers of the noble banner of justice. I appeal to you to do your duty. Don't expect others to do it for you, because they won't. Nor must you blame the upper classes, because they are not, as a rule, reformers. For why should they be? There is no single measure in contemplation that will bring any grist to their mill. Moreover, wealth does not make people unselfish, public-spirited, or just; nor does it give them the knowledge of your wants, nor sympathy with your sufferings. They, the upper classes, are very fairly satisfied with things as they are. Their pockets are well lined, their position comfortable. They naturally, so far from desiring change, fear it.

Those who want must work. Comparatively speaking you want everything, and they want nothing; and on your shoulders naturally must the whole burden of reform be borne, if there is to be reform.

Remember I am not blaming the upper classes as individuals, amongst whom we have always had some of the noblest of mankind, and some of our finest reformers. All I want to point out to you is that as a class they will not help you politically. They set much more store on power, and empire than on the happiness of the people, which is constantly being shown by the vast sums of money they will freely spend on conquest, compared with the paltry amounts they spend for the benefit of their countrymen. They allow their statesmen to commit our country to hideous and unjust wars, without even letting Parliament know what they are doing; but

\* By C. Wicksteed, Author of "The Land for the People," Price 1s

not an acre of their land can be compulsorily purchased, nor the hem of their garments touched without an Act of Parliament

### Why you are so Poor.

The evils we are suffering from are deep laid and overwhelming, and no tinkering legislation will be of any avail. I tell you plainly that the reason you are so poor and dependent is because the laws in the main have been made by the rich for the rich, and because you are legally deprived of the fruits of your labour, and of your opportunities for gaining an independent living.

The laws that do this have been woven so craftily into our political system, and we are so used to being pillaged, that we find it difficult to sap the system of robbery at its source. We know, for instance, that few of our great Dukes, or their ancestors, have ever earned in any way a single farthing of their present huge incomes; and we know that, if this is so, they must necessarily be taking it from the working classes who do earn it. But few people recognise that their power to do this is entirely due to our present land laws, which ought to be, and must be altered

### Because our Land Laws rob you.

We have in our land laws a widespread scheme, covering the whole of the country, and underlying every transaction, for enabling landowners quietly and legally to take that which does not justly belong to them. There are plenty of other ways devised to accomplish this "desirable" object, but the land laws are the most overwhelming and the worst—are at the foundation of, and make possible, all the other devices. They are also the first and the easiest to attack, and are the only ones I am going to deal with.

### Difference between Land and other Property.

All ground rent, that is to say, rent of bare land without buildings or improvements on it, and all Royalties on minerals, clearly ought not to belong to private individuals, but to the people at large. When a man takes money in rent for a house he has built, or is paid for a boot he has made, he is justly entitled to it; he gives the purchaser something he has made, or caused to be made in exchange. But when he takes rent for a piece of land, the case is different; he gives in exchange the use of a piece of land which God made, but which He never sold to the landowner, or to any of his predecessors. God made the land for His people; and Christ tells us that we are all brothers, equal in the sight of God, who is our common Father. So, as Christians, we cannot believe that God, our just and kind Father, would sell or give our inheritance to a few of His children, in order that they might extort money out of the rest. On the contrary, we believe that the world was meant to be used for our common benefit; and we know that the people who first claimed the land as their private property to be left to their heirs, must have appropriated it. And here we come to the difference between land and other property. The one is the reward of robbery, and the other of industry. The rights of a man in other property than land are based upon this right of a man to keep that which he has made; but property in land gives the owner the right to take, by force and violence if necessary, what other people make without giving anything in exchange.

The two sorts of property are in direct contradiction to each

other. You can't acknowledge the justice of both. As workers, then, you must abolish property in land, and must, at the same time, support property in other things. Is anything plainer than that?

But, we are told, many have bought the land with hard earned money, and it would be unjust and cruel to take it away. Without going into this question I will merely say that we must try to do nothing by violent or unjust means, nor yet must we think that there is any possibility of undoing this great wrong at one stroke. At the same time you must look the question fairly in the face, and take every practical step in your power towards regaining your inheritance. There are some grand measures in this direction, practicable at the present moment, as I shall soon show you; after these have been taken more will be practicable, and so you will go on step by step till you reach full justice.

### The Way for the People to Manage the Land.

In passing let me say, that recognising that the land belongs to the nation, and not to individuals, means nothing so silly and impossible as that the land should be cut up into equal portions, but simply that all men should have equal opportunities of using land under such just conditions, as will enable them to use it to the greatest advantage, without disturbance as long as they pay the fair rent, and without confiscation of their improvements and property, if they fail to do so. Then, the rent, not the land should be divided equally, that is to say, spent for the public good, releasing us from present burdens, and making it easier for us to earn a living. Nor does nationalising the land mean that it should be managed by a corrupt, incompetent and expensive department in London. The land would be managed by yourselves. You would have Land Boards all over the country elected by universal suffrage, who would manage small districts without interference—let the land fairly, and lay it out as you wished. I have not space to go into details, but you can easily see that you being both landlords and tenants would naturally desire fair play all round. You would equally resent favouritism or injustice to any man. Indeed with a few simple rules and a map for everyone to see, on which each man's rent was marked, it would be impossible to go far wrong, nor would it be to the Board's interest to do anything unfair. It could gain no advantage by imposing upon any one. All the state would have to do would be to make the laws under which the land should be managed, and when all taxes were abolished, as they would be when our native land really belonged to us, the Imperial Government would levy a rate on the rent which the land board received in order to pay imperial expenses. The rest of the money would belong to the districts it was collected in.

### True Use for the Land.

The land should be managed for the public good, instead of for the private profit and pleasures of landowners, and it should be recognised that the best use that the land can be put to is that use, which will enable men to live the happiest and noblest lives. At present this, our first necessity of existence, the source of all our wealth, health, and happiness, is bought, sold, and let with no higher object than as a means of extracting money out of the public.

Rent in itself is fair, necessary and just. It decides who is to have the farm in the fertile vale and who on the mountain side,

who the best position in the town, and who the worst; who most land, who little, and who none. The rent should be fair, however, and not an exorbitant one; and poor men should not have to pay more per acre for their little lots than rich men for their big. The question is not whether there should be rent; but who it should be paid to, and how it should be fixed. At present the rent is taken away from you working men and given to the landowners. But if the land belonged to you the rent would simply be a medium of justice between you, and would be spent in things which all of you wanted. It would not be a drain upon you, making you poorer, as it would not be spent in keeping idlers. It would form a public fund for making roads, railways, gas, water, education, public halls, public parks, and other public wants, cheap or free; thus enabling workers to gain a good living easily, and enjoy a healthy happy life.

Please remember I am finding no fault with landowners as individuals, but with the system that enables them to buy the legal right to tax us; for it is nothing else. If we allow this system to continue we shall be always poor and dependent; *for the more we make, the more they will take*, and their power of taking is unlimited. (Look at the illustration of this on page 16).

If land is more fertile, if ironstone is of better quality, or a site in a town is of more value, the landowner will charge so much more rent but the labourer will get no more money. It is in this way that, although we have increased in wealth so enormously during this century, the working classes have had so small a share in it. In spite of the present agricultural depression, the royalties and ground rents, in town and country are probably a hundred millions a year more than they were 80 years ago. They are now estimated to yield about 150 millions. Every farthing of this vast sum of money is taken by law from those who earn it, and given to those who don't; it is not taken from beggars, thieves, idlers, paupers or tramps, but from the hard-working, honest poor.

#### **The Land Laws deprive us of our Independence.**

But our land system does worse things than take money from us; it deprives us of our opportunities of a livelihood; it often taxes our trade till it destroys it; and, as I will show you hereafter, it takes away the freedom, independence, and power of self-help of a large part of our population. You see the land is everything to us. We cannot walk, sleep, eat, make or use anything without using the earth in some way. The men who hold the first necessity of our existence make us pay them for the right to live and work, thus holding us in their hands; for if through ignorance or greed they charge us more for our farms, for the ground our shops and houses stand on, for the right to dig coal and ironstone than we can pay, they ruin us and destroy our industry.

They say we need not have the land if we don't like; that we are free to take it or leave it. They might as well say we are free to pay taxes or not as we like. True, we are free, if we can get into the workhouse, or if we lie down and die. But if we want to start in business, or do any work, or spend any money, we are at once obliged to pay rent and taxes directly or indirectly at every step. *We are as free to make a bargain with a landlord, as a drowning man is to make a bargain with a man in a boat.* We can take his terms or drown, whichever we like. That is our freedom.

#### **I am Asking you to Think.**

I can do you no good if you won't do this. I want to expose

this mighty system of injustice that has grown up amongst us, and show you how it injures agriculture. If, for instance, during the late agricultural depression, rents had gone down at once and sufficiently, farmers would have kept up the condition of their farms, have paid their tradesmen, and employed their usual number of labourers; but the rents were not reduced, and the farmers were impoverished or ruined. You see if the rent of a farm is, say £100 a year too much; a £100, which ought to have been spent in labour and manure which would yield a return, is spent in rent while there is no return. Thus the land is run down, yields less, and the farmer is still less able to pay the £100 on the following year. This goes on, in some cases, till the land is worth nothing for the time being; while the labourers who are dismissed and the farmers who are ruined, go to the town and compete with the artisans there, instead of employing them as they would do if they remained in the country.

When well managed farms do not pay, it does not mean that there is no profit, but that the sleeping partner, the landlord, is getting more than his share. All this can be stopped by legislation, and you must stop it. Landowners must be compelled to take a fair rent, and reduce it at once when necessary. Compelled also to give security of tenure, as long as the rent is paid, and to give the tenant a right to all improvements, so that a farmer may work the land to the greatest advantage. With these boons, competent farmers might be permanently prosperous.

I am speaking about farmers, because, so long as you work for them, it is all important that they should be in a position to give you work, and because if you work the land for yourselves you want the same just laws as they do.

Three things I want to show you how to get. First, the power to demand a fairer and better wage than you now have. Second, to be able to find yourselves employment if others don't find it for you. Third, to supply you with the means of rising in the world, Mr. Bright once said that the bottom rungs of the ladder of advancement were broken off for the agricultural labourer. I want to show you how to put them in.

### **You must be able to find Yourselves Employment.**

There is only one way of getting your wages permanently raised above bare subsistence, and that is by being able to find other and better employment. There has been only one material rise in agricultural wages during the present century, and that was brought about in 1871, not by Mr. Arch's agitation, although that may have contributed to it, but by the labourers being able to find work elsewhere at higher wages. I was in Norfolk at the time. The wages rose four or five shillings a week in a year, and I well remember the indignation aroused at a market dinner by a farmer announcing that he had raised his men's wages to 15s. a week. "Why do I give it?" replies the farmer, "because I want men to work my land, and if I don't give it them, I shall very soon be left without." The fact of the matter was they were all going to the ironstone and other employment. But this advantage, to the labourers, as you know, was lost entirely, or nearly so, when trade declined.

Now what I am going to show you is how you can permanently put yourselves in the position of being able to obtain a good wage by being able to find yourselves employment. There is but one way, and that is to reverse the course land legislation has been

taking ever since the Norman conquest, till Mr. Gladstone scotched it by his first Irish land act. Since then land legislation has taken a healthier turn; but not before we had lost almost all our commons, had allowed the brave Highlanders to be driven out of their native glens, and Ireland to be depopulated to the extent of three millions.

### Commons.

Your commons were invaluable to you as a heritage, but they were never regulated in such a way as to give you anything like the advantage you ought to have had out of them; they lay unused and uncared for to a great extent. The landowning classes saw this; but instead of getting the laws altered to enable the labourers to cultivate them under fair conditions, they passed enclosure acts to take them away altogether. There were nearly 4,000 enclosure acts passed in the reigns of the Georges; very few of these were printed; but when they were, the plea of desiring to benefit agriculture, and promote the public good, was put forward without shame by their promoters. It is estimated that between the years 1702 and 1876 nearly 7,000,000 acres of common lands were enclosed in England alone, or about one fifth of the whole country.

To illustrate the difference of your having a right to cultivate a common under fair conditions, no one being able to turn you out, and of being deprived of it altogether, as you were, let us imagine a labourer enjoying this right, digging potatoes on one side of the hedge, and a landowner standing on the other:

### Freedom with Land.

*Landlord* I want to know if you can do a few days work for me every week, and what you will charge me?

*Labourer* Yes, I dare say I can manage it, if you like, sir; but I shall want 3s. 6d. a day.

*Landlord* No, come; that is too much. You must take 3s.

*Labourer* I can't take any less, sir. I have been running it all up, and I reckon I can earn at least as much as I have asked on my own land. I shall be pleased to accommodate you if you like, sir, especially as a little ready cash would come in handy; and you know I shall work as well and hard for you as if I were working for myself; but I must have my 3s. 6d. a day.

*Landlord* Well, I suppose I must give it you. When can you come?

Here we have a fair bargain between two free men for their mutual advantage. But the landowner goes away ruminating thus: This fellow wants 3s. 6d. a day, when he ought to be well satisfied with 2s. or 1s. 9d. The money I have to pay in wages is a trifle to what my tenants have to pay. This does not hurt them; it all comes out of me, I can see, as I have to take so much less rent. If I could only devise some means of making the men take half the money, I could about double my rents to-morrow without hurting my tenants. It costs them, I suppose, about £2 an acre all round for labour, while they only pay me £1 in rent. This is not fair. If I could reduce the wages of the labourer, say, from 3s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. a day, I should reduce the farmer's expenditure in labour from £2 to £1 an acre. Having thus reduced my tenants' expenses a pound an acre, I could, of course, charge them that amount more in rent, without their being a penny poorer.

I can see it is that confounded common that is in my way. If I could only get rid of that, I could do what I liked with the labourers, and bring them down into their proper position; besides,



if the common was enclosed, I should not only be able to reduce the wages, but also get a nice addition to my estate. To be sure it may seem rather hard on the labourers, but then I have always maintained that high wages are no good to them. Besides I never pretended to be a saint.

He gets the farmers to send him to Parliament, and has an act passed to enclose the common.

### Slavery without Land.

The next year he returns and delivers himself after the following fashion to the labourer:—No, you need not think you can charge me 3s. 6d. a day any more. I must tell you that I have had an Act passed to enclose this common, which will come into force next month. The question is now, not if you will take 3s. 6d. a day, but whether or not you will be thankful to take 1s. 9d. You will now work for me at the price I choose to give you, or you may starve; you are perfectly at liberty to please yourself. I will give you a day to make up your mind, but if you don't like to accept my terms then, you must not blame me for the consequences, that is all.

Here we have no longer a bargain between man and man, but the terms of a master to a slave. The landlord becomes rich enough to be made a Peer: the labourer is converted from a free man into a slave to the man-made lord, who has stolen his common. The labourer, his wife and his children, are all absolutely at his mercy; he can save them from destitution and despair, or plunge them into it, and banish them from their native vale, according to his sweet will. The labourer may have the anguish night after night, as he returns without work, without money, and without food, of seeing his children's wan, hungry, little faces, and of feeling his wife daily fading away before him, without the power of doing a single stroke of work to help them.

The common has been enclosed, and with it the sunshine of the labourer's life has been shut out. A dark cloud now hangs over him; and an almost joyless life of hopeless toil, poverty and dependence, ending in a pauper's grave, is only too often his fate.

Men of England, as you love your country, as you love your homes, as you wish your name to be for ever blessed by future generations, you must regain your birthright.

" Rise like lions after slumber,  
In unvanquishable numbers!  
Shake your chains to earth like dew,  
Which in sleep had fall'a on you!"

### Local Government the First Step.

Are you ready and willing to do this? If so I will tell you how to begin, you can't get to the top of a ladder all at once, but you can go up step after step, and, as each step is reached, the next is possible. I can't travel with you far in this short pamphlet, but I will put in the bottom rungs of the ladder, and show you how to begin with measures that are possible at present.

First you must have a popularly elected county or district authority that will represent you, and do as you wish.

### Purchase of Land for the People.

This authority must have power to purchase compulsorily, at fair and remunerative prices, land in each district, for the purpose of letting it out to you on fair and equitable conditions.

The board would borrow the money from the Government at

three per cent., and would pay another one per cent. towards paying off the loan, which at this rate would be repaid in about 49 years. There is no reason whatever, however, why the Imperial Government should not itself pay the one per cent., if we could deprive ourselves of the luxury of a few wars, and leave off spending seven millions a year in tramping on our fellow subjects in Ireland. As this loan was gradually paid off, and as the value of the land increased, the surplus funds would be spent for your common good in any way you might think well.

In order to cultivate land successfully you must have it under such conditions as will enable you to use it as if it were your own; build a cottage, plant fruit trees, enrich it and farm it, without any fear of being disturbed, as long as you paid a fair rent; or of being deprived of your improvements in case you left.

A fair rent would be a variable rent that would be based on some sort of sliding scale, going up and down with the prices of produce, etc. Your rent, moreover, should never be a materially higher rent than the farmer's, and I know you would not be afraid of paying that.

Then you must have the right of selling your improvements, or tenant-right as I will call it, to anyone you like, and whenever you like, just as you might if the land were your own; your successor having the land at the same rent, and on the same conditions as yourself.

Although, no doubt, the greater number of you will only want allotments of one or two roods, you ought all of you to have the opportunity of having enough to make, at any rate, the best part of your living out of it. I don't mean small farms of 30 or 40 acres; you can't expect to get them yet. What I think you should try to get is a cottage farm of about five acres, where you would aim, not at competing in wholesale market with the farmer, but at providing yourself and family with the first necessities of life, adding to your income by outside work.

Pieces of land away from home are of no use to the labouring man; pieces of land held on uncertain tenure are of no use either. You must insist on having the land on the conditions I have named, or the whole thing will be a failure. You see it is manifestly no use your having security of tenure on a bit of land if you can't build a house on it; otherwise you may be turned out of your land by being turned out of your village.

The following illustration of how a plot of land, of the size I have mentioned, might be farmed, you must bear in mind, is only an illustration. Much will depend on the nature and situation of the land, and a great many other things which it is quite unnecessary for me to point out to agricultural labourers. In some cases, of course, the land might be used to much greater advantage than the way I set forth, and farmed on an altogether different system.

#### Cottage Farms.

Take, then, a cottage farm of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres;  $3\frac{1}{2}$  of it abutting against the cottage, and two of pasture, perhaps at a distance. We will suppose that  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre is occupied by the house, premises, kitchen garden and orchard, and that the other three acres are farmed on the three course system. Wheat, barley, and roots; an acre of each. Of course it is fair to suppose the land would be farmed well. I am anxious, however, to be moderate in my calculations, so submit the following figures:—

- 1 acre wheat producing, say 4 quarters.
- 1 " barley " " 6 "
- 1 " potatoes " " 5 tons.
- 1/2 in greens and root crops, such as, mangolds, cabbage, and turnips.
- 2 acres of pasture for hay and grazing, keeping one cow and sometimes a calf up to a year old.

There are 36 stones in one quarter, which make 144 in 4 quarters of wheat, this would grind into 108 stones of flour and 36 stones of bran and sharps, 108 stones equals 1512 lbs. This made into bread would weigh about one third more or 2016 lbs. This divided by 52 gives you 38 1/2 lbs. of bread a week, or 9 1/2 quartern loaves.

Most of the barley and sharps, a good many of the roots, besides the buttermilk, and other refuse would go to feed the pigs; we might reckon on its fattening four 18 stone pigs. Three of these might be sold and one kept, 18 stone is 252 lbs., this would give you on the average more than two thirds lb. of ham or bacon a day the year through.

Of the potatoes you might sell 4 tons and keep one. There are 2240 lbs. in a ton; this divided over the year leaves over 6 lbs a day for home consumption.

The cow we might reckon on giving 15 gallons of milk a week the year through. Now it takes about 3 1/2 gallons to make 1 lb. of butter, so allow four and a half gallons of milk and 1 1/2 lbs. of butter for home consumption, there would be 1 1/2 lbs. to sell every week.

Thus the labourer, so long as he has built himself a cottage, of which I shall have more to say, would be provided with home, bread, butter, bacon, milk, potatoes, fowls, eggs, fruit, and all sorts of garden produce he liked to grow. He would, in fact, be able to provide himself with almost all the first necessities of a healthy life.

He would have to sell.

	£	s	d.
3 pigs at 18 stone at 5s. 6d.	14	17	0
1 calf . . . . .	1	0	0
4 tons potatoes at £2 10s. . . . .	10	0	0
78 lbs. of butter at 1s. . . . .	3	18	0
Fruit, fowls, eggs, &c. . . . .	4	5	0
	£34 0 0		

His expenses might be estimated as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Rent, inclusive of rates and taxes, 30s. an acre for 5 1/2 acres	8	5	0
Seeds . . . . .	1	10	0
Horse hire . . . . .	6	0	0
Insurance for cows and pigs . . . . .	1	0	0
Young pigs . . . . .	4	0	0
Sundry extras . . . . .	3	5	0
	£24 0 0		

Which would be £10 less than his receipts. He would thus have nearly 4s. a week towards groceries, clothes and other expenses, in addition to the money he could earn by other work he could obtain. *If you want these farms, use your political power. Agitate, and ask your candidates, and representatives, to get them for you.*

**Co-operation.**

A number of these small occupiers might with advantage work

some part of their business co-operatively. For instance, in almost every case both on account of water, fencing, and other things, it would be best that two acres of pasture should not be divided out to each man, but that, say, a dozen of them should have two fields of 12 acres each. They would pay according to the stock they had on, and would arrange with each other about the milking and driving up of the cows; and often no doubt have a common dairy, and, if near the town, a milk cart. This same cart might be used to take fruit and vegetables to the market, also for the private use of individuals for pleasures or other purposes.

Then, again, a man out of this little company might grow oats instead of barley, and keep a couple of horses instead of a cow and pigs, filling in his time with carting when the horses were not wanted on the farms. They might have an insurance fund of their own to provide against losses of their stock, and these joint affairs would, of course, be managed by a committee of all the members. Horse implements and other things would naturally be the property of the company as well.

In this way this company of cottage farmers would co-operate, when they could do so to advantage; at the same time they would be perfectly independent of each other in other matters, so that each one would reap the full benefit of his individual industry and skill, and be able to carry on agriculture under the most favourable conditions possible.

But I don't propose that you should have nothing to do but look after your farms, as I feel sure that after the land was brought into a good state of cultivation, a man, with a moderately helpful family, who was willing to work in the evening, might manage it well if he took, say, a month during the spring, and a few weeks during the rest of the year. Of course if he adopted a less simple mode of cultivation, and went in for any sort of market gardening, he would soon occupy all his time, and his receipts would be proportionally more, as £40 per annum can easily be obtained from a market garden near a town.

At a meeting where I was once speaking on this subject a squire's gardener cried out that wheat could not be grown for 30s. a quarter. My reply was "I suppose it will feed you all the same if it is 30s. or 60s. a quarter," and here lies an important point. I am advocating a way for you to find yourselves food, home and occupation, not for you to provide others with them, although I believe you could hold your own in the wholesale market if necessary.

Yet even if large farmers were able to grow wheat, &c., with less labour than you, it does not follow that, when it gets to your door, after two or three tradesmen had added their various expenses, risks and profits to the first cost, it would be in any sense cheaper than you could provide it for yourselves straight from your land into your pot.

With too many of you it is not a matter as to whether you can buy or produce the cheapest, but whether you are to be allowed to provide for yourselves, or forced to go without. As the farmer says, cheap bread is no use if you have no money to buy it. It is better, then, for you to grow your own wheat, and fat your own pigs, even if it entails extra labour, than stand helplessly idle, without work, money or food.

Don't think that I imagine all the country chopped up, and all agricultural labourers with their plots; because I believe any such state of things is quite against the tendency of the age. Most

businesses are carried on by machinery on a large scale, to the best advantage; and I believe that there will always be a useful place for large farmers. All I insist upon is that you should have the opportunity of having this land if you wish, and that the large men should be compelled to give way to the small when necessary.

By being able to get at the land if you chose, you would be in a position to demand fair wages, and constant employment. The farmer used to point at the reaping machine in harvest time and tell you he could do without you, and that you must come to reasonable terms; you must be able to point at the land and tell the farmer you can also do without him, and then, and not until then, will the bargain be fair. You having the alternative of a comfortable and independent living instead of the workhouse or starvation.

#### But how are you to get the Cow?

By saving, and societies, and other means. The poor Irish Scotch, Germans, and French all managed to buy their cows when they had the opportunity of feeding them, and you will be able to do the same. As for your sheds and cottages, I should not advise you to borrow money to build these *if you can avoid it*. There are plenty of ways for a helpful man to build very comfortable places with every little expenditure. More permanent and better buildings would follow in the course of time. A few poles with gorse plaited round make the walls of a most comfortable cow-shed, while a few faggots and thatch make an excellent roof. Good and comfortable cottages may be made, and are made, in the Norfolk Marshes and other parts of the country of wood, or sun-dried bricks, at a very small cost. Bear in mind, please, that with a few exceptions, such as draining, every thing in the way of improvement must be done by yourselves at your own risk, to belong to yourselves.

This, like all other healthy reforms, would take time to work out. The successful men who laugh at the notion of your being in a position to take a little land, forget that their businesses were not formed in a day. There would be a few labourers in every village who would be able at once to take their five acres. There are more poor people who have a little money of their own, or who can get a little, than most of us are aware of. Every man who took his five-acre farm would leave a situation vacant, improving the position of those left behind, and checking the movement into the towns. As soon as cottage farming was found to pay, industrious, competent men, would find no difficulty in obtaining a helping hand. So far from the farmers being worse off than they are now for labourers, they would be better off. Their labour would be free, instead of forced, obhging instead of sullen. The cottage-farmer would be glad to get the extra money, the farmer to get his help; mutual interest and goodwill would form a voluntary co-operation. I don't anticipate, however, that many of the cottiers would work for the farmers in their spare time. First because many would probably not be wanted. Second because they would find occupation that would clash less with their own

#### Industrial Villages.

I picture to myself large, healthy, picturesque, flourishing industrial villages growing up, not unlike those Mr. Solly is trying to create by another method, (\*) where the inhabitants make boots.

(\*) Society for Promotion of Industrial Villages, 30, Craven Street Charing Cross, W.C. Read interesting report

clothes, and other things during the winter and wet weather, while they work on their land in fine weather and in summer. Land is just what house-coal colliers want, too, as they have little or nothing to do during all the summer months.

#### Plenty of Land for All.

There is plenty of room for us all as long as we only want fair play, but not if one man is allowed to have 1,000 acres, while others are starving for five. It has hitherto been the custom to force the five-acre men to emigrate. This must be altered; if any one is to go it should be the 1,000 acre men. There are about 77 millions of acres in the united kingdom, and about 36 millions of inhabitants. For the sake of simplicity we will cut off only five million acres, or one in fifteen for unreclaimable land, towns, roads, etc. This leaves us exactly two acres per head, man, woman, and child. We have an average of five in a family, which makes ten acres a family. We are not likely ever to have more than a third of our population engaged in agricultural pursuits, so that leaves 30 acres for every agricultural family. I don't anticipate for a moment that anything like half the labourers would ever avail themselves of cottage farms; but if we suppose that half did, it would leave 60 acres a-piece for them, and I am only asking for five and a half, thus still leaving 54½ acres out of every 60 for large farms.

There is nothing visionary in the proposals I have made. You agricultural labourers need no argument or persuasion to show you that, if you could obtain small pieces of land under the fair conditions I have mentioned, it would be a great benefit to you. Proof is not required from me. You see it all around for yourselves. There is a parish not far from where I live, where part of a field is let out in allotments, and part to a farmer. The labourers are paying £3 an acre, and the farmer only 10s, the field being of the same quality all over. I shall not be exaggerating, I think, if I say that, on an average, allotment holders pay twice the rent that farmers do. Their holdings are often a mile from their homes, are far from the best land, and are cultivated under the most disadvantageous circumstances. No cottage on them, no pig and manure, no fruit trees, no security of tenure worth mentioning; and yet they pay, and are generally much coveted. How much more valuable would they be if you had them at a fair rent, and hired them under the most favourable conditions, instead of the least.

#### Accomplished Facts.

The Rev. W. Tuckwell, M.A., Rector of Stockton, Rugby,\* in a pamphlet of his, describes how he has cut up his Rectory land into allotments of various sizes with the most excellent results. He advocates almost exactly the same conditions of tenure that I do, and has carried them out as far as circumstance would admit. He calculates that an acre allotment, rented under favourable conditions is equal to a weekly saving of 7s., and founds his calculations on actual results attained, and says, "Already, throughout the village I find corn bags ranged round the walls, and I am told that for the first time in their history the housewives can face the winter unemployed without alarm. So clear is this to our labourers that a considerable demand for fresh allotments has arisen, and another field will immediately be broken up."

#### Lord Tollemarche.

Then there are the celebrated "Cow-keeping Cottages," as they

\* "Allotments," Jarrold and Sons, 3, Paternoster Buildings, Price 1s.

are called, of Lord Tollemarche. The labourers here work for the farmer regularly, but have a good cottage and three acres land apportioned to them.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres of this is pasture: one acre mowing land; and  $\frac{1}{2}$  in tillage. They pay a rent of £10 per annum for cottage and land. No accounts are kept showing the profits, except the very material ones of a comfortable home provided with milk, eggs, butter, fowls, fruit, bacon, &c. The men pay 6d per month for cow insurance, and are entitled to £10 in case they should loose one. That this is so far enough is proved by the existence of a balance of £164 in the bank.

#### A battle won by the Commoners.

Here is an account that Mr. Tuckwell gives of the reclamation of waste land by labourers.—“On a spur of Dartmoor lies the village of South Tawton. Land less promising can hardly be found in England. Bare masses of granite crop up through the thin layer of soil, which is saturated by the overflow of every cloud that Cawsand Beacon gathers round its head and dissolves in mist or rain. But upon it, divided and protected by rough granite walls, lie 208 acres of Allotment ground. Fifty years ago the villagers, in assertion of old common rights which had practically lapsed, began to cultivate small pieces of moor. Tons of rock were removed, broken, piled into walls; land was drained and manured, the men labouring only in the hours which they could spare from their day's work. The fashion spread and the lands increased; roads grew into acres, acres into plots, till the 208 acres were reclaimed, cleared, fenced, cropped. The officials of the Cornwall Duchy interfered, demanded rent, brought navvies to raze the fences and lay the enclosure waste. The labourers barred the way with spades and pitchforks, and the officials fled. Finally it was arranged that on payment of 10s. an acre, the legal owner should forego all claims and make a deed of conveyance to the men; the Duchy received £104 for what was scarcely worth 100 pence until the labourers had created its value; the occupiers became its recognised legal owners. Mark the result. Fifty years ago the land was rated at 4d per acre, and one-third of the inhabitants were paupers; to-day there are only three, of whom one is an idiot. Illegitimate births were the rule, criminal offences common, now immorality is almost unknown, and in twenty years not a single individual has been charged with crime.”

Here is a tiny ray of light that has struggled through the dark cloud of cruelty, greed, and successful robbery, under whose shade our land laws have run their inhuman course, tearing up and trampling down.

It ought to help to open your eyes to see what it is that is oppressing you, and give you light to guide you to the true remedy for the wrongs which surround you. Wrongs that have been established, not, as is often blasphemously stated, by God, but by man. Wrongs that it is the object of this address to show you may be removed by man—removed by you, as soon as you can make up your minds as to what you want, and are determined to have it. As soon as you see through, and rise above, all the mean, contemptible, little bribes, that are thrown across your path by immoral politicians. As soon as you feel that your power when united in a just and glorious cause is as irresistible as the rising tides of the sea.

# AN OBJECT LESSON IN POLITICAL ECONOMY.

From the "NEW YORK STANDARD."

On land free to use, labour may obtain a bare living.

Land above that grade is "owned," and labour must share with the "owner."



As production increases, the sharing goes on, much to the satisfaction of the "owner."

With the rise in land values the injustice becomes more plain.

GOD MADE THE EARTH FOR THE EQUAL USE OF ALL MEN!

BOSH!



So that LABOUR is really NO BETTER OFF on the BEST LAND which is "owned" than on the POOREST which is free.





## TAX AND TAKE.—BOTH.

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**T**HERE are cheering signs that the Land-gospel is winning its way steadily; but it grieves us to think that there is a split in the ranks of the workers.

All are agreed as to the end, the abolition of Landlordism; the only difference is as to the means. The difference though seems at first sight a serious one, and in consequence of it there is not that cordial co-operation between the two sections that there might be, and would be, we think, if the two parties understood each other better.

This address is written in the hope of producing this better understanding, and so securing more cordial co-operation, and more efficient action.

The enemy is posted in a strong position. Some of us think he can be better attacked on one side, some on the other. We need not quarrel about it. Why not divide forces as we are doing now, but as allies not opponents, and attack on both sides?

The idea of the Land Nationalisation Society is to attack by direct assault in front, giving Local Bodies the power to *take* land straight off, bit by bit, as it is wanted and applied for.

The idea of the Land Restoration League is to attack indirectly and in flank, bombarding the enemy, as it were, by Taxation on Land Values till the place gets too hot to hold him, and he gives up the land, bit by bit, of his own accord.

Each is good in its way, but both together are best.

But it is objected that we sacrifice principle by our proposal to give the Landlord Bonds representing Rent (or compensation for Rent) which the League says he has no right to.

Well, it is open to the League to tax the Bonds. Which of you does not inhabit a house for which he pays Rent, part of which is Ground Rent? But it does not occur to him that he is sacrificing principle in so doing. He pays this Rent because he knows he cannot get the house without it, but he hopes to get the Rent taxed hereafter.

So with us. We propose to give Bonds for the reason (amongst others) that we know we cannot get the Land without it, but there are the Bonds for you to tax, just as your Rent is. Both alike represent Land Values.

"But the Bonds may in the meantime have passed into innocent hands, into the hands of people who have bought them with fair earnings?" But so it is with ordinary Rents which you propose to tax. In the shape of Mortgages, Insurance Securities, and so on, a large part of the Land Values you propose to tax are in "innocent hands" already. The difficulty is no greater in the one case than in the other.

Landlordism represents two evils, generally connected together but quite distinct:—

1. The appropriation by private persons of the natural increase of Land Values, which should go to the State; and
2. The power that Landowners possess of withholding land from full productive use, for their own profit or enjoyment, and so creating an artificial scarcity, contracting the field of employment and forcing earnings down.

Either of these evils can continue to exist without the other.

For example: Suppose first that our proposals alone were carried out, but carried out in full—that all the resources of nature were unlocked, employment become abundant for all who chose to work, and wages rising rapidly. Then private Rents would be reduced but not destroyed. That part of

their former value which was due to artificial scarcity, would be gone, but that part which was due to natural difference in fertility, situation, and so on would remain.

On the other hand, if the League's proposal alone were carried, and Land Values taxed, but monopoly not directly interfered with, the evils of monopoly would continue, much as at present.

Take the case of a Mine.—

A Mining Company pays Rent (in the shape of Royalties) to a private Landowner. They hold the ground, warn everyone else off, and keep wages down as low as they can.

You tax the Rent, beginning with (say) 4s. in the £; the Landlord suffers the loss; but will he be any the less eager to get the remaining 16s.? Rather the contrary. The more you take from him the harder he will screw the Company.

Go on with your taxing till you have taxed him up to the hilt and out of existence. What have you left? A Capitalist Company, paying its Royalties to the State instead of to a private Landlord, but still in exclusive possession of the ground, still with the labourer under its heel, and still with the same incentive and the same power to keep wages down in order to keep profits up.

You will have thrown open no fresh natural resources, stimulated no industry, afforded no relief to labour. All you will have gained will be the Land Value, equivalent to the reduction of so much taxation, a few pounds per head of the population. Will that settle the Labour Question?

But the case of Mines, you will say, is exceptional. True; but think how vast an exception. It covers all the coal, oilshale, iron, copper, lead, salt, china-clay, slate, building-stone, and other materials too numerous to mention. It represents, directly and indirectly, the industry of millions. A proposal which, like your single tax, professes *by itself* to abolish all monopoly of nature, and yet fails to touch the mining difficulty, fails indeed.

Let us take then a case that is not exceptional, but thoroughly typical, the case of Agricultural Land. Travel through the Midland Districts, the most fertile part (barring a

tract here and there) in all England, the part that would yield the richest return to cultivation, and that ought therefore before all others to be cultivated, and you will see a country almost void of inhabitants. Where there should be millions of busy toilers dwelling in happy homes, embowered in shady trees, you will see only cattle; fat perhaps, up to their knees in grass, and representing so much value in meat, but still cattle, not human beings. The people who once tilled the great part of these lands, and who would gladly have tilled it all had they been allowed, have been turned adrift to crowd into the already overcrowded cities, and force wages, already dangerously low, still lower.

Now if this desolation were due to laziness, pride, or mere wantonness of power on the part of the Landlords, your tax on Land Values would doubtless promptly bring them to their senses, and force the land into fuller productive use. But it is due to no such cause. It is due to the simple fact that when a single person is allowed to monopolise a large and fertile tract, it is often not his interest to put that land to the most productive use. It pays him better to keep labor off rather than to put labour on. For where the soil is rich, unassisted nature will yield in grass, (once the grass is laid down) a good return to the occupier with small risk, trouble, or expense to himself. The total produce will indeed be vastly less than if the land were cultivated; but if it were cultivated, the greater part of the produce would go in wages to the laborers, and wages and profits combined to tradesmen and indirect assistants innumerable, while the returns from grass, though much less, are nearly all spontaneous, and so can be kept by the Monopolist to himself.

Suppose I, a large farmer, employ ten men at £40 a year each to grow crops, and that after deducting Rent and all other expenses, I find at the end of the year that I have got back this £400 with 10 per cent. interest=£40. Then it is clear that the land must be yielding £440 a year *not increase*; £400 going to the laborers as their share, and £40 to me as my share. (I am leaving out of sight for simplicity's sake all my other outlay and profit on that outlay.) These two sums £400 to the laborers and £40 to me, are our respective clear earnings after everything else is paid for.

If now by putting all my land down to grass, and then discharging my laborers, I can make the land yield a *total* produce of £50 in fat meat, (but can keep all that £50 to myself, (having no laborers to share it with) it is my interest to turn the laborers off. So that for a trumpery gain to myself of £10 a year, ten men and their families are thrown out of employment, and the productiveness of the land reduced from £440 to £50. The farmer then who lays his wheatlands down to grass, and turns his laborers adrift, can afford to pay a higher Rent than the farmer who cultivates, and so the occupancy passes into the hands of the grazier and the land is gradually emptied of its inhabitants.

How will your tax on Land Values change this? Tax your Landlord 4s. in the £, and he only the more rigorously screws the remaining 16s. out of his tenant. Tax him out of existence and you are only brought face to face with the monopolist farmer, whom you cannot on your own principles tax any further, but whose interest it is just as before to look upon the laborer as a mere expense to be kept down, and whose aim will still be to make unassisted nature yield over a wide area a comparatively small produce, but one that he can keep all to himself.

It is the case of the Mine over again.

And as in Grazing versus Agriculture, just so will it be, and for the same reasons, in Agricultural Capitalist Monopoly versus Small Holdings. The interest of the agricultural farmer, as of the grazier, is to employ as few men as he can, and keep wages down, making nature and machinery together, with as little assistance from labor as possible, produce a smaller result which he can keep all to himself rather than a larger result which he must share with others.

There are two classes of Land only which your Land Tax will force into more productive use,—Land withheld for speculative purposes, (chiefly building lots,) and land withheld for sporting purposes. These are good gains so far as they go, but they hardly touch the skirts of the great Land Question.

As to Private Parks, we do not want those glorious grounds with their stately trees and lovely glades broken

up and put under wheat and turnips; we only want them thrown open for public enjoyment, which also is a good but a different thing.

That your idea of the Single Tax is a grand and realizable idea we readily admit, and are willing and eager to help you in fighting for it, but we submit that by *itself* it is wholly insufficient to break up that Monopoly of the Land, which, far more than the appropriation of Land Values, hinders progress, and robs labor of its just reward.

Your plan has the great name of Henry George in its favor, which alone would be enough to secure for it our earnest consideration, and almost to prejudice us in its favor. Still it does not appear to us that it will do all that you expect or all that we both desire.

Our plan to begin with in brief is this. To empower Local elective Bodies to take land as it is wanted, giving Bonds for what may be considered its fair value, and having once taken, never to re-alienate it but to let it out (in quantities and situations as determined by the number and kinds of applications for it):—

- In limited areas.
- With Fixity of Tenure.
- And Right to Improvements.
- At Rents periodically revisable, irrespective of Improvements.
- Reserving Mineral Rights to the State.

We believe that if this were done we could shortly exhibit to the nation so many samples of Land thoroughly nationalised in actual work, and that their success as shown in the immediate stimulus to production, abundance of employment, and rise of wages, (a rise checked only by the influx of workers from the lands not nationalised,) would do more to convert the public, and so hasten the triumph of our cause than any other method yet suggested.

So important does it seem to us to make a beginning in this or some such way—to get in the thin end of the wedge—that we think it worth almost any sacrifice.

An Irish Speaker lately remarked with great good sense that the Irish recognised that they must either fight for their land or pay for it, and that as they were too weak to fight (with any hope of success) they must expect to pay for it.

So it is with us. The Landlord interest is so strong that you cannot hope in any reasonable time to get your rights without a sacrifice of some sort; and the outlay of a few thousands in compensation at the outset, would be as small a sacrifice as you could expect to make, and hardly worth mentioning in view of the enormous and lasting gain, even though the compensation were in some cases excessive (which it need not be), even though you could not tax the Bonds (which you could), and even though part of the burden fell on the laboring poor (which it would not).

We offer you two guarantees that the Rights of the people shall not be sacrificed :—

1. That the compensation shall be determined by Boards locally elected, and therefore representing the sentiments of the people.
2. Your power to tax the Compensation Bonds.

A. J. O.,

*(Author of a "Colonist's Plea for Land Nationalisation")*

**LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,  
11, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND,  
LONDON, W.C.**

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**OBJECTS.**

To obtain for the individual his right to use Land.  
To obtain for the Nation its right to the Land Revenues.

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PRESIDENT: ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, LL.D., F.R.G.S.

TREASURER: FRANCIS L. SOPER, F.L.S.

HON. SECRETARY: WILLIAM JAMESON.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY: JOSEPH HYDER.

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**MEMBERSHIP.**—Payment of an Annual Subscription of or exceeding *One Shilling* confers Membership. Subscribers of five guineas or more become Life Members.

**LECTURES.**—The Society is anxious to extend its work in town and country, and will be glad to hear from Secretaries of Political Associations and Land Reformers generally, with a view to holding meetings, supplying lecturers or attending debates.

**LITERATURE.**—An extensive and varied stock of literature enables the Secretary to respond promptly and liberally to applications for information upon this important question.

Members of Debating Societies and Local Parliaments are invited to bear this in mind.

Those who desire a just solution of the Land Problem are earnestly requested to become Members.

Remittances should be in favour of F. L. SOPER. Cheques to be crossed the London & County Bank, Covent Garden.

*The Assistant Secretary attends at the Office from 10 till 4.*

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## OUR PROPOSALS.

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*WE declare the monopoly of the Land to be the great evil of the age.*  
Industry languishes, the poor suffer, and labor is defrauded of its just reward, because the resources of nature are in the hands of a class who live by levying toll on the workers, and who, by withholding a large part of the soil for purposes of sport, pleasure, speculation and private advantage of one kind or another, have driven the laborers from the country into the towns, and created an artificial scarcity of employment, forcing wages down and leaving many without any opportunity of getting work at all.

Our remedy for this is not to substitute State Control for private enterprise, but to set private enterprise free, by forcing open to use the locked-up resources of the country, leaving every man full liberty to follow his own bent, so long as he does not trench upon the equal rights of others.

We declare, That this planet belongs to the Human Race, not to the Landlords; That it is for the use of all, not for the aggrandisement of a few; That the right of every man to work and to reap the fruit of his work comes before the right of a Landlord to charge him for permission to work, or of an employer to make a profit out of his work. And that if the occupier of many acres does not see how to make profit out of his laborers, that is a reason not for his turning off the men, but for his giving up the acres.

*As a first step then we demand:—*

That Local Bodies, locally elected, be established throughout the country.

With power to take land from time to time on behalf of the State for Small Holdings, in such quantities and situations as the number and kinds of applications for it generally may indicate.

Such lands to be taken over absolutely, not merely hired.

"Fair Compensation" being given to the Landlord, payable in State Bonds, transferable.

*The Land never to be re-alienated, but to be let out:—*

In limited areas;

With Fixity of Tenure;

And right to value of Improvements if Occupier wishes to retire;

At reasonable Rents,

To be periodically revised, and raised or lowered according as the land, *apart from improvements*, may have risen or fallen in value;

Occupier to hold always direct from the Board.

And all Mineral Rights to be reserved to the State.

The present Allotments Act is a sham and a snare, pretended to give the laborer access to the soil, but imposing so many restrictions requiring such complicated proceedings, and piling up such a mass of costs as practically to prohibit what it professes to grant.

For example:—

1. The Local Boards are not elective and need not take action unless they like. They should be elective and bound to act on receipt of a specified number of bona-fide applications.
2. The Act provides (or pretends to provide) for "laborers" only. We claim the right for the *whole people*. Every man, whether a "laborer" in the technical sense or not, has a right to the opportunity to acquire on reasonable terms the use of a limited portion of his native land, if only to build a cottage on and make himself a home.
3. The mode of estimating the value of the land gives power to the dispossessed Landlord to demand a speculative or fancy price. He should receive "fair compensation" and no more; a compensation in no case exceeding the net rental value.
4. The whole complicated mass of proceedings must be swept away and a short simple Act be passed empowering and enjoining Local Bodies to take land at "fair compensation" whenever and wherever wanted for small holdings or for public purposes of any kind.
5. All the absurd restrictions as to kinds of improvements permitted, must be swept away; occupier being free to make whatever improvements he thinks fit.

The resources of Nature being thrown open, every man will have the choice between working for another and working for himself, instead of as now, between hired employment and the workhouse; and as no one will work for another for less than he can make for himself, capital will compete for labor, instead of labor competing for employment; and as prices gradually rising till they represent the whole produce of labor, the payment to the State of Rent for the use of natural facilities which belong to all alike (a payment which the State will receive on one hand only to give back with the other), and less payment to the owners of such special appliances as the laborer of his own will may choose to hire or in some way get the use of (a payment which will resolve itself into payment to the workers who made the appliances).

More than this Justice does not require.

More than this Law cannot give.

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Those who approve of such land reform as is here indicated are earnestly invited to communicate with the Society. The nominal subscription for *Members* is only *one Shilling per annum*, and this or any amount will be thankfully received.

Applications for lectures and literature will be promptly responded to.

**LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,**  
**10 SOUTHAMPTON ST., STRAND, LONDON, W.C.**

*Land Nationalisation Society Tracts—No. XXXI.*

# LAND NATIONALISATION.

BY H. J. OGILVY,

Vice-President of the Land Nationalisation Society.

REPRINTED (BY PERMISSION) FROM

THE CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETIES' ANNUAL, 1890

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# LAND NATIONALISATION :

WHY WE WANT IT ;  
 WHAT WE MEAN BY IT ;  
 AND HOW WE PROPOSE TO SET ABOUT IT.

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BY A. J. OGILVY,  
 VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY.

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I SHALL not waste time in dwelling on the want and misery of the poor, the horrors of the slums, or the inadequate reward of labour. We know all about it. Volumes have been written on it, the papers are full of it; thousands of earnest reformers are trying to find a remedy for it. I shall pass lightly over this and straight on to my subject.

It is not, as Malthus and others declare, that nature is so niggardly that she cannot provide enough for all. We need not linger over the "law of diminishing return," the supposed tendency of increase from the land to go on in arithmetical progression only while population increases in geometrical progression. It is sufficient to point out that, notwithstanding all the waste of human effort, the obstruction of monopolists, the wanton consumption of the luxurious, nature *does* produce enough for all. There are more foodstuffs consumed in distilleries and frivolous manufactures, and in feeding dogs, sporting horses, game, and the like, than would feed abundantly all the illnourished; and, even were it not so, there is more land lying untilled, and more effort wasted in profitless occupations than would suffice, if turned even in a moderate degree to better use, to provide not only necessaries, but abundance for all.

Our contention is that the inadequate reward of labour, the gross inequalities of fortune, the depopulation of the country and overcrowding of the towns, and, in short, nearly all the industrial and most of the social evils of the day are not the inevitable accidents of healthy progress, nor the result of an inextricable tangle of bad social arrangements requiring a complete and artificial reorganisation of society from top to bottom, but the consequences of a single simple wrong, which, being removed, society will right itself spontaneously.

That wrong is the monopoly of the land, the power accorded to those who have money to buy up the face of nature and charge other people for the permission to work, and even, at their sovereign will, to forbid many from working at all, thus

## LAND NATIONALISATION.

artificially restricting the field of labour and creating an army of unemployed whose competition for employment increases the toil and reduces the earnings of the workers all round.

It may be due to a law of nature that the idle, the improvident, and the drunken should starve. It is due to no law of nature that the great mass of those who toil should remain poor, while those who are richest should do little or nothing to produce their wealth, but live luxuriously on the labour of others. What we war against is not poverty as such, nor inequality as such, nor luxury as such, but wrong as such. Undeserved poverty through misfortune there will always be to a certain extent, but that could easily be relieved. Inequality of physical and mental gifts, of energies, of pure luck, there will always be; but inequality of rights, and especially of the first great right, *the right to earn a living*, there need not be.

Luxuries, if a man chooses to produce them for himself without trenching on his neighbour's right, are quite legitimate, but luxuries acquired by compelling another person to work for me instead of for himself are not legitimate.

We have no complaint against mere inequality of wealth as such. We have no objection to anyone becoming a millionaire, no matter how poor other people remain, so long as the millionaire's money is fairly earned; nor do we care how little exertion or self-sacrifice its acquisition may have cost him so long as he has not interfered with another's rights.

If Patti can earn £1,000 in a night by singing a few songs, she is welcome. She robs no one. Her voice is a gift that pleases all and injures none. No one need go to hear her unless he likes; no one is hindered in his business by her song.

If Joe Smith, working with pick and eradle in an Australian gully, strikes a pocket and becomes rich in an hour, while his mates all round can hardly earn their keep, he is welcome. All started fair. They did not happen to hit the right spot, he did. But they are none the worse for his success. If he also had missed the right spot and it had remained undiscovered, what the better would they have been for that?

If young Crossus is born heir to a million while my father has nothing to leave me but his blessing, I am none the worse off because he is better off. Rather am I the better off. It is an absolute advantage to me to find a rich man close at hand wanting many services done, and able and willing to pay well for them.

But when any man's wealth is due not to his own exertions, nor to some natural gift, nor to a lucky accident, but to his getting possession of the face of nature and forbidding others to work except at his sovereign will and pleasure, then a wrong is done.

We hold that the great evil of the age (not the only evil, but the one that underlies and fosters nearly all the other evils) is the monopoly of the land; the power accorded to the rich (who have money) to buy up the opportunities of existence and charge other people for the permission to live; the "power" of one man (whether landlord or tenant) to get possession of more land than he can use by his own personal labour, while others wanting land remains without it, in order to prevent these others from using it by their labour, except for his profit. This is what we mean by the word landlordism, and this is what the nationalisation of the land is intended to abolish.

## LAND NATIONALISATION.

Property in its only legitimate sense signifies goods, the produce of labour.

Man may own what he produces from nature, but he cannot own nature herself, he cannot own the land (*own* as distinguished from *use*). He did not produce it, and no one else had the right to convey it to him. It was there before we were created, it will be there when we have all passed away. It is the basis of all industry, the source directly or indirectly of all employment. It is the first necessary of life, for all other necessaries come from it. It is the common inheritance of all, to be allotted by the State *for use* on such terms as shall secure the rights of each, and produce the greatest benefits for all.

Mere ownership of land, however, as such, we should care little about if it were limited to what the owner could personally and efficiently use. If men settling down in a new country selected each what spot of land he fancied most, "first come, first served," as much as he could cultivate, and kept it as his own, then the first comers would get all the best pieces, but though there would be great inequality there would be no injustice. For all cannot be first comers; no two can occupy the same land, and no one has more than his share. My land will yield no less because another's yields more, his extra profits are not at my cost, but are due solely to his happening to be the first comer, which is a purely natural and accidental advantage, like having been born stronger or cleverer. When it comes to raising a general revenue, this inequality of natural advantage may give rise to disputes as to the equitable adjustment of taxation, but none as to the right of exclusive possession, which is seen to be a condition necessary to the effective use of the land. Nor, so long as the first right of every man to the opportunity to work, and *for himself*, if he wishes it, is recognised, have we the least objection to the vast residue of the land which is not wanted for that purpose being held by private persons in any quantities and on such terms as the public interest may require, *until it is wanted*.

But you cannot give or barter away the rights of the unborn. Every fresh man born into the world is born with the same indefeasible right, the right of access to nature, the right to work and to reap the fruits of his work. This is the first fundamental right of every man, the right on which all his other rights rest, and without which his other rights are of small use to him. Without that right he is a slave, bound to sell his labour for whatever he can get, only too happy if he can find any master to have him at all. The evil, the wrong that grows gradually to gigantic proportions and crushes the life out of the labourer, is when one man is allowed to get possession of other people's share as well as his own, and to charge them all he can get for mere permission to use it.

This is the golden rule, the principle on which our whole case rests, that the legitimate use of the land is as an instrument of production, not as a means of extortion, and its possession is to be permitted to *secure to its possessor the fruits of his own labour, not the fruits of other people's*.

In England the action of the land monopolist, not only in appropriating the labourer's earnings, but also in contracting the whole field of industry, and so intensifying the struggle for existence and forcing down wages, is obscured by the fact that the landlord and the labourer are not brought into direct contact.

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The landlord lets his land to a tenant, and retires out of sight. The tenant is then the employer, but only one employer out of many, and does not seem to have any more connection with scarcity of employment than any other employer. It seems to be capital that employs labour, and the amount of capital available for employment to be the determining factor of the labour market.

Before we attempt to unravel this tangled skein let us step for a moment to a country where the skein is not tangled and the lie of the threads is easy to trace; we shall then see better how to pick out the tangle. Let us go to Ireland, where the confusing multitude of middlemen is absent and the landlord and the labourer stand face to face.

## IRELAND.

OVER a great part of Ireland the conditions of tenure and methods of using the land are much the same as in England, but in the outlying poorer parts the soil, so far as it is cultivated at all, is cultivated by the peasant—by the labourer working for himself and paying rent; and throughout the country generally there are no mines, manufactures (to speak of), or other standing field of regular employment, consequently the labourer is thrown upon the land itself as his sole resource, and must support himself from nature direct with such odds and ends of hired employment as he may chance to get. He is not a capitalist working for profit and ready to take the land only if he can see his way to a profit, but a poor labouring man working for life, and who must therefore have the land on any terms or die.

The landlord is thus absolute master of the situation and can dictate his own terms. He can either stand forth as confessed despot, saying "These are my terms, accept them or go" (which is equivalent to sentence of death or of the workhouse); or he can go through the farce of putting the land up to "free competition," which means keeping back all the good land for his own use, or letting it to a capitalist who will pay high for it, and offering the poor residue to the hungry crowd to whom it is the first necessary of life, the source whence all their necessaries must come. They must therefore run each other up for it, not merely to the utmost they can pay, but beyond; to a sum they cannot hope to pay, but can always be held liable for.

Of course the occupier is soon in arrears, and thenceforth has to "work the dead horse," that is, to work not for his own enrichment but to pay off an impossible debt. Of course, also, he soon ceases to work (that is to work more than enough just to live), and to save any surplus he may chance to get. So he gets the character of being idle and improvident, and the landlord points triumphantly to this and says—"See, he can't pay his just rent, simply because he won't work or deny himself. This wicked creature is robbing me of my just dues by his idleness and improvidence."

But as if this was not bad enough the landlord had, till yesterday (for I am speaking of a state of things which is—not past—but passing), the power of refusing any security of tenure, of turning off the tenant whether he paid his rent or not, at his (the landlord's) sovereign will and pleasure, and confiscating all his improvements. For though this accursed system had the necessary effect of strangling all hope of advancement, all ambition to rise, all desire to improve, still there are some improvements that the tenant *must* make.



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The land on to which he is forced (the landlord keeping all the best for his own use or profit) is stony mountain side, or coarse bog, or inferior soil of some kind, which must be reclaimed before it will grow anything, and he must have a dwelling of some sort, and a wall or fence round his crops. All these the landlord might seize at any time, and though they might (the dwelling and fences) be worth little to him, they were all in all to the tenant. Observe that this payment called rent was a payment in return for absolutely no service rendered whatever. The landlord need make no improvements, advance no capital, but simply charge the tenant all he could get out of him for the mere permission to live by his own labour on the face of the earth; and as soon as the tenant, with hard toil, had converted the barren land into a more or less fruitful garden, the landlord, casting his eyes upon it, would see that it would now bear good grass for his cattle and would push the tenant off to another barren patch to reclaim that, to be again taken when it was good enough for grass, until Englishmen learn with surprise that all the congested population is concentrated on the worst land.

It is nothing to the purpose to say that the landlord was often an honourable and kind man, who did not take full advantage of his powers, or "press hardly on the poor," that he sometimes gave away in charity much of what he took in rent, that he often took a sincere interest in his dependents, and showed them much kindness; that he often earned their affection and respect, and lived amongst them in mutual goodwill; nor that he fully believed in the justice and propriety of his demands, and that such harshness as he occasionally felt himself compelled to exercise was in the exercise of a privilege he had legitimately acquired, and which, as he believed, it was good upon the whole that he should possess. All this I freely admit. Precisely the same things might be said of many slaveowners in relation to their slaves. But it only tells in favour of the landlord's private character, which I am not attacking. It proves nothing in defence of the institution he represents, any more than it would be a defence of slavery to say that many slaveowners were honourable and kind men, who would not exercise *their* full powers, showed much kindness to their slaves, and were beloved by them, and believed honestly in their rights as slaveowners.

## IMPROVEMENTS.

It is said, again, that the landlord sometimes made great improvements. True; and yet has been much more of a hindrance than a help to improvement. For there are some improvements (such as draining, clearing, cleansing, cultivating, &c) which represent labour only, and which the poorest occupier would gladly effect in his spare time *if only the landlord would let him*; that is, if he would only guarantee the improvee the undisturbed enjoyment of these improvements.

There are other improvements again (such as buildings), which may require capital. These, a building society, or anyone with money to invest will readily make if only there is security for payment of good interest, which the occupier of the land and user of the improvement could easily give if only he had secure possession, which again the landlord refuses to guarantee.

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To induce a man to build a house it is not necessary for him to own the land it is to stand on any more than to induce him to build a ship it is necessary that he should own the water it is to float on. All that is wanted is security for interest on the cost or enjoyment in the use, which could easily be got if the landlord did not stand in the way.

Again, when the landlord does make improvements he makes them as a capitalist, not as a landlord. A landlord is simply a person who owns land; he may or may not also be a capitalist owning money. If he is not he cannot make improvements however big a landlord he may be. If he is, and makes improvements, he makes them as any other capitalist would—as an investment. It is a proof (if proof were wanted) of the advantage of capital; it is no proof of the advantage of landlordism.

The distinctive feature of a landlord in regard to improvements lies not in his power to make them, which is not peculiar to him, but in his power to prevent their being made; in his power directly to forbid or indirectly to discourage them by refusing that security of possession without which there is no inducement to the occupier or security to the capitalist to make them. I have seen buildings in plenty going to pieces because the landlord was too stingy, too indifferent, or too poor to repair them, and the occupier did not dare. The landlord, as landlord, does immeasurably more to hinder improvement by refusing the necessary security and inducement than he does to further it by his occasional outlay. His power to charge other people for permission to work, to withhold or restrict the use of the land, to refuse security of possession and to evict, are all that is distinctive of him as a landlord. He represents an abuse, pure and simple.

It is true that he bought the land (or we will assume that he did) and with it all these powers as a necessary corollary; but that only means that A has bought from B the legal right to impoverish and oppress C, for what did he buy the land for? He bought it solely in order to exercise these powers; these powers of vexatious interference, of obstruction, and of extortion. The land was no use to him for any other purpose. He did not buy it in order to settle down on a bleak hillside, or in a damp bog, and laboriously reclaim the sterile soil. Not he! He bought it in order to be able to extort money from those who did. He bought it "to let," as it is euphemistically expressed, and we now see what that means. What it means and how it has worked is shown by the condition of Ireland, where we see a people impoverished, a backward industry, a general hatred of the law, and a desire always to frustrate rather than assist it, and an ever-smouldering state of insurrection.

The law is altered now, in theory. The landlord's power to extort has now, in theory, been restricted to the exaction of what is called a "reasonable rent," and his power to evict at will and confiscate improvements abolished. In short, he has ceased to be a landlord, a lord of the land, and become a mere claimant for certain moneys regulated by the courts. In theory, but in theory only. For the refusal of Parliament to wipe out unjust arrears has left his real powers under the law pretty much as they were. Happily there is now in Ireland a National League, stronger than the law, which is gradually converting the empty theory into accomplished fact.

But you cannot get an Irish (or an English) landlord to see anything wrong in landlordism any more than you could get a Southern slaveowner to see anything

## LAND NATIONALISATION.

wrong in slavery. Every argument that the landlord now uses has been used by the slaveowner. The land is his "property, honestly bought or inherited" (just as the slaves were). "To interfere with his rights would be undermining the sacred institution of property on which all civilisation rests, and bringing chaos. The owners are generally honest and good men, who show great kindness to those dependent on them. Many of them are very poor, notwithstanding all the 'property' of this sort they own, and really get very little profit out of it. Many are widows and orphans and aged people, who would be left penniless and helpless if deprived of it," and so on. Anyone who goes about pointing out the injustice of landlordism and the wrongs of the labourer is a pestilent fellow, "setting class against class," and "making the people discontented with their lot." All which is exactly what the Southerners said of John Brown—and hanged him.

## THE HIGHLANDS.

IN the Highlands of Scotland the system has been carried to even greater lengths, though the more patient Highlanders have borne their wrongs more quietly. There, whole counties have been depopulated and laid waste to make hunting grounds for the rich. The landlord first confiscated the immemorial grazing rights of the people, and then turned them off the better land to make way for sheep; later he turned them off the worse land to make way for deer; and every time he pushed them from better to worse land he, by that very act, intensified the competition for the ever-lessening quantity of available land, increased his own power of raising rents, and made the people more and more abjectly dependent on his mercy or caprice till, in his greed, and the wantonness of oppression, he grudged them even the wretched strips of barren land that were left them; and the cry of the crofters is that, not only are they charged extortionate rents for an insecure tenure of the worst land, but they cannot even get, on any terms, a sufficient quantity to keep them alive, even of the worst land.

Again and again has rent been demanded which was confessedly more than the land could possibly produce and yet maintain the producer, but as the landlord (or his agent) naively remarked, "The tenant could earn it at the fishing!" That is to say, there was no pretence of the rent asked being economic rent, or the differential productive value of the land, or as representing the value of the land at all; it was a simple, straightforward claim to the right of extorting from the labourer all that he could earn anywhere and anyhow in return for the mere permission to exist on the face of the earth! So if you did as some of our statesmen propose, and advanced public money to provide improved appliances for the Fisheries, or to start public works which would provide fresh employment for the people, still the fresh earnings would be "at the fishing" and the landlord would claim them. -

People have risen in arms before now for far less wrongs than these, and history has applauded them for so doing. The wrongs for which the Commons rose against Charles I., and for which the American States rose against King George, were the veriest trifles in comparison. But then the Commons and the Americans were a

## LAND NATIONALISATION.

ple well provided, able to combine, sturdy, and independent; while the Celts are poor, scattered, broken down by oppression, and confused by a claim based apparently on the rights of "property."

To return to England. The situation in Ireland and the Highlands does not at once make clear the situation in England, but it gives us the clue to the tangle. The landlords, as a class, who, as landlords, produce nothing, are rich, while the labourers, whose toil is the active factor that produces everything, are poor; and there is obviously a connection between these two facts. The man who owns the land lives upon the man who puts it to use. And just as the Turkoman partially cripples his slave, because, though it renders him less efficient, it places him more completely in his power, so the landlord's interest is to partially cripple his slave, that is, impose restrictions on the use of the soil which, though they diminish the total returns to be got from it, yet place the user more completely at his mercy. These restrictions are mainly two. Restrictions in the quantity that shall be put to full effective use, and restrictions in the conditions on which that limited quantity shall be used.

While in Ireland the landlord "takes it out" of the labourer in money, demanding rent for the mere permission to live, and is thus clearly and simply a receiver; in England he "takes it out" of the labourer in work, paying him a fixed sum for his maintenance, called wages, and thus appears to be a giver. The English landlord finds it more profitable (to himself) to start some enterprise on the land and to forbid the labourers to exist at all upon his land, except in limited numbers, and as his hired servants. If he either offered employment to them all or allowed those whom he did not employ to earn a living for themselves at a moderate rent on one part of his land while he carried on his enterprise on another, there would be no competition for the privilege of being employed, and no man would work for him for less than he could make for himself, which would not suit his book; so he only employs some, and either absolutely forbids the others to have any land on any terms, or demands such an extortionate rent for an insecure tenure that it amounts to prohibition; so they drift into the cities, intensifying there the struggle for existence and swelling the tide of poverty. But by this time they have severed their connection with him, and are far away, and so to the casual eye he is not responsible for their poverty. He thus gets rid of one-half of his responsibility.

The other half he gets rid of by letting his land in block to a capitalist farmer, and retiring out of sight altogether. That is, instead of taking it out of the labourer himself, he sells the privilege of taking it out, for a specified period, to the farmer, who is now in his turn the monopolist, the man who (by arrangement with the landlord) has obtained possession of more land than he can personally use for the purpose of preventing other people from using it, except for his profit; so it is his actions we must now follow. He is almost necessarily a harder task-master than the landlord proper, partly because he has had to pay for his privilege a stiff sum which he has got to make good somehow, and partly because he is not the real owner of the land, a man of social position with recognised semi-feudal duties to his dependents, but simply one who has taken the land as a matter of business, and acts, and is expected to act, on strictly commercial principles; so

## LAND NATIONALISATION.

much rent for so much land, and as little rent for as much land as possible, and so much wages for so much work, and as little wages for as much work as possible. All he produces has to be produced by labour, so he has to get it all out of the labourers, but they are expensive, so he employs as few as he can. The fewer he and his class can manage to employ the less will they have to pay to those whom they do employ, for the more there are left out in the cold, the keener will be the struggle for existence among them, and the lower the wages they can be compelled to accept. His interest, in short, is to create this struggle for existence.

Mind, I am not saying that all this is done consciously and deliberately, but it is done, all the same. The labourer, in his eyes (and I am sorry to say in the eyes of too many of our statesmen and economists too), is not a human being with as much right to the opportunity to earn a living as he has, but a mere instrument of production like the teams and implements—an expense, in short, to be minimised to the utmost.

His first step towards reducing the number it will be necessary for him to keep is to lay down as much ground in grass as possible, and this process is going on daily. The greater part of the best land of the country is down in grass already, and more goes down every year. This, the economist says, is because grass is found to be the most productive way of using such land—the way that yields the greatest net increase. That that is not the fact may easily be demonstrated. Suppose that I, a farmer, am in the habit of employing ten labourers at £40 a year each (total £400) to grow crops, and that after deducting rent and all working expenses, I find at the end of the year that I have got back this £400 with 10 per cent profit on it. Then it is clear that the land must be yielding £440 a year net increase; £400 going to the labourers as their share and £40 to me as interest on the wages I have advanced. (I am leaving out of sight for simplicity's sake the interest I make on my other outlay and the profit on my own labour of superintendence.) These two sums, £400 to the labourers and £40 to me represent our respective clear earnings after everything else is paid for. If, now, by putting my land down to grass, and discharging my labourers I can make the land produce £50 increase only but can keep all that £50 to myself (having no labourers to share it with), it is my interest to do so. So that for a paltry increase of £10 a year to myself, ten men and their families are turned adrift and the productiveness of the land reduced from £440 to £50.

And if I hesitate at so doing I have to remember that the land goes to him who offers the highest rent for it, and that the man who can offer most rent is the man who (*ceteris paribus*) least lets sentiment interfere with business, so if I hesitate I may lose my farm. And mark! The more fertile the land is, and the more desirable it is, therefore, in the public interest that it should be cultivated, the more certainly is it my interest *not* to cultivate it, because the more fertile it is, the more certain am I to find something (like grass) which it will produce spontaneously, so to speak, and which I can, therefore keep all to myself, till the landlord takes it from me in increased rent.

But the interest of the landowner is not only in many cases to turn the land from more to less productive use, but often to prevent its being put to any productive use at all.

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When a Highland lord receiving £1,000 a year rent from sheep farmers and crofters is offered £1,200 a year by a southern lord to turn the land into a deer forest, and the farmers and crofters accordingly are swept away, it is said, "This may be hard on them, but it must be good for the country at large, because the land is now bringing in £200 a year more, which is so much added to the national wealth."

There is nothing added to the national wealth, but quite the contrary.

All that has happened is that one rich man has (so to speak) bribed another rich man *with wealth already existing* to prohibit poor people from producing any wealth at all over a given area, in order that the land may be turned into a wilderness for his amusement. There is no more wealth produced either on that land or anywhere else in consequence of this arrangement. It is a mere unproductive, or rather wantonly destructive, bargain between two great men to the ruin of the helpless poor and the contraction of the national industry.

The supposed national gain is a mere transfer of money from one rich man to another. A, who has £1,200 of surplus wealth which he intends to spend on his own enjoyment somehow, hands it over to B to spend on *his* enjoyment, on condition that C, D, E, and the rest of them, shall be turned adrift and all productive industry prohibited over a certain area.

So far from there having been a net gain to the country of £200, there has been a loss of thousands; first of the £1,000 which the farmers and crofters would have produced for rent, and second, of the thousands more they would have produced for their own maintenance, comforts, and improvements.

But sometimes the evicting landlord wants the shooting, not to let, but for his own amusement. Here there is not even the illusory appearance of a gain, and the wanton wickedness of the transaction stands out without disguise. Put it how you like it comes to this, that many poor people are turned out of house and home, and flung upon the world, that one rich man may shoot.

Here, if you will but look—here, in the examples I have given of the injurious effects of land monopoly, is the whole explanation of trade depression, scarcity of employment, and pauperism. The land is being withheld from full productive use, and industry being dried up at the fountain head.

I do not for a moment mean to say that it is necessarily wrong to put down in grass for cattle, or even in heather for game, land that is fit for cultivation.

When as much land is under cultivation as *is wanted*—that is, when all the people of the country have full employment, either in extracting the raw material of wealth from the land or in working up and distributing it—the surplus land (and there will be plenty of it) may be left down in grass or heather, or whatever the occupiers' interest or fancy may suggest. The wrong is in the present power of the land monopolist to withhold from full productive use land that *is wanted*, and so to restrict employment and force down earnings.

It is said that the people who have been turned off the land (the labourers of the midland counties, the farmers and crofters of Scotland) would only have consumed all that they produced, and so would have added nothing to the national wealth.

That is not true, for, where employment is plentiful and wages consequently high, a considerable portion is always saved up or put to uses that do not immediately die

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out. But suppose it were true; so, also, do the landlord and the employer consume their share. What, indeed, do people produce things for but to consume them? Whether they do so a little sooner or a little later makes small difference. The great aim of human labour is not to pile up wealth, but to satisfy human wants, and that only ought to be piled up which is not wanted at present.

But it is said, "the men discharged are set free for other work." True, but, unfortunately, the other work is not set free for the men. On the contrary, the whole field of employment is narrowed, for all productive industry consists either in extracting the raw materials of wealth from the land (as in agriculture and mining), or in working up and distributing those materials (as in manufactures and commerce), and the less there is extracted (from the land) by some, the less must there be for others to work up and distribute. So that my turning those men off the land not only throws those particular people out of employment, but restricts the whole field of employment, and helps to reduce wages all round.

Take two more examples of the interest the owner has in withholding his land from full productive use.

1. *In the case of Minerals.*—There are known deposits of coal, iron, &c, in abundance which cannot be worked simply because the landowner demands such exorbitant royalties that enterprise cannot see its way to a profit, so these resources remain unworked.

But is it not the landlord's clear interest, then, to moderate his demands and so receive some income where he is now receiving none? No, it is not—that is, if he is rich enough to hold on. For if every landlord threw open all his minerals for whatever he could get by free competition, the rise of wages consequent on increased demand for labour, coupled with the fall in coal and iron from increased production, would cut down the *entrepreneur's* profit at both ends, so to bring himself right he would have to offer just so much less royalty, and so all royalties would come down with a run. But the landlord, by trading on the necessities of the people, by withholding the resources of nature, can so intensify the struggle for employment among the poor, and so accentuate the scarcity of minerals, as to force wages down and prices up till the public are compelled to accede to his demand.

Think what tens of thousands of men living with their families in poverty, and only too eager to work, are held back and kept down by this withholding of minerals alone, and not only the actual miners, but the indirect assistants of all sorts—the artisans, traders, carriers—co-operators in their work and ministers to their wants. Full employment, with consequent high wages to all these, would again create a fresh home market and stimulate every branch of industry.

2 *Building Sites.*—All round every town are sites on which people would gladly build; but the demand, great as it is, is not so great as it will be presently. This the owners know, so they hold back, refusing offers that would bring them in much more as interest than they are now receiving as rent for growing cabbages, and so on. Indeed, in many cases the land lies absolutely vacant and idle, but withheld. As a natural consequence we have all the horrors of overcrowding, the brunt of which falls on the poor. The poor are kept wretched in the centre in order that the rich man in the outskirts may make a larger profit which he does nothing to earn.

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These withheld sites are like the hoop-iron round a bale of wool—break the band and the whole mass will expand with elastic force, relieving the pressure at the centre.

But, even if it were not the landowner's real interest to withhold his land, still a fancied interest is as potent as a real one; and it is a fact in human nature that the prospect of sudden and great gain arouses greed even in men not naturally greedy. Over and over again have kindly and moderate-minded men, on hearing that minerals have been found on their land, or that their land is wanted for some great public purpose, have had their imaginations so fired by the glimpse of a golden opportunity as to make a quite preposterous demand, and on finding their demands refused have moderated them perhaps, but in a wholly insufficient degree, and have stuck to their reduced but still excessive demand, not from any cool calculation of expected rise, but simply because their imagination has been so fired that they are convinced that their land is worth much more than it really is.

There is no greater fallacy than this commonly accepted belief, that land once owned, it is the interest of the owner to have it put to the most productive use.

His interest is only to get the most out of it he can for himself; and a small produce which he can keep all to himself, is more enticing than a far larger net produce which he must share with other people in the shape of wages, purchases, &c.

I have not space to show how, in a thousand ways, the self-interest or self-indulgence of the monopolist withholds the land from full productive use, substituting extensive for intensive cultivation in the same way that it substitutes pasture for crops, holding back the land altogether in places, in the hope of forcing up its price; demanding excessive royalties on minerals which industry cannot afford to pay, depopulating whole counties to provide sport for the rich, and turning even industrial inventions into opportunities of exploiting labour.

Machinery, for example, in itself is a blessing, potentially, at least. It is a means whereby the labourer's toil may be lessened or his returns increased, and if his rights to the use of the soil were recognised this blessing would bear its natural fruit, for the labourer would then use machinery himself for his own advantage, not, perhaps, the same machinery exactly that the large farmer uses, but machinery in some shape, in the shape most suited to his needs. I use the word machinery in its widest sense, as representing not only complex contrivances, but ingeniously contrived and better made tools; implements of all sorts; horse, water, and steam power, and every appliance, in short, by which labour may be saved, or made more effective. But unjust laws can turn even blessings into curses, and the land monopolist can take advantage of his monopoly to use machinery to increase the labourer's toil, not to lessen it; to reduce his earnings, not to increase them. For it enables him to do with less men, and so to increase the struggle for employment, and enables him thus to insist on longer hours or lower pay. The farmer especially, when he adopts a labour-saving machine, does not continue to employ the same hands to produce larger results, but simply does what he wants with fewer men. Some of the displaced men, no doubt, find other employments which machinery itself has opened out, but the gain in the new direction does not balance the loss in the old. For the same cause that enabled the farmer and the mineworker (who produce the



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raw material for all the other industries) to do with less hands, enables the manufacturer and the transporter to do with less hands too. The inevitable tendency of machinery, on the whole, is to enable the master to dispense with some of his labour, that, indeed, is the sole, or, at anyrate, the chief reason for which he adopts it.

In the district (in Tasmania) where I come from (and no doubt in all others, more or less) the agricultural population has sensibly declined since the introduction of machinery, and the displaced men have not found other compensating employment, except where the opening out of fresh lands by roads, the discovery of minerals the undertaking of public works, or other such causes, have, to a certain extent, counter-balanced the loss to the labourer by the lessened demand for him in the settled districts. These outer openings have, at best, only balanced a loss to him instead of doubling a gain, as they ought to have done. Turn where you will, the monopoly of the land, the power accorded to the rich, who have the money, to buy up land and use it not as an instrument of production for themselves to use, but as a means of demanding the produce of other people's labour, turns blessings into curses, limits the field of employment, and grinds down the poor.

The landlord does not (as some say, or are supposed to say) get the whole surplus produce of industry. That is palpably, absurdly untrue. But, in order to get what he does get (and he gets a great deal), he keeps land and labour—the two great factors of production—apart, closes the opportunities of industry; hinders the production of wealth, and flings the labourer helpless at the feet of capital, to be exploited by all. He even, as it were, compels the employer to exploit him by artificially producing such a scarcity of investment and employment and intensity of trade competition that the employer is obliged to exploit in order to keep his own head above water.

This artificially-produced scarcity of employment and struggle for existence among the poor amounts virtually to slavery; for the essence of slavery consists in the power of one class to keep another class in subjection, and to appropriate its earnings.

But, it is sometimes asked, if this wrong is so clear and so great, how comes it that the great mass of the best and wisest men are unable to see it?

This question can be best answered by asking another. How comes it that during all the ages of the world's existence the best and wisest men could not till yesterday, you may say—till a bare century ago—he got to see any wrong in owning a fellow creature, in working him under the lash, in appropriating all the fruits of his industry, in violating his most sacred domestic rights, and in buying and selling him like a beast?

Surely, if it took countless ages to get the mass of good and intelligent men to recognise the wrong of slavery in all its naked horror, we need not be surprised if it takes another generation or two to get them to recognise it under a disguise.

It is no use tinkering with a great question of this sort. There is nothing for it but to go straight to the root of the matter. Recognise that the land belongs of right to the nation, and enforce that right. We need not do it with a sudden jerk that will throw the whole social fabric into disorder, nor by violent and revolutionary means, nor with a reckless disregard of rights that have grown up, and moneys that have been invested in all good faith. Do it by degrees, so long as you use reasonable

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expedition, do it, as far as possible, by adaptation and extension of existing machinery, do it with careful inquiry into all claims, and a desire to do justice all round; but begin it at once, and go through with it resolutely, with a clear idea of what you mean to do, and how you mean to do it.

Well, we are met at once with the difficulty of compensation to dispossessed landlords. I am not going to inquire whether all landlords have an equal claim to compensation; those who have invested actual earnings in land, and those who have merely inherited it, those who have used their privileges wisely and justly, according to their lights, and those who have abused them. I shall treat the question as one of practical politics rather than of pure ethics, and explain the two solutions of the difficulty at present before the public, dwelling chiefly on that of the society to which I properly belong.

Mr. George's plan dexterously glides round the difficulty by making the abolition of the evil gradual, and never actually *taking* the land, but only *taxing its value*, higher and higher by degrees, till the landlord is taxed out of existence. By this means there is no appearance of confiscation at any time; for, up to the point at which the landlord is made to pay as much in proportion to his wealth as those do who are not landlords, there has been nothing more than a gradual and equitable adjustment of taxation, and, by the time it begins to pass this point, a new generation of landowners will be coming into existence, who can none of them claim to have bought their land, but have only come into possession of an inheritance which they will have been brought up to regard as a wrongful inheritance; as an antiquated and oppressive privilege (like those of the old French noblesse), to which there can be no moral claim, and which has been condemned by common consent to gradual extinction. They will, therefore, suffer no disappointment, realise no sense of loss, but grow up under the cheerful consciousness that they have got to earn their own living like other people, but in a world where everyone has now a fair field, and labour is assured of its natural reward.

From the first turn of the screw it begins to be expensive to keep land unused or insufficiently used. Country landlords withholding farms because the rents offered are not high enough to please them; owners of vacant town or suburban lots in no hurry to build, or of minerals which remain unworked because the royalties demanded are too high, all these will find themselves subjected to a gentle pressure. Those who are already in difficulties will give way almost immediately, and so many farms, town lots, and withheld minerals will come into use, opening out fresh fields for work and relieving the pressure of competition for employment. Those landlords who have been holding back for a rise will find a fall instead, and many will take fright and come to terms at once. The needy yield first, and the timid follow. All this means not only a fall of rents, but a rise of wages, for farms, building sites, and mineral deposits cannot be brought into use without producing an increased demand for labour. Another turn of the screw and more needy monopolists give way, more land is forced into use, more capital finds investment, and more labourers are wanted. There is a stir like the buzz in an awakening hive. Men begin to realise that a silent, peaceful, gradual, but tremendous revolution is in progress. Rents are falling, wages are rising. The classes that live upon the labour of others

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find their power and influence slipping from them, those who live by their own labour become conscious of growing strength and catch glimpses of a splendid future. There is now work for all; work crying out for hands, not hands crying out for work, capitalists bidding for labourers, not labourers craving for employment. When matters reach this pass the dawn has broken and the day is at hand. Still this process will take time that to impatient spirits will seem long, and to many it smacks of confiscation.

Well, there is another method before us, that of the Land Nationalisation Society, with Dr. Wallace at its head. It lacks the beautiful simplicity of George's plan, but is more direct in its action. It takes the land instead of taxing it, but it gives compensation. As to its principles, the society, like the league, declares that this earth belongs to the human race, not to the landlords, that it is for the use of all, not for the aggrandisement of the few; and that its legitimate use is as an instrument of production, not as a means of extortion. But it goes beyond these general statements, and puts forward this particular proposition:—*That every man born into the world has an inherent right of access to the opportunities which nature provides, and, therefore, has a right to the use, if he wishes it, of as much land as he (and his family) can personally use, and whereon to make himself a home that, as a home, shall be his own, wherein no man may disturb him so long as he chooses to stay, and so long as he fulfils his duty to the State, the first of which duties will be the payment to the State of the annual value of the land he thus occupies to the exclusion of other people.*

It has been objected that population may, in course of time, so increase that no fresh claimant for land could find room without displacing or squeezing someone else, and so the right we claim become impracticable.

Well, there is no right that, under some circumstances, may not become impracticable.

But a state of things, in which there will not be land enough in limited but amply sufficient quantity for all who are likely to want it, in the British Isles is about as far off as the next glacial epoch—at any rate, a great deal too far off for us to concern ourselves about at present. A sensible man will not embarrass a pressing and practical question with such fanciful difficulties, and when the reader sees what it is we actually propose, and that it is a mere extension of a recent Act of Parliament, he will see that there is no difficulty whatever in securing what we demand.

A man with the world thus thrown open to him is a free man; free to choose between working for himself and working for hire, instead of, as at present, a slave bound to sell himself to some master or other for whatever terms he can get in an overcrowded market, and often unable to find any master to take him upon any terms. Our society holds that this claim goes to the root of the matter; that it is the denial of this inherent right to the use of the land that has created all our industrial difficulties, checked the development of our natural resources, restricted the whole field of employment, robbed labour of its just reward, and produced nearly all the destitution and misery we see around us.

We propose no violent social revolution; no sudden or forcible disturbance of existing industries; no violation of legitimate rights. We do not even declare any

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really new principles. We propose only to take principles already recognised by law and embodied in Acts of Parliament. The Irish Land Act, the Crofters' Act, the Agricultural Holdings Act, the Allotment Act, contain the substance of all we ask.

In the Irish Act it is recognised that rent is not the result of a free contract undertaken on equal terms, but that the landlord has a power of extortion of which he is not to be allowed to take advantage. It declares that excessive rents shall be cut down, notwithstanding that the tenant agreed to pay them and that others in their eagerness for possession of the land are ready to agree to them; that the right of the occupier to live in decent comfort on the fruits of his own labour comes before the right of the landlord to squeeze all he can out of him; that once in possession he is not to be disturbed except for non-payment of rent; and that he has a right to the unexhausted value of his improvements.

In the Crofters' Act two further principles are admitted; that not only shall excessive rents be forbidden in the future, but arrears of excessive rents in the past shall be remitted, and that not only is the occupier not to be disturbed in the possession of what he already holds, but that if the holding is not large enough to maintain him the landlord shall enlarge it.\*

And in the Allotments Act it is declared that local bodies shall have power compulsorily to acquire land and let it out to the labourer. On what grounds can all these principles be justified but on our grounds? That this earth is for the use of all, not for the aggrandisement of the few, that the right of every man to work and to enjoy the fruits of his work comes before the right of a landlord to charge him for permission to work, or of an employer to make a profit out of his work; and that since all industry rests ultimately on the land, since production can consist only either in extracting the raw materials of wealth from the land, or in working up and distributing those materials, therefore the land must be thrown open for use.

The Allotments Act is the one we build upon. That goes to the root of the matter. The Irish, the Scotch, and the Agricultural Holdings Acts deal only with the rights of the existing tenant as against the landlord, which means too often merely the rights of one monopolist as against another. They treat of the conflict between the two people who have already, between them, got possession of the land, and both of whom want to keep everybody else off it. But the Allotments Act recognises for the first time the right of the labourer, of the man who at present has no land, but who ought to have it, and who is suffering undeserved poverty for the want of it.

But the Allotments Act is a failure! Not a single acre, it is said, has been applied for by local bodies under that Act!\* Just so. It was meant to be a failure. It was passed, reluctantly, by a Landlord-Parliament, who hardly dared refuse to pass it, but who took care to quietly cut its throat in passing it; who took care to impose so many restrictions, to pile up such excessive costs, and to require such complicated proceedings, as practically to prohibit what it pretended to grant. But in passing the Act they recognised the principle of the Act; and there is no going back on that. Henceforth it is admitted that the labourer has a claim to use the land and that local bodies may compulsorily acquire it on his behalf. That is enough. That is

\* Written in August, 1880.

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the lever with which if we do but join together and press we can overthrow and break up the whole accursed system of land monopoly. What we want now, first, is a single comprehensive Act that shall embody all the principles of the aforementioned Acts, that shall make its provisions apply to the whole kingdom, and not to this or that part of it only, and that it shall be a reality and not a sham, and shall be honestly constructed to work—not dishonestly constructed to break down.

It will be seen that in the scheme we propose there is no State *management* of the land, or interference with the occupier whatever. The occupier is left free to manage his affairs absolutely as he pleases, so long as he does not interfere with the rights of others. The duty of the State in regard to the land is simply to secure the equal rights of all.

1. To see that a few do not monopolise the whole, but that every man's right to the opportunity to earn a living direct from nature is recognised and enforced.

2. To secure to the State the unearned increment.

## OUR PROPOSALS.

As a first step, then, we propose —

That local bodies, popularly elected, be established throughout the country,

With power to acquire land compulsorily, from time to time, on behalf of the State for small holdings, in such quantities as the number and kinds of applications for it generally may indicate.

Such lands to be taken over absolutely, not merely rented.

Fair compensation being given to the landlord, payable in State bonds, transferable.

The land never to be re-alienated, but to be let out

In limited areas,

With fixity of tenure,

And right to unexhausted value of improvements, if occupier wishes to retire, at reasonable rents.

To be periodically revised, and raised or lowered according as the land, apart from improvements, may have risen or fallen in value

Occupiers to hold always direct from the board.

And all mineral rights reserved to the State.

*Comments on Proposals.*

(A) "*Popularly elected*," and, say, annually re-elected (in whole, or in part by rotation); *bound* to take action on receipt of a specified number of *bonâ fide* applications (a small fee, say, being demanded in proof of *bonâ fides*, deductible afterwards from the rent); under the eye and influence of a whole population directly and intensely interested in its honest and efficient administration.

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- (b) "*Fair Compensation.*"—Compensation in the strict sense of the word; that is, simple recompense for actual loss, and will mean, generally, "agricultural" or wholesale value—what the landlord was receiving from the farmer.

Where I now write, on the Norfolk Coast, there are some allotments on poor sandy soil for which, I suppose, no farmer would dream of offering more than 15s. an acre, which the landlord lets out in dribbles of ten rods to the labourer at the extortionate rate of £6 an acre, *with no security of tenure*. Any holder may be turned off at a month's notice without compensation. This is simple legalised robbery and oppression. The lord of many acres sees a chance of squeezing the poor man—and he squeezes him with a vengeance. The board would make short work of such a claim as this.

- (c) "*In Limited Areas.*"—The object is to secure to every man what we hold to be his natural right, the right to a spot of ground whereon to make himself a home, and the right of access to natural opportunities, so that he shall be free to choose between winning his livelihood from nature direct by labour on his own account, or hire himself out to an employer as suits him best, and all the land that is necessary to secure this is just so much, on an estimate, as he can cultivate by his own labour and that of his family. We are under no obligation to find land for him to employ other people under him.

- (d) "*With Fixity of Tenure.*"—This is for small holdings not only reasonable and just, but necessary. For the small holding system is necessarily intensive. It implies the concentration of labour and attention and the massing of improvements (dwelling, sheds, fruit trees, &c.) on a small area. But no man will think of applying all his labour and savings in this way without assurance that he shall be left undisturbed to enjoy the fruits, some of which (as with fruit trees) will be long before they begin to come at all, and others (as with dwellings), though the enjoyment begins at once, yet must be continuous in duration to justify the outlay. A long lease and compensation at the end is the least that should be given. But why should the lease have any termination at all? Why should we ever wish to dispossess a man who has invested his labour and savings in the land, and is making good use of it, and has come to feel a pride in, and an affection for, it as his home? So long, of course, as he fulfils his duty to the State—that is, so long as he pays his rent,—obeys the laws, and does not make himself a nuisance to his neighbours. Peaceable possession of the land he uses seems to us a man's natural right, so long as he does not occupy more than his fair share of the national inheritance, and pays his dues regularly.

- (e) "*Right to Improvements.*"—This does not mean that if the occupier wishes to retire the State is bound to take his improvements off his hands, but only that if the State does take them it shall pay for them. If, as is most likely, the State does not want to take them, the occupier shall have a right to sell his right of occupancy, and so realise their value for himself.

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- (r) "*Reasonable Rents.*"—If the board determine to let the land at a fixed price, it must ask enough to meet the compensation, with a surplus over to cover costs and risks, and to provide a certain amount of revenue. Thus, if it takes a certain tract at its agricultural value of, say, 30s. an acre (and for which the landlord would generally ask the labourer £3 or £4 without security of tenure), it will charge, say, £2, an amount the applicant will gladly pay for a tenure equivalent to practical ownership.

Some think the rents should be fixed by competition. Well, that is, no doubt, the fairest way for all parties, and will probably be the method ultimately adopted, but since the board has to provide as many lots of, say, three different classes, building lots, allotments proper, and small farms, and each applicant will want land of one class, and no other, but will not very much care which lot of that class he gets, one hardly sees how any effective competition is to come in, at first, at any rate. But that is a matter that can be left to the boards.

Some, again, think that competition would run rents up even higher than they are now, and make matters worse than ever. That would be so, no doubt, if the conditions remained as they are now, but the conditions would be completely changed. At present, lands are forced up to an unnatural value (even now, despite the fall of land values) by the landlords holding back the land, and so creating an artificial scarcity.

For example, what enables the landlord aforesaid to extort £6 an acre from the labourer for the mere permission to utilise the soil is simply the fact that he withholds the land except on those terms. He says, in effect, "Give me all I demand or the land shall be idle," that is, shall go on simply carrying its natural crop of scanty grass and worthless weeds. But if the State steps in and says "No! The land is for use and must be used," and compels him to throw it open, what would it fetch by competition? Say there are 50 applicants and he is compelled to offer 50 lots—that would be a lot apiece—what is there to compete about? There will be nothing to compete for but the differential value, which is hardly worth mentioning. The lots are all alike, the only difference is in the situation. He would get perhaps 2s. 6d. for the lots nearest the town, and nothing at all for the lots farthest off. So when you force open for small holdings all over the country as much as is wanted for small holdings there will be no fear of "cut-throat" competition. The difficulty will be to get up any competition at all. You will have to fix an upset price.

- (c) "*Mineral Rights.*"—The fixity of his holding does not give the occupier the right to claim a coalmine subsequently discovered under it. The State (or the Board) will dispose of the right to develop minerals on such terms as it may think best, giving the disturbed occupier full compensation for his disturbance and loss.

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- (H) *Latitude to the Boards.*—We propose, while binding the Boards rigidly to the broad principles laid down in the proposals, to allow them wide latitude in the application. Conditions suitable to one locality would not be applicable to another, and the liberty to each Board to try its own methods at its own risk would afford the best opportunity for the rapid perfecting of the system.
- (I) The Board should have power to take land not only for small holdings but for any legitimate public purpose (for roads, for schools, for plantations, &c.), and to make by-laws for re-arranging boundaries, giving rights of exit for drainage, and other such matters.

*"Payable in State Bonds."*—We do not expect to carry that point for some time to come, but we attach great importance to it. Moreover (but here I am speaking for myself and have no special authority from the Society), I should have stamped across the bonds the heading "Land Values," and in handing them over to the dispossessed landlord should say, in effect, "Notice that, and understand that there is a large and yearly increasing party who hold that land values, as such, should be taxed. You have to stand your chance of that. Observe, that we do you no wrong, we put you in no worse position than you were in before. If the party referred to fail to carry their point, and land values are not taxed, then your bonds will not be taxed. If they succeed and land values are taxed, then your bonds will be taxed. But you will have to pay no more on your bonds than you would have had to pay on your land if we had left you in possession of it. You are in the same position as to taxation either way.

- x) *Our system self-supporting.*—It will cost the State nothing, but, on the contrary, at once begin to bring in a local revenue. The land is taken only as it is wanted, and in such quantities as are wanted, that is, as the applications indicate. The landlord does not step off till the State tenant is ready to step on. By the time there is £1 due to the landlord as compensation there is 30s. (or so) due from the tenant as rent to meet it and leave a surplus.

No advances of capital are asked for. We want our rights only, not charity or assistance, the right to work for ourselves and to keep the profits, and take the risks of our work. Those only will apply for land who have the means to make a beginning on it, that is, those who have got (or can get) the tools and the prospect of earning a living somewhere until their returns come in. The rising rate of wages, due to increased openings of employment, together with the stimulus of fresh hope and awakened ambition, will rapidly multiply the numbers of the applicants, and, by diminishing the pressure of competition for employment, still further raise wages and improve the condition of those who do not apply.



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## THREE CLASSES OF APPLICANTS.

Men want land from all sorts of motives, for all sorts of purposes, in all kinds of situations, and in very different quantities, but it will be found that however various the applications, they may all be promptly resolvable into three classes, building lots, allotments, and small farms.

- (A) *Building lots*.—These will be applied for by thousands who have no wish to change their occupation or add to their work, but who want simply a home of their own. Such lots will be of small area, but will have to be close to the towns or other centres where the men work. The result of the creation of this class will be, to the applicants themselves, a *home of their own*, to occupiers of houses generally, a reduction of house-rent, due to the multiplication of houses, and to the labouring class generally, an increased demand for labour, due to the building of the houses.
- (B) *Allotments*.—That is, pieces of land applied for by those who also have no wish to change their occupation, and who also want a home, but who *do* want to add to their work by devoting their spare hours and off days to growing food for their families, and supplying extra comforts by the sale of surplus produce. Such lots will be larger, and will have to be scattered in groups among the farms and factories where the men find work.
- (C) *Small farms* required by men acquainted with agriculture, and who have saved enough capital to start independently, proposing to live solely or chiefly by their land.

The Board, having the applications before them stating the area required and purpose generally for which it is required, will at once be able to sort them into their respective classes and act accordingly, taking so much near the town for the building lots, which, of course, will have to be laid out under municipal regulations, and the other lots in such localities as may seem most suitable. They will not, of course, meddle with private premises nor with lands highly improved, but will take vacant lots, grass lands, game preserves, or whatever is being put to least effective use and seems suited for the purpose.

We may fairly expect them to exercise some common sense in the selection. The costs, on the one hand, they would have to pay for highly-improved land (which would be no better for their purpose generally than less-improved land), and the loudly-expressed dissatisfaction of their constituents if they took worthless or unsuitable land would make them pretty careful. The relative suitability of all the properties about would be well-known and eagerly discussed by the whole neighbourhood, and public opinion would soon narrow down the choice to one or two properties, when, if the Board were disinclined to make invidious distinctions, they could decide finally by lot.

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It is said that the labourer could not use the land without "capital," that is, without more money or goods than he usually possesses. Experience has shown over and over again that he can. Not only does the ordinary Warwickshire labourer grow on his allotments far heavier crops than the farmer alongside, and at much less cost, but in Ireland and in the Highlands, in the most poverty stricken parts of the whole kingdom, the trouble has always been not that the labourer could not win a living from even the barrenest soil, but that the landlord wrested from him all he produced in rent, not that he could not multiply improvements, but that the landlord robbed him of them when made. Repeatedly has he removed the rocks from the stony soil, reclaimed the barren bog, or heath, and enriched it with seaweed carried up on women's backs. Poor and wretched he was, no doubt. How could he be otherwise under such a system; under a landlord who had power to wring from him not only all he produced from the land, but even the wages he earned elsewhere — at the fishing or the distant harvests. And all this, mind, not in return for capital advanced or service rendered of any sort, but for the mere permission to live by his own labour on the face of the earth. And if the poor Celt can, without capital, and under such a system of legalised robbery and oppression, yet maintain himself and rear up stalwart sons and daughters on his remote, contracted, and barren patch, what could not the English labourer do on the rich lands we should force open for him close to the best markets in the world?

But suppose he could not without "capital" utilise the land; still there are tens of thousands of workers who have saved some little capital, artisans, small dealers, petty officials, hardworking men of all sorts, many already acquainted with the simple processes of spade husbandry, and all able to learn quickly. Multitudes of these at once could, and eagerly would, take up small farm holdings on the easy terms and sure tenure we should offer, and would at once commence to raise the many millions' worth of small products which we now import, but which could be just as easily produced at home. Each of these, as he stepped out of the struggling ranks, would leave a gap, and so ease the pressure among those who remained behind, and cause a perceptible rise in their wages.

But this rise of wages, slight though it might be at first, would enable others to begin saving too, and the new hope and prospect of independence would fire their ambition and give them fresh motive to save. A stream of applicants would begin to flow in an ever-increasing volume to the land, every fresh applicant helping to ease the pressure behind and to improve the condition of those who remained in the ranks, until their improving condition began to lessen the motive for leaving, and the stream began to slacken.

But what could they all find to produce? Well, I have just seen some statistics (taken from "Whitaker's Almanac" for 1887), and the list of imports of produce which the British smallholder could readily produce came to between seventy and eighty millions in value; and this list made no mention of a vast number of items equally suited for home production which would bring the value, I suppose, well up to one hundred millions. Here, I submit, is a pretty good opening. And if this enormous value comes in while the labouring class is so poorly paid that the labourer can afford to buy little more than actual necessaries, what would it be when he is

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better paid, and able to become a customer himself to a much greater extent? When one considers that the large farmer produces little else than wheat and meat (the oats, hay, turnips, &c., going mainly to feed the working teams and fatten the meat), that wheat and meat are, after all, only two items out of the multitude of things producible from the soil, and that the higher earnings rise in consequence of fresh natural resources thrown open and competition for hired employment diminished, the more of a consumer the labourer himself will become, we shall see that the openings for production are practically boundless.

No one dreams, of course, of placing every labourer on the land and setting the whole population to grow cabbages. All that is sought is to force open the locked up resources of the land, and to make the labourer a free man; free to choose between winning his livelihood from nature direct, or hiring himself out to an employer as suits him best, instead of being as at present a serf, bound to sell himself to *some* master in an overcrowded labour-market for whatever he can get.

But the hope of the future, as opened out by our proposals, does not rest mainly on the independent small farms, that is but a secondary matter. It is through the allotment, not through the small farm, that the emancipation of labour will be worked out. The word allotment has different meanings, but what I mean by it here is a piece of land which the occupier proposes to use *in addition to*, not *instead of*, his usual calling, on which he means to work only in his spare hours and off days, the looking after being left a good deal to the wife; but which, as with the houselot and small farm, he is to be left absolutely free to build upon, improve, and utilise in whatever way he likes and hold undisturbed so long as he pays his periodically revisable rent, a rent which will gradually merge into what the Restoration League calls the single tax.

For every ten men with some capital who take small farms there will be ten times ten and more, with or without capital, who will take allotments. It needs no capital to do this. The Warwickshire allotment labourers and others have proved this, if proof were needed. All the allotment holder wants, *to begin with*, is a spade, which his first week's earnings will procure him. By the time his ground is dug and seed time comes he will have earned enough to buy his seed, a hoe or two, and so on. Step by step he will acquire the few simple things he wants. His first sown crop will be growing while he is putting in the late ones, and some (house vegetables, &c) will be yielding some return long before others are fit to gather. Figs, poultry, one thing after another, will be wanted in due course, but not all at once. Supposing him to begin in good time, and to go industriously to work, by the time the year is out, he will have his next twelve months' supplies of food secured.

## A HOME.

But the first thing he will want will be a home, a dwelling of some sort that, however humble, however inconvenient and defective just at first, shall be *his own*. Of course, he will want it on his land. Well, there are two ways for him to get it. Those who have saved some little capital will, partly with that, and partly on the

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security of their crops and improvements, at once obtain through the building societies a small substantial cottage, which they can enlarge hereafter. Those who have no capital will do as we do in the colonies, that is, will make the best kind of dwelling they can—rough and temporary, perhaps—out of whatever materials come to hand. Many a man of gentle birth and scholarly attainments has lived contentedly in the bush for months, and even years, in a bark or log hut, and what contents an English gentleman will probably satisfy an English labourer, at any rate, till he can afford a better. You have no primeval forest in England to yield bark and logs; but we do not use bark and logs because they are best, but because they are the easiest got. When we can't get them we use other materials—stones, turf, wattle, and dab—just the materials that you can find here, one or other of them everywhere. These, with a few spars, which will cost but little, and a thatched roof, make as snug a dwelling as one could wish (more sanitary than many a pretentious mansion), as easily kept clean as any other dwelling, and with a few creepers over it, far more picturesque than your detestable square brick cottages.

Your lordly squire snorts his disapproval of such dwellings as I have suggested, and says he will have no "pigstyes" on his place, but we shall not ask for his permission, or care for his approval. I have lived comfortably and enjoyed the best of health in just such a "pigstye" of rough paling. All things must have a beginning, and a man can live in a hut till he can afford a house, just as he can ride in a cart till he can afford a carriage.

But with a home of his own, free of house rent for the rest of his life, and twelve months' supply of food secured in advance, in what position will the labourer stand then? He will be a free man. He will meet his employer face to face, not upon hostile, but upon equal terms, not craving work as a boon, but offering to perform it on such terms as will suit both parties.

I have seen in Cheshire cotton factories scattered about in rural districts with green fields up to the doors, so to speak. Think of the difference to these factory hands if these half-used, untilled fields were promptly parcelled out for homesteads for the men, whose day finishes at 5-30. Work, with fresh sets of muscles, in the open air, of an interesting nature, and on their own account, would be a positive invigorating relief after their long dull, sedentary hours indoors. And I have seen in these coast towns fishermen standing idle about when the weather, or other circumstances, interfered with their usual calling, with nothing for them to do, while great stretches of unused land lay all around, and up almost to their cottage doors. How long would it be, if our proposals were carried, before each of these men would have a home of his own, twelve months' supplies in advance, and the certainty of useful occupation of some sort at home when the fishing was not open to him or was not productive? Soon the labourer would be in a position to withdraw a day or a week every now and again from his hired employment or usual business in addition to his spare hours, and later on to do nearly all the hard work of his holding in these stolen days, leaving his evenings for that recreation and social enjoyment which are his natural birthright.

But, it is said, his employer could not allow this; it would leave his machinery to stand idle. Well, the world was not created only to keep machinery going. The

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great purpose of industrial endeavour is not to keep up large profits on capital, or bring down prices of goods; to make large incomes grow larger or go further, but to make human beings generally, and especially those who do all the hard work, prosperous and happy. The labourer wants better pay, a larger share of the wealth which he creates, but before even better pay, he wants shorter hours, some respite from incessant toil at the command of others and for the enrichment of others, some leisure for amusement, for self-improvement, for home joys, as well as for useful work on his own account in and round his home. So he will insist on, and obtain, not only an off day now and again but shorter hours every day. He will say to his employer, "Your machinery already stands idle 12 hours out of the 24, it will now have to stand idle 14 or 16, or more if need be, or you can get relays. We have ourselves and our families to think of before your machinery or your pocket. With his *home rent free* and his supplies in advance, with the field of employment opening out on all sides, will he consent to go on working 10, 12, or 15 hours a day (as some have to do), wearing out his heart and body with aimless toil—aimless as far as he is concerned? Scarcely. And with every spare hour taken in the evening, and every off day taken in the year, he will not only be increasing the comforts of his home, but also be strengthening himself in his citadel. He will be becoming less dependent on his employer, and his employer more dependent upon him.

Of course, there is a limit to the rise of wages; in the productiveness of labour. The labourer cannot earn more than his labour produces. Only we are not too hastily to conclude that this limit has been reached merely because a further increase of wages would at *present price of goods* leave no profit to the employer.

So far I have represented the labourer and the employer as two hostile parties, one trying to force up wages at the expense of profit and the other trying to force up profit at the expense of wages, partly because under present conditions that is unhappily only too generally the case, and partly to bring out in full relief the strength of the position which the labourer will hold under the new conditions which we are striving to bring about.

But, in truth, under these new conditions there will be no hostile attitude, no threat of war. The era of conflict will pass away, and strikes, with all their miseries and privations, their waste and loss, their bitter feelings and revengeful memories, will become the traditions of a barbarous and past age.

For, as the field of labour widens out and opportunities multiply, as monopolies shrivel up, as the power of one class to levy toll upon the earnings of another disappears, the earnings of the worker will approximate more and more to the full value of the product, and wages will come to be determined naturally and spontaneously by the productiveness of labour instead of by the scramble for employment in any artificially contracted labour market.

The labourer, better paid than he has ever been before, and recognising that the tide of events is with him, will be in no hurry to force matters and to court privation and possible disaster by a needless war.

He will keep quietly at his accustomed work till a better opening presents itself. When it does, he will go to his employer in a friendly way and say, "Sir, where you now pay me £1, I can earn 25s. elsewhere. If you can give me that 25s. well and

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good, I will cheerfully stay on with you; but if you cannot, then you must see that it is to the general interest, as well as to my own, that I should follow that more productive line."

The employer will recognise at once the reasonableness of this demand, and that there is no faintest suggestion of hostility or extortion about it. He will, therefore, yield the advance at once if the nature of his business will permit it, and, if not, he will realise that he is embarked in a failing industry, and will withdraw his capital as best he may to seek some fresh investment.

## THE TWO TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS.

We shall have, then, scattered over the country, two distinct types of agricultural producers; the capitalist farmer with his teams and implements, machinery, and money power, producing, as at present, chiefly grain and meat; and the cottar with his simpler appliances, but more intensive culture, producing vegetables, fruit, poultry, rabbits, milk, and other "small produce." Each class will be the natural complement of the other. The cottar will find beside him the hired employment on which he will still chiefly depend, and the teams and appliances he must occasionally engage; while the farmer will find, also beside him, a community of labourers less dependent on him but more dependable because more attached to the soil, and bound to him by community of interest; for each wants exactly what the other can supply, and, standing on equal terms, they can come to friendly arrangement as other equals do. The farmer cannot count on keeping any one man the whole year round, but he can always count on getting *soms* man, for there will be more of them, and more bound to the neighbourhood, and a certain number always available at the critical seasons. For the critical seasons of each fall at different times, and so do not clash. The farmer's grain sowing is all over before the cottar's potato planting and root sowing begins, and the grain harvest is over before the potato and root harvest begins.

The tendency of the age is to the differentiation of industry. Grain, which can be put in, harvested, and prepared almost entirely by machinery, which is equally good for use whether the produce of a fine or a poor crop, and which will bear long storage and rough usage, is becoming more and more of the nature of a manufacture to be carried on on a large scale, and by machinery; while the "small produce" which requires constant and careful attention, which must be good of its kind to be worth anything, and must be used promptly when ready, is becoming more and more the speciality of the small holder, and is therefore falling into the hands of the foreigner whose laws and customs encourage small holdings, but which could be produced just as well at home if the land was thrown open to the people, and the railway rates equalised.

Many object that the small holder could not compete with the large farmer even if he had the land. The danger, if there were any, would be the other way; for the experiment is being tried under our eyes. On the Rev. W. Tuckwell's allotments the labourer grows wheat (which I consider least suited for small holdings) at an

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average rate of 40 bushels to the acre, as against the neighbouring farmer's average of 24 bushels. But observe, the labourer's 40 bushels (after deducting seed) is *all profit*, while only that part is profit of the farmer's 24 which remains after wages have been deducted.

But, in point of fact, there would be, as we have seen, no competition any more than between a grocer and a butcher setting up shop in the same street, for they deal in different goods. And though there may be some few goods, such as bacon, which either the butcher or the grocer may sell, so each may go on selling it, or one give up to the other, yet both go on merrily on their own general lines, so there may be some products, such as wheat for personal consumption, which both producers may go on growing, or the small holder give up to the farmer, and yet both pursue their general independent lines.

But you cannot call into existence like this a fresh army of agricultural producers without at the same time calling into existence another army of non-agricultural producers—builders, tailors, smiths, carpenters, carriers, dealers, indirect assistants of all sorts—to supply their wants, and these will again become customers as well as assistants. Given agriculture; manufacturers and commerce follow as a natural consequence. Agriculture is the basis of civilisation, and the broader the basis, the higher, the firmer, the grander the pyramid you can erect upon it. And yet the landlord, with the policeman and the soldier at his back, has been deliberately narrowing that basis, saying to those who would broaden it and build upon it—“Go! It does not pay me to let you live.”

As a result of the enormously increased home production of food you will save, first, the millions you now spend in importing food; for the newly-produced food will not be instead of the manufactured goods with which you formerly purchased it, but in addition to them. For (putting aside the spare hours in which so large a part of it will be raised, as a mere temporary phase of the movement, which will cease as soon as the labourer has so improved and strengthened his position as to be able to insist upon more leisure instead of more work) the fact is that the work will be done by the great army of what are now the unemployed and the irregularly and inefficiently employed; by those who can now get no work; by those who only get work irregularly, by those who now live in comfortable idleness, but will then have to work, by those who work unproductively, as flunkies, gamekeepers, ministers to idle show or luxury generally; by those who work at absurd employments, as when stalwart men are measuring out ribbons or groceries behind counters, work which hungry women driven into wretchedness or sin by poverty, or fretting for want of useful work would gladly do, and do as well. It will be done, moreover, by men who, working for *themselves* at last, and fired with new hope and energy, will be working to better purpose; and it will be done in great part on land which (now withheld by monopoly, because it is so fertile, the fat pasture lands) will yield greater increase to given labour.

And, again, this supersession of foreign by home-grown food will mean two things. It will not mean the loss of so much foreign trade. It will mean that the exports with which we formerly purchased our food will be set free to purchase other things which we cannot produce at home, or not to such advantage; and it will mean that

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the labourer, whose poverty hitherto allowed him to buy little beyond bare necessities, will be now well off, and will have become a customer for manufactured goods himself. It will mean, in short, the creation, at a single stroke, of increased home production and an increased home market. Further, it means more useful production, and more stable markets; less of costly luxury and idle service, and more of solid comforts and real service; less of fancy goods liable to the perturbations of sudden change of fashion, more of goods that are always wanted, and therefore always in demand.

With the land thrown open for full use, the soil offering itself for tillage on the one hand, employers offering wages on the other, the tens of thousands who have been driven from the country into the overcrowded cities will begin to flow back into the country, which means a double benefit to the workers who remain in the cities, it means lessened competition for employment, and therefore higher wages, and it means lessened competition for lodging, and therefore better accommodation at less rent. All your difficulties about the housing of the poor and the relief of the starving will be settled for you by spontaneous process. The people will get decent housing at fair prices, and will not accept bad housing at any price, and the vast endowments and donations of charity being no longer wanted to relieve the able-bodied, will provide abundantly for the worn-out and broken-down. The emancipation of labour will have come at last, for with the barriers of monopoly broken down and the boundless resources of nature thrown open for use the field of employment is absolutely limitless. Land, labour, and instruments are all that are wanted, and all are there. The land cries out to be tilled, the people are crying out to till it, the instruments of production abound all around us, in private hands, in the shops and stores, in process of manufacture daily. Where they are wanted they will be produced as the first step, and so long as a human want remains unsatisfied there is work to do.

The power of capital over labour consists solely in two things—in the pressing necessities of the employed in the foreground, and in the army of the unemployed in the background, unemployed because employment is arbitrarily closed to them. The labourer must work long weary hours for inadequate pay, producing wealth for others instead of for himself, because, if he dare complain, the employer can say "go," knowing that he has but to raise a finger and hundreds stand ready, eager to rush into the vacant place. But how will it be when the army of the unemployed has vanished, when no lamishing crowds stand eager to rush into the vacant place, grateful to secure it on any terms? When, on the contrary, capital finds itself confronted by labour standing in its serried ranks, provisioned and prepared? Will the employer be in a hurry to say "go," then? The labourer will be quite ready to go of his own accord. It is the employer who will have to offer inducements to make him stay. With good earnings in his pocket, with food supply in advance (or the certainty of finding it), with a home of his own, the labourer will be better prepared to stand siege than he. For though the employer has, generally (not always), his money reserve to stand upon, still, without labour, he can only consume, not increase his store, and meanwhile, his machinery rusts idly, while the labourer not only has his present supplies, but the land and his labour to go on producing more.



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Few realise how small a portion of the year's labour is required to produce the year's supply of food, and how much smaller still it might be, and is yearly becoming, as knowledge increases, appliances are multiplied, and the subdivision and organisation of labour is improved. It would be difficult, almost impossible, to get any really approximate estimate of the number of people engaged the year round in producing the food supply of the nation, for many are really contributing to it who apparently are not, and many are not really contributing to it who apparently are. But we can get some general, though indistinct, idea of it by seeing how vast a proportion of the people are clearly not contributing to it at all. There are thousands upon thousands who consume only, producing absolutely nothing, the men of wealth and leisure, with all their servants and dependents, the army, navy, police, and Government officials of all kinds, the thieves, tramps, and paupers, the young, the old, the sick, the crippled; the numbers who are producing things really useful but not food, the numbers more who are producing things or performing services of no real utility at all. Yet, notwithstanding all this, there is always food in abundance and to spare, to feed sporting dogs, horses, and pheasants, to use up in distillation and manufactures. The few who starve to death, and the many who, less fortunate, starve daily without dying, do not starve because the food is not there, but because they have not the money to buy it. They starve from underpay. They starve from injustice. They starve through that accursed system that empowers the rich to buy up the natural facilities of labour, and charge the poor, in goods or services, for the permission to live by their own work. They do not exactly do it on purpose. Like another class, mentioned in history, "they know not what they do," so we hope they may be forgiven. They are (multitudes of them) honest, kindhearted, conscientious folk who think the whole thing the working of a natural law which there is no evading. They give away in charity or good works a part, sometimes a rather handsome part, of what they have (unwittingly) extorted from the poor. The land monopolist, who is at the bottom of the whole business, really thinks he is putting the land to the most productive use when he clears off a whole agricultural population and puts it all down to grass. He sees that it leaves a greater profit to *him*, and he has been taught that *his* profit is the only profit to be considered, the only profit that really is profit, all other profits being really expenses—"costs of production." It is as if the top brick of a pyramid thought himself the whole pyramid, and the rest of the structure mere foundation work to support him.

## FOREIGN COMPETITION.

BUT the foreigner! How is British industry at high wages to compete with foreign industry at low wages? Here you have to distinguish between industry as a whole and industry in a particular department. Wages cannot rise above the point at which it is profitable to employ labour. If wages generally are high it must be because enterprise is so profitable that employers can afford to pay high wages, and employment so abundant that they cannot get the labourers except on such terms. If the British workman will not work at any given industry except at wages that will

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not allow his employer to compete with the foreigner, clearly it must be because he knows of some other more productive industry that can afford the wages he demands, and, as he cannot be in two places at once, it is better for him and better for the country that he should turn to that other industry, and leave this to the foreigner. The country will then lose that particular branch of industry, but only because it has found a more productive one elsewhere; and so high wages help to weed out the weak industries and inefficient managers and to concentrate labour where it is most effective.

## BENEFITS OF HIGH WAGES.

Look round the world and you will see that high wages never injure a nation, but the reverse. High wages and national prosperity go together. Wages are higher in England than on the continent, and prosperity is greater. Wages are higher still in America and Australia, and wealth there increases even faster. What country in Europe is the most unprogressive? Russia, where wages are lowest; where the labourer lives on black bread and cabbage soup, and is clothed in sheepskins. High wages do not indicate greater difficulty of production but greater effectiveness of production. High wages mean that the labourer who does the work is getting a larger share of the produce of his work, and somebody else, the landlord, the employer or the consumer, who, as such, is not doing the work, a smaller share of it. Which is as it should be.

But high wages are not only a sign of progress, they are also a factor of progress, and this in three ways—

(1) When the labourer is well paid he becomes more intelligent and skilful, more self-respecting, a better man all round. I do not mean that wherever the labourer is poorly-paid he is dull, unskilful, immoral, and that wherever he is highly paid he is all that he ought to be, for many agencies go to the making of character besides the rate of wages. But I mean this: that given any labourer of the character that he is, however produced, higher wages will make him better, not worse—more efficient, not less.

(2) High wages induce clever men to invent, and compel slow men to adopt labour-saving contrivances of all sorts, and so add to the productiveness of labour. Employers do not bother themselves about inventions where labour is dirt cheap.

In the making of the Suez Canal, the sand was excavated with common hoes and carried out on women's heads, though steam excavators and elevators were well known, and would have saved nine-tenths of the labour. But the labour wasn't worth saving—to the contractors. Improved appliances in agriculture are in much more general use in America and Australia, where wages are high, and because they are high, than in England, and more in use in England than on the continent for similar reasons.

(3) High wages, like free trade, help to weed out weak industries and to concentrate labour where it is most effective, as already pointed out.

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*Where the high wages are to come from.*

BUT, seeing that trade competition is so keen that profits are already cut down to the edge, where are the high wages to come from?

From three sources.—

(1) From the greatly increased production of wealth when the bountiful resources of nature (agricultural, mineral, &c.), now held back, are forced into use, and absolute security of tenure and right to improvements have set free the occupiers' energies to put these resources to their fullest use.

(2) From reduced rents.

If actual rents coincided with natural or economic rents, and represented simply the differential productiveness of land, they would be determined by wages, and not wages by them. That is to say, the worst land worth cultivating (which might be very good land indeed) would pay no rent, and the rents of other lands would represent their respective superiority, which would not be affected by any rise of wages. But the great bulk of rents in Great Britain is artificial or monopoly rent, and is at the expense of wages. As wages rise, this will fall. Tenants, one and all, will turn to their landlords and say, "The more we have to give to our men the less we have to give to you. Our previous rents were calculated on low wages, but times have changed, and your rents must change with them." And as the landlord can only get what tenants will consent to give, rents must fall as wages rise. So, too, when building sites are forced open and dwellings easily procured, house rents will come down, and reduced house rent means a larger balance of wages available. So in innumerable ways (which I have no time to point out), rising wages will come out of falling rents. This will occur particularly in those trades in which the land is an active factor in the business, where (as in agriculture and mining) it consists in extracting the raw materials of wealth from the land, where consequently trade competition is for the use of the land, and the competitors run each other up in rents.

(3) From increased price of goods.

But where the land is not an active factor in the business; where the business consists in working up or distributing materials already extracted from the land (as in manufactures and commerce); where the land is only wanted as a site, one site doing as well (within certain limits) as another; in these, the secondary industries, the main competition is not for land but for custom; the competitors run each other down in price of goods. At present every factor that adds to the productiveness of this class of industries benefits the consumer as such. Inventions are multiplied, processes improved, but neither the rate of wages nor of profits rises in consequence.

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"In consequence." I do not dispute that wages *have risen*. The Factory Acts raised them over a large area by relieving so many thousands of labourers from the competition of their own women and children; and trade combinations are forcing up wages and reducing hours till old-fashioned people gasp, and ask what is the world coming to?

But these gains are not due to inventions; no, not by a hair's breadth. There is nothing in the nature of an invention to compel an employer to pay a higher general wage, but quite the contrary, for it does not tend to make the labourer less dependent on him, but him less dependent on the labourer.

Inventions do not make wages rise, but prices fall, and the labourer, as a consumer, gets a share of the benefit. True, but only on the particular goods that he personally consumes, and how wretched a share that is!

That the labouring class as a whole consumes a vast quantity of goods is nothing to the purpose. It is the labourer as an individual that we are concerned with, and how little he benefits! Little beyond the necessaries of life are yet within his reach. Food has been cheapened, thanks to free trade and consequent importations. If it had not been for that, nearly all the gain of agricultural invention and improvement would have gone to the landlord. Clothing has been cheapened, and the labourer benefits here too. But even here it is only in the cheapening of the coarser sorts of food and clothing that he gets any gain. All the superior sorts of both are still far beyond his reach. And think of the multiplicity of yearly cheapening goods, the produce of his labour outside these of which he is none the better. Glance in at the shop windows and note the goods displayed. What percentage of the endless display is within the labourer's reach? Look down the trade lists and see what proportion in the long catalogue are things he can ever hope to buy. Survey the few paltry possessions in the poor man's cottage, and then think of the infinite variety of luxuries in the rich man's mansion, all produced by the workman's labour with ever-improving appliances, yet never increasing his earnings or lessening his anxieties, only falling in price, and so making the rich man richer by giving him a greater command of luxuries for the same income. Little indeed does the march of science and the multiplication of inventions benefit the labourer, either as a consumer or in any other way. But ought it not? Ought not the benefit of increasing productiveness of labour to go first and above all to him who does the labour?

But whether or no, my point is this:—

Increased wages will imply increased price of goods; not in anything like the same proportion, for, as we have seen, a large part of the labourer's increased earnings will come from increased production of wealth, and another large part from reduced rent. Still, prices will rise (the labourer, as labourer, getting more, and the consumer, as consumer, getting less of the benefit of progress), and they will go on rising till the inconvenience from increased cost of living balances the gain from increased wages, when a natural level will be reached, and both wages and prices will cease to rise.

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Of course, in the foregoing, I have only spoken broadly. I have no space for qualifications and details. I am writing an article, not a treatise; and I write for those who think, and only suggest, not demonstrate.

It is quite likely that the compensation awarded to the landlords under the scheme here sketched out may, in some cases, be excessive. But we are not much troubled about that. That tendency will soon rectify itself. The gain to the whole nation of having the barriers of monopoly broken down, and the whole field of industry thrown open, is a gain so enormous as to appear to us to be worth almost any sacrifice; at any rate, well worth the sacrifice of a few thousands in this way. The loss to the labourer, to the consumer, to the State, to the whole public, of allowing this monopoly to go on would, in a single year, far outweigh all the excess of compensation likely to be granted above what was reasonable.

But the standard of compensation would fall rapidly. For the first act of compulsory acquisition of land (if carried out in the way proposed) would sound the knell of the whole system of monopoly and of artificially forced-up rents. For as soon as it is clearly understood that any man, by simply applying to a Board, can acquire, at agricultural or wholesale price, a piece of land, not exceeding a certain area, that shall be for all purposes of use and enjoyment, though not for commercial speculation, absolutely his own, no man will, henceforth, apply to a private landlord for such land, but to a Board, which means that all fancy allotment values will disappear at once. Small capitalist farmers again in hundreds will throw up their privately rented farms of a hundred acres or so on insecure tenure to take up the smaller area with fixed tenure under a Board; this will mean an immediate diminution in the competition for farms, and a consequent fall of agricultural values all round.

Lastly, the rising rate of wages will render it impossible for any farmer to go on paying the old rate of rent, and this will bring the letting value of all land still lower. So that each year that the Boards acquire a fresh piece of land they will find that the agricultural value (which is their standard of compensation) has fallen a step lower, and so the whole system of monopoly and monopoly-prices will fall to pieces rapidly.

But it does not follow that because the Boards will have to pay less and less compensation they need charge less and less rent in proportion. Indeed, it would hardly be fair to those who took land at the earlier higher rates to do so. They may as well keep up their rents as high as they can in face of the competition of private landlords still anxious to let land on some terms or other, and they can apply the difference to the reduction of the rates and the multiplication of public benefits.

We claim that if no more were done than our proposals indicate (and we attack only or chiefly agricultural land), the back of monopoly would be broken, and labour emancipated. But these proposals are but the first step towards the nationalisation

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of the land; and we are content with one step at a time. We hope, however, to see the whole land, mineral land, building sites, all lands of every sort, forced open to use and practically nationalised. But the League for the Taxation of Land Values will see to this pretty effectually; and, meantime, the carrying of our proposals will help to start the general movement and aid them to carry their proposals.

One proposal more, however, we should like to add; and, like the former proposals, it involves no new principle, but only the extension of an Act already in operation. We should like to see the operation of the Irish Land Court for the Revision of Excessive Rents extended to the whole kingdom, and applied to lands of every sort. There is exactly the same reason for applying it to England as to Ireland, to mineral, as to agricultural land.

I admit that there is generally an essential difference between the English tenant, who is a capitalist, who farms for profit, and will not take the land unless he sees the profit, and the Irish tenant who is too often a labourer who farms for life, and *must* have the land on any terms. Still there are at least three cases in which the intervention of a Land Court in England and Scotland is desirable:—

(1) In cases where, as in certain parts of Scotland not covered by the Crofters Act, and on certain English allotments, the tenant is still a mere labourer at the landlord's mercy.

(2) In cases where the capitalist farmer has taken his land on long lease in better times and made improvements which he cannot abandon, and whose rent has not been lowered in proportion to the altered conditions, who is, therefore, not only suffering personal loss, but is living on his capital, and unable to put the land to full productive use, to the loss of the labourer, the State, and the whole country.

(3) In the case of mining rents, where the British mine-worker, who has to pay excessive royalties to a private landlord (who spends them on himself), cannot compete with the foreign mine-worker who has to pay much lower royalties to his State (which gives him back, in great measure, with one hand what it takes with the other), and thus another great national industry is hindered and endangered.

As the land becomes nationalised, the era of servile dependence will pass away and give place to the era of friendly co-operation; not necessarily of partnership (which is what "co-operation" too often means), but of the intelligent division of labour and combination of resources to secure a proposed end, and the equitable sharing of the proceeds in whatever way may to the co-operators seem most convenient. When labour is thus assured its full natural reward, and no one need be idle but by choice, we may leave every able-bodied person to work or starve as he likes best. If he prefer to starve, well and good. We will find him a coffin, but that is all we shall do for him, and we shall not waste much money over the funeral.

## LAND NATIONALISATION.

To sum up, stripped of minor detail, our proposals are simply these :—That local elective bodies shall compulsorily acquire land where it is wanted, and shall let it out—

In limited areas,

With fixity of tenure,

At reasonable and periodically revisable rents.

It is enough for us of the present generation to set the ball rolling, and in the right direction. Those who come after us will see to the rest. Meanwhile, every acre acquired by the people and for the people (and not for a peasant or any other proprietor) is so much land nationalised, no matter whether it be done by a central or a local authority.

•

The Office of the Society is at 11, SOUTHAMPTON STREET,

STRAND,

LONDON, W.C.



# Land Nationalisation Society,

OFFICE: 41, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, W.C.

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## OBJECT.

**TO RESTORE THE LAND TO THE PEOPLE, AND THE  
PEOPLE TO THE LAND.**

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# NATIONALISATION OF THE LAND,

BY

MISS HELEN TAYLOR.

*(Reprinted from the Liberal & Radical Year Book.)*

**T**HE fundamental principles that must never be lost sight of in dealing with land are that it is a necessary of life, and that the quantity of it is limited. From these two facts it follows that the use of it must be the common right of all who live; and that the appropriation of any portion of it by any individuals can only be at the expense of others.

That land is a necessary of life is true in a sense of which it is not true of anything else, excepting, indeed, the air we breathe, of which there is no occasion here to speak, because it has not yet been found possible to monopolise air as private property. No article of food, however necessary, is the only article of food on which human beings can live; but human beings must live upon the earth before they can eat, and in order to eat. Therefore, in a country where all the soil of the earth has become private property, those who are not the owners of that property can only live upon it by the permission of those who are. It is conceivable that those who are the owners might concede this permission to their fellow-creatures from purely benevolent motives—as a matter of fact it is not found that they do. With some exceptions, so insignificant as not to be worth taking into account, it is found that the owners of land sell permission to live upon it, either for as much as they can get, or for as much as they can get without trouble; that is

to say, either for rent or rack-rent. It is obvious that this rent, levied by some human beings upon others for the mere right to live somewhere, constitutes a heavy initiatory burden upon all who have to pay it; and, as such, a serious obstacle to their power of contributing to the general wealth of the community as well as to their own well-being.

Rent, however, does not stop here. Where the land is monopolised as private property, men are not only obliged to pay rent for permission to live; they are also obliged to pay rent for permission to fertilize, to enrich, or otherwise to improve the land belonging to other people. The landowner requires other men to pay him rent for permission to make money for him, leaving to those other men just enough margin of benefit to themselves to make it better worth while to accept the bargain than to die. For where all land is private property, the landowner can always say of such a bargain to other men, "You may take it or leave it;" and whatever over and above this margin is left, where land is private property, is left only, 1st, either from benevolence; 2ndly, by indolence; or 3rdly, from the competition of other countries where land is not equally monopolised. If a man wishes by the labour of his hands to turn into a fertile garden a patch of barren soil monopolised by a landowner; if he wishes, by the expenditure of his capital, to make one acre of land near a town, bringing the landlord £1 per annum, worth £1,000 per annum; if he wishes by the use of his own brain and the capital of his friends to open out mineral wealth unsuspected beneath the soil a landowner has monopolised; the landowner is not content with claiming as his own at the end of a term this wealth so brought forth by others, but he also makes them pay, year by year, for his permission to enrich him by their labour, their money, or their intellect.

It cannot need much argument to show that this process must impoverish the nation that permits it to go on. The exaction of rent must, of necessity, be a check upon all enterprise and energy; for it at once diminishes the motive for energy by diminishing its reward, and also checks the extension of enterprise by drawing off the profits resulting from its exercise. Yet the arbitrary power to exact rent for land for homes is probably even more mischievous than the

exaction of rent for land to be used for agricultural and industrial purposes; since the burden thus laid upon the workers of a nation forces them to live in homes where disease is rife, growth stunted, life shortened, vice encouraged, and moral energy deadened. Where the landowner, dwelling in a park two miles in circumference, draws the means to do so from the rents paid by a population that are crowded together in squalid homes, he not only drains the profits of their labour from them for his own personal benefit, but, in the process of doing so, he reduces them to a condition of moral, mental, and physical weakness, which, while it makes them incapable of resisting his exactions, makes them at the same time less and less able to constitute a flourishing nation in spite of those exactions.

To this system, therefore, of land monopoly, or private property in land, must be attributed the greater part of the poverty to be found in the most civilised portions of the globe, and whatever other reforms, social, moral, political or economical, might be carried out in any nation where private property in land prevails, those reforms must always steadily tend to enrich the landowners, and cannot possibly have a permanent effect in improving the relative position of the other dwellers upon the soil, so long as those dwellers are dependent upon the landowners for permission to dwell and labour there, and must pay toll to the landowners on all gains from whatever source.

There is, perhaps, one reform—a moral one—which would render private property in land comparatively harmless in the community that permitted it to exist. If all those who own land were to be pure and perfect Christians, animated in all their dealings with their fellow-creatures wholly by a spirit of active and disinterested benevolence, then the evils of private property in land would be limited to such as might arise from deficiencies in the energy, enterprise, or intelligence of landowners. Even so, private property in land would check the exercise of those qualities in the mass of the nation, unless shared equally by the landowning class. But it is scarcely necessary to say, that no competent statesman or law-giver will permit privileges to remain, on the plea that if wielded only by men and women who were perfectly good, they might do little harm.

Among those who see the evils of our present system of land monopoly, there are many who believe that these evils might be to a great degree, if not entirely, met by a wider extension of it—by facilitating and encouraging the acquisition of land as private property by a larger part of the nation. And looking at the question from the point of view of those who are to reap the benefits of owning the land, it is undoubtedly true that the nation would be better and happier if these benefits were distributed among a larger number of individuals. There would be greater happiness for a greater number; there would be all the advantages of that greater comfort, greater morality, better education, and more activity in agriculture, industry, and commerce, which results from a wider diffusion of comfort and ease among a larger proportion of the population. But although there would remain fewer to suffer the evils of being disinherited from the land, it does not follow that the misery and dependence of those who so remain will not be intensified rather than diminished; on the contrary, history, and the experience of nations where private property in land is widely spread, rather tend to show that it will. The abolition of the laws of primogeniture, entail, and settlement; the introduction of registration, and all the other measures for simplifying and facilitating the sale and purchase of land in small quantities, commonly known in England as “freeing the land,” (including the enfranchisement of leaseholds,) although having a tendency to mitigate the evils of private property in land by leaving fewer sufferers from it, cannot, even under the most favourable view of such schemes, be looked upon as anything better than palliatives. But there is another and not less serious objection to them. They are intended, in popular phraseology, to give free access to the land; but they are not in any way calculated to keep that access open. They make no effectual provision against the future accumulation of land in a few hands arising from accumulation of wealth and resultant power to purchase. Like all other schemes for the simple re-distribution of property, they are open to the objection that time, by giving scope to the cumulative effects of the superior skill, health, or luck, of individuals, will always re-introduce those terrible inequalities of fortune which are the bane of society.

Legislation to secure "free land" will, therefore, only make fewer paupers, and after a time will not do even that; unless accompanied by legislation limiting the power of acquisition, gift, or inheritance.

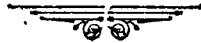
Another, and much more effective scheme, is to lay heavy taxation on landed property; taxation so heavy, as, in the first place, to give to the State a large proportion of the rent; and, in the second place, taxation, which being levied alike upon land which is or is not paying rent to its owner, will be a strong inducement to that owner to let it to any one who will at least defray the taxes. This scheme might insure that no one could own land with a view to pecuniary profit by letting it out; but, nevertheless, it has very serious defects, and would no more "free" the land than the "Free Land" scheme would. The first defect that presents itself is, that the whole taxation, whatever it might be, would practically be paid by the tenant. If the taxation amounted only to an equitable rent, the landlord would lay on a rack-rent, and pocket the difference. If, with a view to preventing this contingency, the tax levied was so high as to equal the highest rent that could by any possibility be exacted from the unfortunate tenant, the tenant would have to pay the whole of it, and the only advantage then gained would be the comparatively small one, that poor men would no longer be induced to purchase land in order to let it out for profit. But rich men would still be able to own it as an instrument of pleasure or power, and could still keep their fellow-men out of its use; for it would still be open to the millionaire to hold vast tracts of land as hunting or sporting grounds; and the politician, even though he could no longer make money by letting his land, yet could still decide which among his fellow-men shall be permitted to dwell in their native land and pay the taxes of the country, while they obey his orders and vote as he chooses under penalty of expatriation. Again, this scheme of taxation would effect no improvement in the homes of the people; on the contrary, it would tend to make them worse than they are. It would have one good effect, and one only. If taxation equal to the highest rent that could possibly be exacted were really levied on the whole land of the country, no other taxes (or rates) would be necessary. The land tax would pour into the public purse

more than sufficient for all public expenditure. But this advantage would be weighted with such serious evils that the remedy would be nearly as bad as the malady. If this is to be the only remedy, the whole and always increasing rental value of the land must go into the hands of the Executive Administration of the country under penalty of being otherwise grasped, as now, by the landowners. The probable effect of this upon public expenditure will be easily perceived; and it would need the Government of the nation to be much wiser and more honest than governments have ever hitherto been, or than they are ever likely to be under a system of private property in land, to secure that all such expenditure should be reproductive and for the benefit of the people, rather than directed to warlike and other objects not less mischievous and immoral than those to which rent is applied now that it goes into the hands of private individuals.

What system then would secure to a nation the fullest advantage that can be derived from its native soil? If the use of that soil is the common right of all who live upon it, and if the appropriation of it by any individuals can only be at the expense of others, it follows that the land should be the common property of the nation as a whole, and that the use of it by any and every individual must be secured under conditions carefully devised to give the individual the utmost benefit consistent with the like benefits to others. No individual must be able to lay down the conditions under which another may dwell or labour on the land of their common birth, to extort by such conditions from him the product of his labour, or to deny to him the opportunity of employing it. Nor must there be any limit, other than the limitation of the powers of nature, to his enjoyment of that common native land as a home. In order, also, that all may derive an equally fair share of advantage from the fertility of their native soil, those who are so situated as to obtain the most from that fertility, must give an equivalent for their special advantages by the payment of rent into the National Exchequer, thereby diminishing the burden of the general taxation.

The advantage of holding the land as national property, and of refusing to individuals the power to permanently appropriate the exclusive right to it, is not only, perhaps not

even chiefly, that it prevents the diversion of the profits from the land into private hands, and secures the agricultural, mineral, and residential value of it for public uses so far as needed for them; but it is still more that the nationalisation of the land would secure, so far as the political liberty and general intelligence of the nation can go, that monopoly of the land shall not be used by private individuals as a means of extortion and oppression, and that the use of it shall be thrown freely open to the needs of the people for their dwellings, and to their industry and intelligence for all other purposes. The nationalisation of the land would not be a security against political corruption; but it would afford less opportunity for such than does private ownership. It would not be a cure for all political, moral, and social evils; political liberty, intelligence, and a general raising of the moral standard of human life must be looked to for wide-spread and permanent reform; but the nationalisation of the land is calculated to do more than any other single measure; economically, by placing at the disposal and using for the profit of all, the land, without which labour can do nothing; politically, socially, and morally, by removing a fundamental source of inequality and a potent means of oppression and demoralisation.





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14, Southampton Street, Strand, London.

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To restore the Land to the People and the People to the Land.

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HOW TO

NATIONALIZE THE LAND

With Due Consideration for all Interests Concerned.

A PAPER

*Read at the National Liberal Club, March 19th, 1889.*

*Reprinted from the "Westminster Review."*

WITH A POSTSCRIPT REPLYING TO UTTERANCES BY

MR. GLADSTONE,  
MR. JOHN MORLEY, MR. HERBERT SPENCER,  
AND OTHERS.

BY  
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WITH A POSTSCRIPT REPLYING TO UTTERANCES BY

MR. GLADSTONE,  
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AND OTHERS.

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## HOW TO NATIONALIZE THE LAND.

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THE evils of landlordism are now so keenly and so universally felt, its gross injustice and the degradation of the people clearly traceable to it so widely acknowledged, that it is needless to enlarge upon them here. The difficulty felt now is how to remedy them. No scheme has yet been put forward sufficiently simple, practicable, and free from serious objections to commend itself to general adoption. Many persons have approached the land question from the standpoint of some special class—the tenant farmer, the agricultural labourer, or the town leaseholder—and their proposals have been to take something from landlords and give it to the class favoured, without considering the interests of other classes. Their methods are therefore crude, partial, impracticable, and, if adopted, would probably produce as great evils as they are designed to remedy. The only way to look at the land question, with any chance of working out a comprehensive but simple and practical measure, is from a purely national point of view, leaving subordinate interests to adjust themselves under a perfectly free economic law. We must regard the entire population as a great co-operative company, the land as their common property or capital; and the problem is, to place the land under such an administration as will best promote the interests of the whole people, and at the same time render it as easily accessible as possible to all workers on equal terms. To solve this problem, or at least, to indicate the lines on which, we conceive, a solution must be sought, is the task we propose to attempt in this paper. Our measure will necessarily divide itself into two distinct parts: 1. The transfer of the land from individual to national control. 2. The work of reconstruction or organization. The former will be transitory and, once accomplished, final. The latter will be permanent, and probably more or less progressive in its character as experience may dictate.

Before sketching our Land Measure, one or two important points require careful consideration. The first is, that the

WHOLE OF THE LAND, and not a part only, must be brought under national administration. There are some who favour experiments in Land Nationalization, or a gradual acquisition of the land. No such partial measure could possibly be successful or advantageous. The cost of administration for a part of the land would be much greater in proportion than for the whole, thus involving a pecuniary loss to the nation. Then it would be extremely inconvenient for the State and private proprietors to be in rivalry with each other. The State would be continually hampered and obstructed in carrying out needful improvements. Suppose land requires draining, and can only be drained through a neighbouring estate belonging to a private owner; blackmail would certainly be levied for permission to carry out the work. The same difficulty would arise if a road were required to give access to land surrounded by other land still in private hands. No readjustment of farms, however desirable, could take place without compensation, nor could allotments or cottages for labourers be so conveniently provided. In towns still greater inconvenience would be felt in the administration of property, especially in effecting improvements. Moreover, the land thus first and most easily acquired would be the less profitable—that which from its character or position afforded the most distant prospect of improvement in value, while the most eligible for national purposes—that in or near towns—could be acquired only at enormous cost and, in all cases, with the heavy legal expenses added. The advantages we anticipate from the resumption of the whole of the land at once would be entirely lost, inasmuch as a partial resumption could not be carried out in the same simple manner. Not only should we have to pay a high price for the land, but compensation would be demanded for the invidious distinction of depriving one landlord of his privileges and not another.

The second point is, that the nation must acquire the ENTIRE INTEREST IN THE LAND. No party must have any interest in or control over it beyond what is granted by the State for industrial or residential purposes, for a limited time, and under clearly defined conditions. There must, therefore, be no such thing as a reserved tenant-right—an interest to be purchased by the incoming from the outgoing tenant. We are quite aware that on this point we tread upon the toes of some ardent land reformers, who,

approaching the question exclusively from a tenant's point of view, hastily conclude that whatever does not rightfully belong to the landlord must, therefore, be the property of the tenant, unmindful that the whole people have an interest in the land. We feel sure, however, that if the advocates of tenant-right will carefully consider the matter from a purely national point of view, they will see with us that no such right is admissible under a national system. Of course we admit that tenants should be fully compensated for all that they do, and, in the scheme of reconstruction hereafter described, such compensation is secured to them. But we do not admit that the entire results of improvements belong to tenants to all eternity, for that is tantamount to ownership. When a tenant has received adequate compensation for his improvements, whatever further advantages may result are due to the land, and rightfully belong to the owners of the land, the people. The wrong of the present system is that these advantages are intercepted from the people by a class of individuals who have no rightful claim to them. Our objections to a reserved tenant-right, or any interest for which a tenant can demand payment on giving up possession, are: (1) that it plays into the hands of capitalists. All those who are unable or unwilling to sink a portion of their capital in the purchase of a tenant-right, are excluded from all chance of occupying land, whereas our aim should be to throw the land as widely and as freely open as possible to all comers, and to afford every facility and inducement for its cultivation; (2) Tenant-right depreciates the national interest in the land. A capitalist who has money to lay down, would say: "Well, if I could use my capital in my business I could make 10 per cent. of it; it is, therefore, worth 10 per cent. to me, and I shall give so much less rent for the farm." A farm worth £500 a year, but encumbered with a tenant-right, for which the owner demanded £500, would thus be depreciated to a rental value of £450; that is, the nation would lose £50 a year for that which it could easily borrow for £15. Being confined to capitalists, the competition for such farms would be restricted, and the rents thereby further lowered; (3) Tenant-right gives the control of the land to the tenant, and he becomes *pro tanto* an occupying owner. No one can oblige him to sell his interest till he pleases, or to any one but whom he pleases. He has virtually, therefore, not only a perpetual tenancy

equivalent to ownership, but the right of nominating his successor to the exclusion of all others, and thus the land would still be a monopoly in the hands of the rich. The chances of obtaining it being so restricted, uncertain, and difficult, would discourage all but a favoured few from devoting themselves to agriculture as a means of livelihood.

A third point, second in importance only to the above, is, that with agricultural land the nation must acquire and retain the buildings and all other accessories necessary to the proper enjoyment and utilization of the land. In other cases it is not proposed that the nation should acquire or hold buildings, whether residential, manufacturing, or mercantile. But there is an important difference between agricultural buildings and other buildings, which necessitates a different treatment. In the former case the buildings are secondary to the land, and necessary for its peaceful enjoyment and utilization; in the second case the land is secondary to the buildings, having little or no value in itself, but only as a foundation for the buildings to stand upon. The value is in the position, not in the land itself. In towns a man has an ample choice. If he cannot come to terms with one house-owner, there are plenty of others ready to accommodate him, and as long as house building or house owning affords a reasonable profit, the supply will be equal to or rather above than below the demand. In the case of the agricultural tenant, however, it is different. He has no choice, but is confined absolutely to the one house upon the farm, and if that were in the hands of a third party there would be great friction and difficulty, especially where the buildings were inadequate or inconvenient. The owner would not spend his money to accommodate the tenant, and the latter would have no alternative but to put up with things as they are, or to spend his own money in improving another man's property. For these reasons we say that it is expedient for the nation to acquire and retain the buildings and all accessories necessary for the management of agricultural land. Its interest in the land will be greatly enhanced thereby, and in no other way can its unrestricted control over the land be adequately secured. These three points being settled—viz.:—

1. That the whole of the land must be brought under national control;

2. That that control must be unrestricted by any personal interest; and



3. Must, in agricultural land, include buildings and all accessories, we are prepared for the first part of our measure, which, avoiding the verbose, technical phraseology of the law, will run somewhat as follows :—

Whereas individual control over the land contravenes natural right and justice, and is detrimental to national interests, be it enacted

I. That from and after the                    day of                    18    , all rent of land shall be due and payable to the national exchequer.

II. That on or before the                    day of                    18    (being six months previous to the date in clause I.), all persons having any claim upon land shall send in to the Commissioners, hereinafter appointed for the purpose of carrying this Act into effect, full particulars of those claims, with all such information relating thereto as may be demanded.

III. That on or before the same date the overseers in each parish be required to send in a complete list of all persons occupying land within the parish, with such particulars of each holding as the Commissioners shall require.

From the former of these returns will be compiled a complete register of proprietors; from the latter a complete register of tenants. There would be no need of any legal investigation of title, except in the case of double or disputed claims. Every proprietor would have to produce a title or his claim would not be admitted. The title produced would be accepted unless there was any reason to suspect its genuineness. Every claimant, at his own cost, would have to satisfy the Commissioners on this head. The two registers would check and verify each other. Discrepancies, if any, would have to be cleared up by the parties concerned. In the case of agricultural holdings, the gross rental paid by the tenant would be taken by the State. Where such holdings are in the hands of proprietors, the rent would be assessed on the same scale as similar adjacent holdings. In the case of residential and town holdings, the gross rental being determined, a reasonable percentage on the value of the buildings, which would remain the property of the present owners, would be

deducted, and the balance, being the rental value of the land or site, would be payable to the State by the owner of the buildings, while the owner of the land would receive his share of the compensation awarded. From the above returns the entire gross land rental of the country would be ascertained. From this such a percentage as may be sanctioned by Parliament (say 20 per cent.) would be deducted for costs of management, losses, and other contingencies, and annuities payable from the land revenue of the country to the amount of the balance, not exceeding the net income now derived from land, would be secured to proprietors. Annuitants, mortgagees and others having claims upon the land would receive their payments direct from the Land Department; the legal owner would receive only that portion of the revenue actually in his possession at the time of transfer. Annuities, on their falling in, would revert to their legal owners just as if the land still remained in their possession.

With the completion of the registers and the allotment of the annuities, the work of transition would be complete. The land would be under the direct and unrestricted control of the nation. The people, through their representatives in Parliament, would determine the form of its future administration, and appoint their own responsible agents to carry their wishes into effect. All this would be accomplished without any social or monetary disturbance. Not a tenant would be disturbed till the natural or legal expiration of his tenancy. Not a shilling would be required from the people for the purpose of compensation. The revenue from the land, over £100,000,000 per annum, would fully provide for the annuities, about £80,000,000, and leave a balance of £20,000,000 per annum in the national exchequer for the benefit of the people. In addition to this sum, there would be a great saving on mortgages, which we propose to treat in this manner. Mortgagees are entitled to the capital sum advanced, but this need not be paid in gold or bank notes. It may be paid in the shape of annuities at the market price of the day, with advantage to the mortgagees themselves, who would thus be provided, free of charge, with a security of the highest character, which they may retain as long or sell as soon as they please. Now the present amount of mortgage on English landed property is estimated at about £240,000,000. On this 4, sometimes  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. is paid,

while the nation can borrow at less than 3. By paying off mortgages by annuities as above proposed, therefore, a saving of over 1 per cent. can be effected:  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. on the above amount will yield £3,000,000 per annum. Add to this the annual increment in the value of the land, say £2,000,000, and we have another £5,000,000 to the national good. This £5,000,000, with very moderate fees charged for transactions in the land department, would amply suffice for all the costs of administration, leaving the £20,000,000 above mentioned available for the immediate reduction of taxation. Some persons would devote the whole, or at least a portion of this surplus, to the redemption of the annuities. This would benefit future generations at the expense of the present. We think the present has borne its burdens long enough, and first deserves consideration. We propose, therefore, to provide for the gradual reduction and ultimate extinction of the annuities in another way, and to devote the entire surplus to the immediate removal of burdens from the people: £20,000,000 a year—one-fourth of the imperial taxation—removed from the shoulders of the people, could not fail to give an immense impetus to industry of all kinds. Agriculture might again lift up its head, manufacturers would be able to compete successfully with foreign nations, trade would revive, while the land, being free, could be placed at the disposal of the people in such a manner as to afford healthy and profitable employment for every man not otherwise engaged. This increase of industry would react upon the land so that the annual increment would not only be maintained, but probably increased.

With such a substantial advantage as the above, we need be under no very great concern for the extinction of the annuities. Still, provision should be made to this end, and we venture to suggest the following method, which, with something of novelty about it, will be the least inconvenient to landlords, while it will secure to the nation a certain and annually increasing advantage till the last penny is paid. In the great reduction of taxation which would ensue on the change in our land system, landlords would very largely participate, and it is not unreasonable to require them to surrender something in return. Our proposal is, that annuities, not exceeding the net annual income derived from the land, should be assigned to landlords in the form of a 3 per cent. stock, but subject to

an annual diminution of *3d.* per cent. of stock. That is, for the first year the dividend shall be £3 per cent. of stock; for the second year, £2 19s. 9d.; for the third year, £2 19s. 6d., and so on, diminishing *3d.* annually till the last *3d.* is paid, when it will cease altogether. Suppose the annual amount payable to landlords should prove to be £84,000,000, the annual reduction would be £350,000. The national income would benefit by this amount, to which add a very moderate increment in the value of land of £1,650,000, and we have, besides the £20,000,000 mentioned above, a further surplus of £2,000,000 per annum available for the further continuous reduction of taxation. This, strictly applied, would extinguish the whole of our imperial taxation in about thirty years. Applied next to the relief of local burdens, this continued surplus would gradually diminish, and in another twenty years or so entirely extinguish all local taxation. Thus, in half a century, the entire burden of both imperial and local taxation might be removed, to the great relief of the industrial classes, not by any sudden convulsion, but by a gradual process, the full benefit of which would be felt yearly. Henceforth the annual revenue of the land would suffice for all national requirements. After this the annually increasing surplus would be available for educational and other national purposes, for further developing the resources of the country and improving the condition of the people, and ultimately for a national assurance fund for the relief of old age and infirmity.

Let us compare this mode of liquidation by annually diminishing annuities with other methods which have been proposed. 1. Life annuities. The great objection to these is, that from the uncertainty of individual life they are wholly unnegotiable, and can be appraised only on a very large scale on the principle of life assurance. 2. Annuities for terms of years. These are easily valued and are therefore negotiable at any time, but the objection to them is, that they afford no relief to the nation till they expire. The burden upon the people remains the same till the last dividend is paid, when a huge windfall drops into the lap of a future generation, which has borne no share of the burden. 3. Perpetual annuities. The present writer has hitherto advocated this form of payment as preferable to those above mentioned on the ground that it entails a lighter immediate burden, and therefore affords some relief

from the first, which may be increased annually by redemption of the bonds at par or by purchase in the open market. The latter has a tendency to raise unduly the price of the stock to the nation's disadvantage, while the former involves the necessity of some mode of selection introducing an element of chance, and tending to depress the value of the security. The diminishing annuities suggested above are free from these objections. There is no uncertainty about them as with life annuities; they are as easily valued as annuities for a term of years; there is not the trouble, expense, or uncertainty of purchase, while they afford an immediate and annually increasing relief to the people; being spread over a long period, no great inconvenience would be felt by the holders. It may be objected by holders that in this kind of stock their capital would be wearing out and finally exhausted. This is equally true of every terminable security, but can easily be provided for by re-investing out of each annual dividend so much as will produce the amount of decrement. If we start with a 3 per cent. stock diminishing 3*d.* annually, it would be necessary to re-invest about 8*s.* out of every £3 in any similar stock. This would reduce the available dividend to £2 12*s.*, and the annuities would be equivalent in value to a perpetual stock at that rate. In further compensation, anticipating the abolition of taxation, these annuities, from the beginning, might be made exempt from income-tax and succession duty, which would probably add some 2*s.* to their annual value, making them equal in present value to a £2 14*s.* per cent. perpetual stock. Bankers and financiers may object that such annuities would be less available as securities for advances, but the objection is not greater in these than in any other terminable security. Their value can be easily ascertained at any time; a table might be made showing their value, at a given rate of money, for every year of their continuance. Further, it should be remembered that the nation was not made for bankers and financiers, and the latter must, therefore, learn to adapt themselves to whatever is advantageous to the former.

In the land thus taken over by the nation would, of course, be included that held by railway and other companies. As there might be some difficulty in putting a value upon this land, and as there is a widespread and growing impression that the railways, which have become the highways of the nation, should be under national

rather than private control, it would be a favourable opportunity for the nation to exercise its right and take over the entire railway interest. This would be attended by great advantages to the community at large. There would be a great saving in the expenses of administration. The numerous boards of directors and highly paid officials would be replaced by a central department, similar to the Post Office. A considerable reduction of rates, both for goods and passengers, could be effected, while the vexatious delays and inconveniences too often experienced in passing from one company's lines to those of another could be easily removed, and both passengers and goods could pass from any one point to any other as easily as a letter or a post-parcel does now. The present proprietors would, of course, be paid in a stock, bearing a fixed interest equivalent in value.

Thus we have endeavoured to show that the difficulties in the way of an equitable scheme of Land Nationalization are not insuperable, nor so great as many imagine. The advantages to be gained will depend upon the mode of administration to be set up, the importance of which cannot be over-estimated. To this, the second part of our scheme, we now proceed.

Having shown above how, without anything that can be reasonably called spoliation, without any social or financial disturbance, but with great gain and social advantage, the land may be brought under the direct and unrestricted control of the nation, we now proceed to the second part of our scheme, the work of organization. Here, also, several preliminary questions present themselves, which must be settled before we can definitely determine the form of administration to be adopted. There are some persons who, for various reasons, cannot accept Land Nationalization, but would not object to Land Communization or Municipalization. Such persons apparently fail to perceive that these are but different phases or applications of one and the same principle, which may be thus stated in general terms:—That where a community has a common and exclusive interest in land, that land should be under the direct and unrestricted control of the community. From this it will be seen that the phase or name depends upon what the community is. In the case of an isolated village, having a common and exclusive interest in the land surrounding it, the Russian *mir* is an appropriate applica-

tion of the principle. In a wider area, such as a Swiss canton, the principle would assume the form of communization. In the case of an independent town or city, such as Hamburg, municipalization would be the natural expression of the principle. But when we come to England, we find the whole people so interdependent upon each other, and their common interests extending over the whole country, that it is impossible to split it up into separate and independent communities. The inhabitants of London, for instance, are as much interested in the lands of Devon and Dorset, Essex and Kent, Staffordshire and Yorkshire, even to the Highlands of Scotland, as the inhabitants of those counties. On the produce of the whole country they are dependent for their supplies. On the other hand, the inhabitants of the rural and mining districts throughout the country are as much interested in the lands of our towns and cities, which constitute their markets, as the residents therein. Whatever affects the interests of the one affects also the interests of the other. Higher rents, whether in town or country, mean higher prices to consumers; or lower profits to producers, or both. The inhabitants of Great Britain, in fact, constitute one great and indivisible commune, or, as a Scotchman, addressing the writer, tersely put it, "What is England but one big clan?" The only consistent application of the principle in this country is, therefore, Land Nationalization. Only by being brought under one responsible administration can the interests of the whole people be effectually and impartially secured.

Next, as to government. Some persons have strong prejudices against central government. All governments are corrupt and untrustworthy. No power or patronage should be entrusted to them: Local boards are preferable. Now, where a government consists of some power independent of and irresponsible to the people, we say the less committed to such a government the better. Such a government ought not to exist. That such governments do exist is undeniable; that such a government has existed in England is equally true; but at the present time, here in England, if anywhere, the government is entirely dependent upon the people. If our government is corrupt, it is because the House of Commons is corrupt; and if the House of Commons is corrupt, it is because the people are corrupt, and not true to their own interests. The proper

remedy for corruption in the government, therefore, is not in restricting its functions, but in improving the people and Parliament. In our private concerns, if we have a dishonest servant we do not commit our affairs to strangers, but replace the unfaithful servant by one more worthy of confidence; and if we wish to secure fidelity we look sharply after him, and not give him the opportunity of defrauding us. The same course should be pursued by the people at large with reference to national government. As long as a considerable number of the people are indifferent to their political responsibilities, neglect their duty, or allow themselves to be actuated by selfish and unpatriotic motives, they must not be surprised if Parliament and the Government reflect the same characteristics. Let the people be honest and true to themselves, and in a thoroughly patriotic spirit send true and honest men to Parliament, and none but an honest Government can stand for a day. Even under present circumstances, with many anomalies still in our Constitution giving an undue preponderance of power to certain classes of the community, Government not unfrequently finds itself compelled to yield to any general expression of opinion on the part of the people. We are not insensible to the evils, often urged, of excessive centralization; nor, on the other hand, can we shut our eyes to the personal influence and incompetency which too often characterize local government. Of the two we believe that the acts of a central or government board are more open to the criticism and under the control of the people than are those of a local authority. The deeds of a local board are seldom known beyond the confines of the district affected. Residents, wishing to live in peace, do not care to make themselves obnoxious to their neighbours by interfering, and therefore, as a rule, take no interest in local affairs; tradespeople can open their lips only under pains and penalties. If any spirit bolder than the rest ventures to raise his voice in opposition to the powers that be, he becomes a marked man, and the authorities simply brave out the opposition and live it down. Of a Government department, on the other hand, every act is or may be known from one end of the country to the other, and is open to the scathing criticism of any and every one who chooses to take up the matter without fear or hindrance. But both central and local government have each their special and appropriate functions, and the advantages are



greatest, and the disadvantages least, when to each is assigned its own proper duties. Matters of purely local interest are most appropriately committed to local, those of a wider or national interest to central, administration. The question comes to this, therefore—Is the management of the land a local or a national interest? From what we have said above, it will be seen to be essentially and pre-eminently a national interest. To commit it to the control of local authorities, therefore, would be to ensure inefficiency, partiality, and jobbery without remedy; whereas under a central authority it would be entirely under the control of the whole people. There are few farms of any magnitude that are not situated in more than one parish, many even are in more than one county. To bring these under local administration would cause much difficulty and friction. Each local board would have its own peculiar ideas, probably not the most enlightened, of land administration, and would certainly play into the hands of the most influential and interested men in the district. For these reasons we must pronounce emphatically for a central administration of the land. We are ready to admit, however, that local authorities may with advantage be invested with certain delegated powers, and thus be made usefully instrumental in administering the acts of the central authority.

Then, again, many object to central administration on the ground that it confers upon the administrators a large amount of patronage and leads to partiality and favouritism. The same is equally true of local authorities, and the evils would be as manifold as the number of local bodies exceeds that of the central, and the powers would be exercised with more impunity, as shown above, in consequence of their more limited publicity. But under the principles of management we shall hereafter lay down, the administrative authority, whether central or local, will have no power of partiality or favouritism, for it will not be able to select a tenant or fix a rent. Both these will be determined by the applicants themselves, and the authority will have no alternative but to accept and register the result.

Another ground of our preference for a central administration is, that a large board is unnecessary. A few men discreetly selected for their ability, high character, and special knowledge and experience would form a far more efficient administration than boards popularly selected for

no special qualifications, and for no other reasons than that by some means they have gained the popular ear. The former, having no personal interest in the matter, and liable to be questioned at any time in Parliament for every act of their department, would have every inducement to consult the requirements and promote the interests of the people. The latter, having no knowledge of or interest in anything beyond their own borders, would blunder on with impunity and in obscurity, intent only on satisfying the more influential and interested of their constituents. For the above reasons, and especially on the ground of economy and efficiency, we feel bound to give our decisive preference for a central administration of the land. The next question is, How is it to be constituted ?

The Department would naturally comprise four main divisions :—(1) A secretarial, for correspondence ; (2) A registration, for keeping a register of all tenants and their holdings ; (3) A financial, for accounts ; and (4) A surveying, for inspecting and reporting on the condition and requirements of all holdings. At the head of each of these divisions we propose to appoint a Commissioner, who must be a member of the House of Commons, and over the whole a First or Chief Commissioner, who should be a member of the Cabinet. These five Commissioners would constitute the Land Court, and would have charge of all matters under the Act. Their functions would be purely administrative, on principles laid down and under bye-laws approved by Parliament. They would have no arbitrary power, either to fix a rent or to accept or reject a tenant. Under the Commissioners would be the permanent staff, consisting of a head to each of the four divisions—that is, a chief secretary, a chief registrar, a chief accountant, and a chief surveyor. The greater part of the work, being of a routine character, would be done by an adequate number of rank and file clerks and writers, the organization of which would rest mainly with the heads of divisions, and would to a large extent be provided for by the preliminary work of registration of proprietors and tenants. Doubtless, it will be found expedient to have a branch office and an official representative in each town for the transaction of local business, but it would be entirely subordinate to the central authority.

The next important point for consideration <sup>is</sup> the mode of letting land—that is, of fixing rent and selecting tenants.

Rent has hitherto been arbitrarily fixed by the landlord, and by a tentative process has been gradually increased to its present rate, tenants having no alternative but to submit or go. But this mode of fixing rent is contrary to sound economic law. The value of any commodity is that which any man will be willing to give for it, and this can be determined only by competition in a free and open market. Land is no exception to this rule. Under a national administration it is most important that the true economic rental value should be determined in some way quite independent of official authority. This can be accomplished only by submitting the land to public competition—not the competition of the auction-room, where men bid half or quarter the value of an article in the hope that, in the absence of a competitor, they will get a great bargain—but by tender, where a man, knowing nothing of his competitors, must put what he considers a fair value upon the land, and take the chance of its proving more valuable to any one else. It is to the national interest that the land should be in the hands of those who can turn it to the best account, and these, as a rule, would offer the highest rents. This mode of letting land by tender would also determine the tenant in every case, and leave no opportunity for a preference of one man before another. The land would thus be entirely under the control of the people, the Commissioners simply recording the result, and protecting alike the individual in his holding and the national property from misuse by the tenant. Objections have been made to this mode of letting land, that it would lead to rack-renting, that in the eager competition for land persons would offer excessive rents which they would be unable to pay, and thus many of the evils of the present system would be reproduced. We think otherwise. The high rents prevalent both in Ireland and in Scotland have not been the result of free competition among tenants, but have been for the most part arbitrarily forced upon those already in possession, who have had no option but to submit or render themselves homeless and hopeless. But under our new system circumstances would be very different. With land in abundance coming into hand every year, there would be no inducement to offer immoderate rents. If a man failed to obtain one holding he would not have long to wait for another opportunity; or he might tender for two or more at the same time, when, if his offers

were reasonable, he would be pretty certain of getting one. After a few years the rental value of land brought constantly and regularly before the public would be known as accurately as the price of shares and stocks is now, and would vary within narrow limits as they do according as the balance of the numerous conditions affecting it tended this way or that. Under this system land courts and valuers, whether official or professional, would be dispensed with, and the entire cost saved to the great advantage of both the tenant and the nation. No one can know better the value of land than those who use it.

The next point to be determined is the length of tenancy which should be granted. This will vary with circumstances, and must to a large extent be the result of experience. All we can do on the present occasion is to fix the extreme limits beyond which we should not go, and to notice the leading incidents affecting it. Perpetual tenure is out of the question, being equivalent to ownership, however limited in other respects, and opposed to the equal right which every man has of access to land, a right which every one should have the opportunity of exercising equally with others, but which would be seriously restricted if the land or any considerable portion of it were tied up in perpetual tenure. Life tenures are open to the same objections as life annuities, involving uncertainty and loss to one or the other of the parties interested. Tenure for a fixed term of years alone remains, and the question is, What shall this term be? The interest of the tenant requires that it shall be long enough to secure him a fair return for his labour and the responsibilities he incurs—long enough to induce him to do his best, but not so long as to make him responsible for changing conditions which he cannot foresee or estimate. In the case of ordinary agricultural land already in good condition with all needful appliances, and requiring only capital to stock and work it, the term must at least be long enough to give the tenant an average round of seasons, and the least that would secure this would be seven years. This we may take, therefore, as the minimum length of term. In the case where special outlay of capital is needed for improvements, such as drainage, fencing, road-making, enlargement of buildings, cottage accommodation, &c., the execution of which would be included in the conditions of letting, the term would have to be extended to ten, fourteen, or twenty-

one years, or perhaps even longer, according to the amount of outlay, to enable the tenant to recoup himself for his expenditure during his tenure. Here is the opportunity for the capitalist, who would find a more secure and profitable employment for his capital than in lending it to foreign Governments at low interest. The tenant having in his tender so adjusted the rent as to secure a return of his capital with interest during his tenancy, the land, at the expiration of the term, would revert to the nation in an improved condition, and the latter would then reap its share of the advantage in the shape of an improved rent without confiscating anything to which the tenant could reasonably lay claim. But the question has been put, How will this affect a man who plants an orchard which takes many years to attain maturity? Such a case could be met in this way:—Applicants should tender an initial rent, subject to an annual increase, say two or three shillings an acre. The larger the annual increase, the lower would be the initial rent offered with some advantage to the planter, as his rent would begin low, and increase as he became able to pay it. Suppose the initial rent offered is ten shillings an acre, increasing two shillings annually for a term of twenty-one years, the rent would increase from ten shillings the first year to fifty shillings the last year. If it commenced at five shillings, with a yearly increment of three shillings, it would rise to sixty-five shillings in the last year. The difference between the two for the whole term would be only five guineas for the additional convenience the planter would enjoy during the first six years of his term. The increment and length of term would be fixed by the Commissioners; the applicant would make his own calculation as to cost of planting and annual returns, and tender accordingly. He would, of course, be under the obligation to maintain the fertility of the plantation to the end of his term. In a similar manner any other special case, such as reclaiming waste land, clearing wood, &c., could be met. The object in all such cases should be to give the utmost facility to the labourer during the earlier and more arduous years of his tenancy.

The next class of property we have to apply our principle to is land to be let for building but not yet covered. As we propose that all buildings, except agricultural, shall remain the property of those who erect them, the long terms now granted in such cases will be no longer necessary. From

seven to twenty-one years will probably be found sufficient according to circumstances, and the term should on no account be extended so as to deprive the nation of the increased value sites acquire from increase of population. In the first instance, the ground would be let by tender which would fix the rent for the term. At the expiration of a ground lease the building would be valued, and so much of the rent as appeared reasonable allotted to the owner. The premises as a whole would then be offered by tender, and the balance of the rent offered above that allotted to the building would be the ground-rent payable to the State. As it is necessary for security that the owner of the building should be the lessee of the ground, one of the conditions on which a new lease is offered would be that in the event of the owner of the building being outbid by another party, the accepted tenant should purchase the building at the valuation price. If the owner of the building wishes to retain his property his would doubtless be the highest tender, as it would be of a greater value to him than to a stranger. If he were indifferent or wished to sell he would tender or not accordingly, but in either case would be sure of the value of his property.

There is a third case, that of shop property, in which a third interest is involved—viz., the goodwill of a business, which clearly belongs to the occupier, whether he is also the owner of the building or not. If this goodwill could be appraised with as much certainty as the building, it might be protected in the same way by means of a reserved price payable by the incoming to the outgoing tenant. But its value is so uncertain, and there is, moreover, such scope for misrepresentation and fraud, that the case could not be met in that way. Some special means, therefore, must be adopted by which the interest of the occupier may be protected without prejudice to the other interests involved. We suggest the following as one, not the only method by which this may be attained. Not less than six nor more than twelve months before the expiration of a lease the tenant may, on the ground that he wishes to retain the goodwill of his business, apply to the Commissioners for permission to send in a special tender for a new lease. The Commissioners, on being satisfied with the *bona-fides* of the applicant, and that it is a suitable case for the exercise of the privilege, may assent to the application and fix a date for considering the tender. The

Commissioners would know from experience what any particular site would be likely to command. Previous to opening the applicant's tender, they should lay upon the table, in a sealed envelope, their estimate of value. The applicant's tender should first be opened in his presence; then the estimate of the Commissioners, which should not be divulged, and if the applicant's tender is at or above the estimate, it should be accepted. If so approximately near as to indicate a *bona-fide* offer, differing only by an accidentally small amount, he might be permitted to amend his offer if he chose. If his offer proved much below the estimate, it would be rejected and the premises would be offered to public tender in the usual way. He would still have the opportunity of tendering among others, but would have to take the risk of being outbid. In the latter case he would have only himself to blame; he has had his opportunity and lost it. Experience may enable us to improve upon this plan, but it is the best we can think of at present, and at any rate much more favourable to the tenant than the present system which places him at the absolute mercy of the landlord or his agent.

Objection has been made to leasehold tenure, more particularly of agricultural land, that under it tenants are liable to disturbance at the expiration of their term, and would thereby be discouraged from doing their best with the land lest some one else should reap an advantage from their labours, and further that there would be an inducement for selfish and ill-disposed tenants to neglect or exhaust the land during the last year or two of their lease. Against such a dereliction of duty and abuse of the national property due precaution would be taken. A condition of every holding would be that the tenant should maintain and deliver it up in good condition, both as regards fertility of soil and repair of buildings and all appurtenances. His failure to do so should render him liable to damages, and disqualify him from holding land in future. The land being national property, in which every tenant has an interest beyond that of his holding, no true patriot would seek thus to aggrandize himself at the public expense. Any attempt to do so should brand him with disgrace as an unworthy member of the community. While we protect ourselves against dishonest men we must legislate for the honest. With regard to disturbance, we think that the cases of involuntary removal would be

extremely rare. A tenant in possession will always have an advantage over an outsider in his superior knowledge of the holding and its capabilities, and in freedom from expense of entering and stocking. He could, therefore, always offer as high or somewhat higher rent than a stranger. In the case of equal tender, he should have the preference, and if the difference between his tender and the highest was very small, indicating an honest bid, he might be allowed even to amend his tender if he wished. On the other hand, there are advantages under the leasehold system that would greatly outweigh the occasional disturbance of a tenant, which after all is no more than leaseholders, both in the country and in towns, are now subject to at much greater inconvenience. There are few men who settle down in a position in early life with the determination that they will remain in that position to the end of their days. Most men aspire to something like progress and seek to improve their position from time to time. The leasehold system affords convenient opportunities and encouragement for this. A young man, for instance, commencing life with a small capital and little experience, takes a small farm of, say, fifty acres for seven or ten years. At the expiration of his term, if he has been successful and careful, he may find himself in a position to take a larger farm of, say, two hundred acres, and a growing family may render it expedient for him to do so. He accordingly searches the list, that would be published by the Department, of farms to be let, and selecting one or more suitable to his purpose, would tender for them, vacating his former holding, which would be available for another young beginner. At the expiration of another lease, he may find himself in a position to take a still larger farm, say, of five hundred acres. This spirit of progress is much more worthy of encouragement than the lethargic spirit of a man who says, "Well, here is my living; my bread and cheese or potatoes are sure, and I shall rest content, take my ease, and trouble myself for nothing further." The circulation which would be induced by more frequent removal would also be much more conducive to social, moral, and intellectual progress than the stagnation which too often characterizes agricultural populations. Fixity of tenure—that is, allowing tenants to retain their holdings as long as they please unconditionally—is unfavourable to the spirit of progress, and



encourages the unaspiring and indolent to hold land away from those who would make a much better use of it. Under anything in the shape of perpetual tenure, a man might look far and long before meeting with a farm to suit him, and when the opportunity did occur, might find equal difficulty in disposing of his present holding. The uncertainty and difficulty of obtaining land under these conditions would deter men of enterprise from devoting themselves to agricultural pursuits, and would thus be detrimental to national progress. All things considered, the advantages of a leasehold system appear to us greatly to outweigh its disadvantages.

Having given our reasons for preferring

1. A central administration,
2. Letting land by public tender,
3. Leasehold tenancies for terms of years,

we may now gather up the threads and weave them into further leading clauses of our Bill, thus—

IV. That for the future administration of the land a national department be established, to be called the Land Department.

V. That this Department consist of four principal divisions—viz.: (1) a Secretarial division, for conducting the correspondence of the Department; (2) a Registration division, for keeping a register of all tenants and their holdings; (3) an Accountants', or Financial, division, for keeping the accounts of the Department; and (4) a Surveyor's division, for inspecting all holdings and advising as to their condition, improvements required, &c.

VI. That at the head of each of these divisions a Commissioner be appointed by the Government of the day, who must be a member of Parliament and responsible thereto for the entire conduct of his division.

VII. That a Chief Commissioner be appointed who shall be a member of the Cabinet, and responsible to Parliament for the entire policy of the Department.

VIII. That the said five Commissioners constitute the National Land Court, with authority to determine all matters under the Act.

IX. That at the head of the respective divisions, but under the Commissioners, be appointed a Permanent Secretary, a Permanent Registrar, a Permanent Accountant, and a Permanent Surveyor.

X. That to the respective divisions be also appointed an

Assistant Secretary, an Assistant Registrar, an Assistant Accountant, and an Assistant Surveyor.

XI. That to the above-named officers and Commissioners be entrusted the further organization of the Department, and the drawing up of the rules and bye-laws, subject to the sanction of Parliament.

XII. That all land henceforth be let by public tender for such terms of years and under such conditions as to the Commissioners may appear expedient in the interest both of the nation and of the tenants.

XIII. That, in order to bring all unemployed labour as far as possible on the land, it be an instruction to the Commissioners to provide allotments and small holdings wherever and to whatever extent they may be required, on such terms and conditions as shall be as favourable as possible to the workers consistent with the national interest.

It is unnecessary to encumber this paper with the further details of the measure or with the inner organization of the Department, which must be entrusted to men of practical ability and experience. The above outline will enable any one to realize our ideal scheme of administration. That it will not be open to numerous objections from various points of view, or occasionally to abuse by selfish and ill-disposed men, is more than we can venture to hope. It is put forth as a first tentative scheme from a purely national point of view, open to any possible amendment, or to be superseded altogether by any better scheme that can be produced.

Let us glance for a moment at some of the results which may be confidently anticipated from carrying such a scheme into effect. Landlords will be little, if any, worse off than they are now. All they will lose is the iniquitous power they now possess to prey upon the people, to enrich themselves at the expense of the national industry, and to obstruct that industry by their arbitrary control. Tenants will everywhere be free from the hand of oppression, will have security of tenure so far as is consistent with national interests and the equal rights of their fellow-citizens, on terms and conditions fixed by themselves in competition with each other, and will be at liberty to conduct their business in their own way so long as fidelity to the national trust is observed. The nation will profit by whatever additional value is given to the land by the expanding industry of the people. Labour will everywhere find full and remunerative employment. The minimum unit of

wages will be that which any one can earn by applying his labour to land, for land being accessible to all, no one will work for another for less than he can himself earn from the land. All superfluous labour will be drained off from the towns to the great relief and advantage of those who remain. The country will be again dotted over with agricultural and industrial villages. For fifty or a hundred small holders, planted in any spot, would soon grow into a village, while there are many manual industries at present carried on in the crowded centres of our great towns which might be removed to such rural villages with great advantage. Many other advantages will suggest themselves as possible under the system we advocate which are impossible at present. Take, for instance, our suburban roads. Instead of the ugly, dreary, noisy thoroughfares they now are, hemmed in by brick and mortar, dusty in summer, muddy in winter, they might be laid out in this fashion :— A good roadway in the middle, with tram lines if need be ; if asphalted, it would be a universal tramway for all vehicles, especially if mechanical were substituted for animal power ; on each side of this roadway a strip of plantation 30 feet wide, laid out with trees and shrubs, grass and flowers ; next to these a good footpath, asphalted, 10 to 12 feet wide ; next, the front gardens of the houses, which latter should be set back 30 to 50 feet, the fences to be open iron above three feet from the ground. These footways would then form clean and delightful promenades for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood without having to trudge some five or six miles to a so-called breathing hole before they could get a glimpse of a green leaf or a blade of grass. The land thus given up for the benefit of the people, without the enormous cost which has now to be paid to save a bit of land from being covered with brick and mortar, would be more than compensated for by the additional value given to the land on either side. Along such roads would be built detached houses from £80 to £150 rental value. In cross-roads from these would be smaller houses and shops, while sites for larger houses, with more ample grounds, would be reserved in more retired situations. At convenient spots, and within easy reach of the main roads, should be erected blocks of dwellings for artisans. These should be built on a large scale, accommodating at least a thousand families, or from five to six thousand inmates, provided with all the comforts and conveniences suitable to their life.

These buildings should be quadrangular in form, enclosing an open court some 500 feet square, which would be the playground of the children. The private rooms should be 12 ft. by 15 ft., the back portion being the sleeping apartment, which could be curtained off during the day, leaving a convenient sitting-room 15 ft. by 12 ft. Besides these private rooms, to prevent overcrowding, there should be dormitories for children from ten to fourteen years of age, others for youths and maidens from fourteen to eighteen, and others for adults of both sexes. These dormitories should be divided into cubicles by partitions, so as to secure privacy. In addition to these there should be a public dining hall, with ample cooking accommodation, where the inmates could either cook for themselves or purchase what they require ready cooked by some of their number appointed for the purpose. In this room families could sit at tables and partake of a better meal—breakfast, dinner, tea or supper—with much more comfort and at far less expense than most of the class can now obtain in their miserable homes. Then there should be a reading-room, well supplied with suitable literature; a recreation-room, where there could be free conversation and innocent games; a work-room for females only, when they wish to be apart; a lecture-room which, if denominational prejudice did not stand in the way, might also be used as a chapel. Schools should be provided within the building for boys, for girls, and for infants; a *crèche* might be added where infants under school age might be taken care of during the absence of their mothers by some of the inmates appointed for the purpose. Baths, lavatories, and washhouses would, of course, be included. The whole of the buildings should be heated by hot water, lighted by electricity, and carefully ventilated. The rent of a room should include all this, with free access to all the public rooms and conveniences. These rooms, with all these comforts and conveniences, would not cost more than is mostly paid for wretched apartments in the crowded parts of the metropolis and other large towns. Around the entire building a belt of land should be laid out as allotment gardens, and let at a moderate rent to those of the inmates who are disposed to spend a portion of their leisure time in such a healthy and delightful occupation as gardening. Fifty colonies like these planted around London would relieve the most congested parts of the metropolis of a quarter of a million of its inhabitants, at much less

cost than the hideous blocks of buildings that have recently been erected, and with infinite advantage, physical, mental, and moral, to the inmates. Instead of four millions of people being crowded on a hundred square miles as now, they might be spread over four hundred. Sites could be had for schools and other public purposes without cost or difficulty, and metropolitan improvements could be effected with a gain to the revenue instead of enormous losses to the ratepayers at present incurred.

In placing labourers upon small holdings of land it is not necessary to isolate them and reduce them to a state of primitive semi-barbarism. A thatched cottage on a patch of land may have a romantic charm for some æsthetic natures, but if they had to live such a life the romance and the charm would soon, we think, disappear. If civilization has any merit, any advantages, why should it not be brought within reach, as far as practicable, of our agricultural labourers? The comforts, the conveniences, the pleasures of social life, are quite compatible with rural occupation, and if it is the duty of the community to provide comfortable and healthy dwellings for the poor in towns, it is not less the duty of the State to provide for those in the country. With this object in view, we would suggest the following plan for providing small holdings:— Let a thousand acres of suitable land, conveniently situated, be divided into two hundred plots of five acres each. Instead of leaving each occupant to erect a miserable hut, destitute of all conveniences and far removed from his fellow-man, let a block of buildings be erected in the middle of the estate, with private and public rooms and schools sufficient for the entire community, which would consist probably of a thousand individuals, men, women, and children. These buildings (on the same plan as those we have sketched for town workers), with good water supply, well lighted and heated, would at the same cost afford far better and more healthy accommodation than is possible in detached cottages, while, though the individual freedom and independence of the inmates would in nowise be diminished, their closer proximity would enable them to enjoy the pleasures of social intercourse to any extent they pleased without resort to the public-house. Facility would also be afforded for mutual aid and co-operation. By clubbing their shillings together they could purchase their first plough and team of horses to be used by all, in turn.

They could come to any arrangement they pleased with regard to crops, exchanging produce and thus supplementing each other's labour. Ranges of sheds should be put up at convenient places round the margin of the estate, affording accommodation for cows, pigs, storage of produce, and tools. The hire of one plot of land should carry with it at least one good-sized private room, with free access to all the public rooms, attendance at school for the children, if any, and adequate shed accommodation. But we would not restrict a man to one or two plots if he is able to utilize more, provided other applicants were not excluded thereby. In this way all the comforts and conveniences of civilized life may be combined with the pleasures of rural occupation. A thousand villages like this planted all over the country would relieve our congested towns of a million of their surplus population, to the great advantage both of those who were removed and of those that remained. These are visions possible as soon as, but not before, the land has been brought under the control of the nation, and landlords prevented from appropriating the results of other people's industry.

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## POSTSCRIPT.

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Since the foregoing Paper was read and appeared in print, there have been utterances by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Herbert Spencer and others, which appear to call for some notice.

Mr. Gladstone in an address, while acknowledging the right of the nation to deal with the land in any way it deemed expedient in the national interest, said that in his view, to take the land without compensation to landlords would be robbery; to take it with compensation would be folly, for the State is not qualified to exercise the functions of a landlord. To the first point the people might reply

that in doing so they were only taking back their own property which had been wrongfully filched from them. But, holding as we do that, however iniquitous our land laws may be in their origin and history, as long as the people permit them to be the law of the land they are responsible for what takes place under them, we so far agree with Mr. Gladstone that in very many cases it would be unjust, and in all cases extremely harsh to dispossess landlords without compensation. On the second point, whether the change would be advantageous or otherwise, depends of course upon the compensation given, and the mode of administration adopted. If the nation is to buy back its land at landlords' prices, as it is bought by individuals, doubtless the transaction, in a pecuniary sense, would be disadvantageous, at least at first, though it is a question even then whether other advantages, such as placing the land more fully and freely at the service of labour, would not ultimately outweigh this disadvantage. But this is not the way in which the State must acquire the control of the land. It would be more unjust to the people than to take it without compensation would be to landlords. One individual has no more right to land than another, and therefore, if one not in possession wishes to acquire the interest another holds in land, he can do so only on such terms as the latter demands or is willing to accept. But the State bears quite a different relation to the landlord. The State is the supreme landlord and actual owner of the land. It has a right, which the individual has not, to resume possession whenever it pleases. All that landlords have is an estate or interest in the land during the pleasure of the Crown as representing the nation. That the nation should purchase its own property at prices demanded by the holders, may be a landlord's view, but it will not be the people's. The landlord's interest in the land is twofold, consisting:—1. Of a control over it which enables him to exercise a most despotic power over the people; 2. A revenue derived from it. The latter only is in any sense property and the ground of compensation. The former is a power which may be withdrawn at any time by the people without compensation. A prisoner having no other prospect of regaining his liberty, may consent to pay a ransom; but it would be a dangerous proceeding to demand a ransom from a people having the right and the power to assert their freedom. But even over

the revenue from the land the State has a supreme control and can tax it or reduce it as it may deem expedient. The matter of compensation, therefore, is entirely at the discretion of the nation, and in securing to landlords, as we propose in the foregoing paper, the present net income they derive from the land, we deal considerately and generously with them. We virtually say to them, "You may keep what you have, but you must not further enrich yourselves at the expense of the people." Lastly, Mr. Gladstone says that the State is not qualified to exercise the functions of a landlord. The functions at present exercised by landlords, perhaps not. We should be sorry if it did, even if it had the right. But such functions as we have assigned to it, we think it can and ought to exercise.

Mr. John Morley declares himself dead against Land Nationalization, but until he assigns some cogent reasons for the position he takes, all we can say is—notwithstanding our admiration of his ability, political and literary—we are sorry for Mr. John Morley.

Next, as regards the recent attitude of Mr. Herbert Spencer towards the Land Question. Matters of fact which we are unable to verify for ourselves, we must accept, with more or less confidence, on the most reliable authority we can find. Not so matters of opinion on which, so far as the data before us and our ability to reason from them go, we can form our own judgment. A proposition or statement is true or untrue in itself, quite irrespective of any authority, however eminent, that may enunciate it. When Mr. Herbert Spencer says—"Equity does not permit property in land. For if one portion of the earth's surface may justly become the possession of an individual, held for his sole use and benefit, as a thing to which he has an exclusive right, then other portions of its surface may be so held, and our planet must then lapse into private hands. It follows that if the landowners have a valid right to its surface, all who are not landowners have no right at all to its surface. . . . However difficult it may be to embody the theory of the Nationalization of the land in fact, equity sternly commands it to be done"—we accept that statement, not because Mr. Herbert Spencer says it, but because it commends itself to our judgment as just. It is not the less just if Mr. Herbert Spencer repudiates what he has said, and therefore, unless he can lay before us convincing



arguments to the contrary, we hold to it still. But, if we understand Mr. Herbert Spencer rightly, he does not repudiate or recall the principle he laid down. He only doubts the expediency of reducing it to practice in this country because he can see no way of doing so that will not be a greater disadvantage to the nation than the existing system. But surely Mr. Spencer will not contend that a nation must continue to suffer wrong to the end of time because no cure can be found that is not worse than the disease. In Mr. Spencer's own words we say, "However difficult it may be, equity sternly demands it to be done." It is our business and our duty to find the way. Mr. Spencer's difficulty is doubtless the same which presented itself to the late Professor Fawcett, to Mr. Gladstone, perhaps to Mr. John Morley, and many others who approach the subject without adequate investigation. We can only refer Mr. Spencer to what we have said above in reply to Mr. Gladstone, and to our scheme as set forth in the foregoing pages.

Lastly, with reference to recent correspondence on town rents, it has been argued, on the one hand, that the landlord has no moral right to appropriate to himself values which he has in no way contributed to create. On the other hand, it has been contended, with equal justice, that no man has a right to premises or land for less than their full value. The question is: To whom should this value go? The only answer is: To those who created it—the community. As we have shown above (pp. 12, 13) in relation to the land, the community is nothing less than the whole nation. The inevitable inference is, that rent of land, after all employed upon it have been fairly remunerated for their labour, should go into the national exchequer to be applied to national purposes and take the place of imposed taxation.

A word to those who, approaching the subject from a pecuniary point of view only, favour the taxation of rent and land values as an adequate remedy for existing injustice. This taxation of rent, while landlords are permitted to retain the power of taxing the people at their will under the form of rent, will prove largely if not wholly illusive. To whatever extent tenants are relieved from taxation, to the same extent will their ability to pay rent be increased, and landlords will avail themselves of every opportunity to increase rent. Thus, while heavy rates and

taxes will apparently be paid by landlords, they will in reality be paid by their tenants in the form of rent. From this there is no escape but by at once withdrawing the land entirely from landlord control. Even if the taxation of rent did to any extent succeed, it would not accomplish or go any way towards accomplishing the main and most important object of Land Nationalization, that of making land more accessible to unemployed labour. There will still be the same difficulty in providing land for allotments and small holdings as now. Local authorities may be invested with powers to acquire land compulsorily, but as long as landlord interests have to be purchased or compensated for in some way, such power will be useless, the cost neutralizing all benefit to be derived therefrom. Nor will the possession of the land by local authorities meet the exigencies of the case. If the whole of the land were under the control of local authorities, each local board would be bound to provide for the wants of its own district, but would feel no obligation or inclination to relieve other districts. What then is to become of the 100,000 unemployed in London? Land cannot be found for them within the metropolitan area, and they would have no claim upon other districts. Turn the question how we will, there is but one remedy for existing evils, and that is to bring the whole of the land under the direct and unrestricted control of the nation, to be administered by an authority representing and responsible to the whole people. In no other way can the requirements of the people be effectually and impartially provided for.



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## LANDLORDISM, AND ITS EFFECT ON WAGES.

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... "I know no better definition of the rights of man:—THOU SHALT NOT STEAL; THOU SHALT NOT BE STOLEN FROM. Give every man what is his—the accurate price of what he has done and been—no more shall any complain, neither shall the earth suffer any more."—CARLYLE.

"To every man according to his work."

No one can deny that the wages received by the main body of the world's workers are not in proportion to the work they do. Wages as a rule do not bear a proper relation either to the time occupied, or to the difficulty, unpleasantness, or danger of the work. It is often true that the hardest work is the worst paid. Thousands of men and women earn so little that their minds are never free from care. They and their children are poorly fed, poorly clad, and poorly housed. Untended sickness and slow starvation take their poor victims, while the *willing* hands of fathers or brothers are *forced* to be idle. Hope is crushed, and men get reckless. Homes are miserable that ought to be happy; and members of our great human brotherhood are pressed down by the weight of their surroundings into the most pitiable degradation of character and bodily strength.

Before we can remove such gross injustice, we must know its cause. The *Land Nationalisation Society* holds that the prime cause is *landlordism*, under which private individuals control the nation's land on which all of us are absolutely dependent, but which is treated by landlords for their own advantage, and without regard to the well-being of their landless fellow-countrymen.

### HOW LANDLORDISM REDUCES WAGES.

#### I. IT CHECKS THE PRODUCTION OF WEALTH.

##### (a) *By affording no security for capital or labor.*

By virtue of their power landlords every day confiscate the result of other men's outlay. Thus farmers who have improved their land, tradesmen who have established businesses, and men who have built substantial

houses are made to suffer, and are often ruined by the extortion of those who call themselves the *owners* of the land.

(b) *By compelling the taxation of labor-products.*

The rent of the land being pocketed by private persons, the National and Local Government have to get their revenue from other sources. Thus they tax the incomes of many who can ill bear the burden. They tax houses, tobacco, tea, coffee, &c., &c.; and it is well known that you hinder industry if you tax its products.

(c) *By throwing land out of use and labor out of employment.*

As *all* wealth, whatsoever, is derived from labor applied to the raw material (land), it follows that all unused land and all unemployed labor is a national loss. But landlords concern themselves only with the rent. The corn-growing tenant is made to give way to the grass-growing tenant, because the latter can pay a higher rent. The sheep-farmer makes way for the sportsman for the same reason. Therefore land is turned out of good cultivation, and men are thrown out of work.

II. IT FURTHER REDUCES THE WORKER'S SHARE OF THE WEALTH HE CREATES.

(a) *By exacting a heavy rent.*

Nearly £150,000,000 a year do the comparative handful of landlords pocket for graciously permitting other men to work for their living on the land which should be treated as common property. They even claim that the coal, iron, lead, tin, copper, &c., under the surface are theirs, and charge £10,000,000 a year for allowing miners to risk their lives in getting them.

(b) *By making the worker helpless.*

Ninety-nine men out of a hundred have no chance of earning money at all except they work for an employer. The wages which they receive do not depend on the harsh or kind character of the employer, or on the largeness or smallness of his profits. Wages are determined by the number of men wanting employment. If labor is plentiful, it is cheap—that is, wages are low; if labor is scarce, it is dear—that is,

wages are high. Landlordism floods the labor market with the unemployed or the half-employed, and therefore is chiefly responsible for the fact that what men are compelled to take is often much less than what they really earn.

If, then, the above be true, and we challenge contradiction, it follows that before wages can permanently rise landlordism must be abolished. As it was established, so it can be disestablished,—by Act of Parliament; of a Parliament, not of landlords, but truly representative of an enlightened and justice-loving but hitherto-oppressed democracy. Let us see what benefits we may expect when all men, however poor they may be, shall be able, either for cultivation or habitation, to rent land, on fair terms, under a Land Board, or Parish Council.

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#### HOW LAND NATIONALISATION WILL RAISE WAGES.

##### I. IT WILL INCREASE THE PRODUCTION OF WEALTH.

(a) *By giving every security to capital and labor.*

They who sow shall reap; they who build shall enter in. Industry will therefore be encouraged.

(b) *By gradually abolishing rates and taxes.*

The land rent will defray all the expenses of national and local government.

(c) *By bringing land and labor into the best use.*

A landlord's chief object (*whether he be taxed or not*) is to get a high rent, regardless of everything else. A Land Board or Parish Council will aim at the proper utilisation of the land as the most desirable end. The husbandman has the first claim to the fruits.

##### II. THE WORKER WILL STILL FURTHER BENEFIT.

(a) *Rents will be used for the public good.*

Instead of being wasted in luxury by private receivers, they will go into the public purse so that all may be benefited.

(b) *Workers will be able to make a free contract.*

The country districts, naturally and healthily settled, will be more attractive; towns will not be overcrowded, and the labor market will not be over-stocked. Thus house-rents will fall and wages will rise. *No man will work for another for less than he can get by working for*

*himself*. This power to get higher wages includes the power to get *shorter hours* and better conditions generally without resorting to that costly *two-edged* weapon, the strike, which so often fails. Better wages, more leisure to enjoy life, and more comfortable homes will increase men's independence and self-respect. More *practice* in spending money will we hope and believe lead to more *wisdom* in spending it. Material improvement will pave the way for moral improvement, and for a *brighter era* in which there will be greater peace, greater temperance, greater unselfishness, and greater happiness of the most lasting kind.

We appeal to you who suffer (for your own sakes) and to you who do not suffer (for the sake of others) to use unrelenting endeavour until your united action shall result in the nationalisation of every acre of the land and every penny of the rent.

“For it's coming yet ere long,  
When right shall conquer wrong,  
And the people shall enjoy their own again.”

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## LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,

14, Southampton Street, Strand, London.

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Object :—

To restore the land to the people, and the people to the land.

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PRESIDENT: ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, LL.D., F.R.G.S., D.C.L.  
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# PAPERS FOR THE PEOPLE

*BY ONE OF THEM*

No. I.

## OUR LAND

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'THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S'

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LONDON

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## PAPERS FOR THE PEOPLE.

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# OUR LAND.

LAND is the source whence man derives all that is requisite for his existence. He needs land as a dwelling place, and as the scene of his industry; from land, directly or indirectly, he draws his food, his clothing, and the materials of all else that he requires. As every man has a right by nature to the means of existence, land is his birthright, and, although the exigences of modern society may render an exchange or modification of this right expedient, no dealing with the land which does not recognise and is not based upon this natural right can be just or equitable.

It will be evident to every reflecting mind that the laws affecting land tenure lie at the very root of our social system, and that any partiality or injustice here must be felt more or less keenly throughout the entire community, and must aggravate and intensify the evils arising from those other and, to a large extent, inevitable inequalities depending upon individual differences.

Though much has been written on the subject of land tenure, the question has almost invariably been treated as one affecting simply the relation between owner and occupier, regardless of the great social problem involved therein.

In the present paper we purpose approaching the subject from a new standpoint, with a view to determine the principle upon which land tenure should be based consistent with the natural and social rights of man. In other words, our problem is—Given land and man to dwell upon it, what is the relation that the latter should bear to the former, so that the rights and interest of every man therein should be equally respected and secured ?

In that primitive state of nature in which man lives upon the spontaneous productions of the earth, no property in land exists. Its woods and its plains are alike free to all, and its fruit is the rightful property of whoever puts forth his hand to pluck it. The cave in which he shelters himself is his only so long as he continues to occupy it. But as soon as man applies labour to the land, he acquires a right until he has reaped the fruit of his labour. If he build a hut, he may retain possession or dispose of it as he pleases ; if he tills the soil and sows seed he has a right to reap the harvest, and cannot be fairly dispossessed as long as he continues thus to apply his labour. If however he removes his hut, or ceases to cultivate the land, his right thereto ceases. He has no longer any right to retain possession or to exact from another man a tribute for that which cost him nothing. We see then that the natural right to land is a right of user only, not of ownership, and is at most a life interest. We see further that it does not include any unexhausted results of labour which belong to, and may rightfully be disposed of by, those whose industry originated them. Throughout our inquiry it will be most essential to distinguish between these two kinds of property—viz., that which is inherent in the land itself, and that which, though frequently inseparable from it, is the

result of industry. It is with the former we have more especially to deal, but the latter, from the fact of its often being inseparable from it, must not be lost sight of.

In the wild state, as families grow into tribes, their hunting excursions frequently extend over a large area. Over this they claim a common right, and will resist another tribe who may venture to trespass upon their grounds. In the contests which ensue on such occasions, though necessarily decided by the relative strength and prowess of the combatants, our sympathies would favour the tribe in possession, and our natural sense of right would lead us to recognise the justice of their cause, whether they were successful or not in maintaining it. Here we get the first glimpse of a common or national right. There is no personal property in the land; it is open to all to hunt individually, or to organise combined excursions on a larger or smaller scale as they please, and to share the booty acquired as they may determine. This tribal or national right, however, like the individual right described above, is one of occupation only. If the tribe removes to another spot, or discontinues to hunt the grounds, we could not recognise any right in them to exclude another tribe or to exact from that tribe any share of the game they had had no hand in taking. The same kind of common right prevails also among pastoral nomadic tribes. The shepherd pitches his tent on any unoccupied land he pleases, but claims no right to or interest in it after he has removed.

As men begin to apply their industry to the cultivation of the soil, their attachment to a particular spot assumes a closer and more permanent character. If a man erects a hut or applies his labour to bring a piece of land under cultivation, no other man has a right to step in and deprive him

of the fruit of his labour or of any part of it. He may transfer his interest to another, but his interest is confined to the results of his labour and does not include any right to the land itself. If he forsakes his hut, and allows it to fall to ruin and thus become valueless, or if he discontinues to cultivate the land, his interest therein ceases and any other man has as much right to possession as he. •

In the progress of society some individuals acquire a skill in handicraft, and instead of each one doing everything for himself, it is found mutually advantageous to exchange the products of their labour. Thus in course of time some men cease to be either 'tillers of the ground' or 'keepers of sheep,' and their interest in the land appears greatly to diminish. In reality we shall find it does not do so. As long as these parties are pretty evenly balanced, so that a man can obtain as good a return in land produce for his labour applied to handicraft as when applied to land, no difficulty is felt and no land question arises. But as population increases, while land remains limited in quantity, a continually increasing number are compelled to obtain their livelihood by handicraft, and the natural consequence is that labour applied to handicraft diminishes while that applied to land increases in value. In other words, a man must apply much more labour to handicraft than to land to obtain an equivalent in produce. Hence a competition for land arises, and land acquires a value which it did not originally possess. What does this value represent? It originates in the increase of labour brought upon the land in excess of what can be applied to its cultivation. It represents the difference in value between labour applied directly to land and that devoted to other branches of industry. It is what a man will pay for preferential possession and is proportionate to the amount and value of

the industry carried on upon its surface.) For grazing and agricultural purposes, it is comparatively small; for manufacturing purposes, representing a much larger amount of industrial labour, it is much greater; for the extensive mercantile transactions of our great cities, representing the industrial energy of vast tracts and populations in all parts of the world, it is immensely greater. To whom should this value belong? Does it rightfully belong to the individuals who happen to be in possession at a certain time? Certainly not; they have not given it the value. It belongs to the community at large whose united energies and increasing industry have conferred this value upon it, and it should be applied in such a manner as to equalise the value of industry: to compensate those whose labour has become relatively depreciated by being applied to handicraft.

However various may be the laws and customs relating to landed property in different countries, they may all be grouped as based upon one of two principles—viz., individual ownership, or common or national ownership. It is our business to inquire which of these two principles the more effectually secures to man his natural right and protects him from unjust influence and oppression; which also affords the greater facility for the full development of the industrial resources of the people.

Unfortunately, wherever land has acquired value, individual ownership in some shape or other is the rule, and we have consequently no experience of the working of the opposite principle. This individual ownership, moreover, has its origin, not in the free development of social relations, but in conquest or force of some kind, and its evils are also so mixed up with those arising from other sources that it is

difficult, if not impossible, clearly to distinguish them. The only course which appears open to us is to take a hypothetical case from which all disturbing influences may be eliminated, and work out each principle to its inevitable consequences. If we find that the one results in unjust social inequalities, giving to one man an undue power and influence over another, requiring, from time to time, special legislation to readjust ; while the other, possessing within itself the power of adapting itself to all circumstances, is free from these evils, and especially if it afford greater facilities for developing the industrial energies of the people, we can have no hesitation in affirming the latter to be the true principle upon which land tenure should rest.

Our hypothetical case then is this. Let us suppose that a hundred men with their wives settle upon a tract of country, say an island like our own. Actuated by upright and honourable motives, they desire to be just towards each other and towards their descendants. They accordingly survey and parcel out their newly acquired territory into one hundred lots of equal value, and each takes possession of that which falls to him. We need not isolate them. Recognising the value of co-operation, they may lend friendly aid to each other in carrying out such operations as they cannot perform single handed, and may act in concert in the execution of works for their common benefit, but each would be lord of his own freehold, to dispose of it as he pleased. We will further suppose that their love of justice and equality leads them to set their faces against any law of primogeniture, and to determine that on the demise of each proprietor his estate should be equally divided amongst his children. Here then is a state of the most perfect equality anyone can desire.

Such a community might exist and flourish, and have all that heart can wish, for many years, nay for many generations. But a day of reckoning would come.

While population as a whole increases with considerable regularity, this increase is very irregularly distributed among families. Some increase with great rapidity, others remain nearly stationary, while some become extinct. After a sufficient time, therefore, we should find some of the original plots so subdivided as not to afford an adequate subsistence for their proprietors, while others would remain entire. Here then is the first element of inequality. We should have large proprietors and small proprietors, and the fate of small proprietors under such circumstances is not difficult to determine. Besides, there must be a limit to the subdivision of land, or the plots would ultimately become so small as to be quite useless, and therefore worthless. What is to become of the superfluous labour in the more densely populated districts? In the first instance, it would doubtless find employment on the lands of the larger proprietors, but at wages diminishing and rents increasing in proportion as labour and competition for employment increased; and thus the difference would become wider: the rich would grow richer, the poor would grow poorer and have to work harder. Mining, manufactures, and commerce would find employment for large numbers of the people, but mining can be carried on only where useful minerals exist; and manufactures and commerce naturally concentrate themselves on spots favourable to their development. In the competition for these plots the fortunate owners would be able to exact a large and ever-increasing rent, which means nothing more nor less than a large and ever-increasing share in the indus-



trial products of the nation, for the simple permission to exercise that industry upon its surface. The natural result of this is to lower the wages of labour on the one hand, and to raise the price of all the necessaries of life on the other, thus inflicting a double injury on the industrial population by increasing the burdens they have to bear, while, at the same time, it diminishes their ability to bear them. We see then, without the introduction of any of those inequalities which arise from the natural difference in energy between one man and another, individual property in land must ultimately produce those social inequalities from which arise most of the evils that afflict modern society. Superior energy may enable a few to overcome these disadvantages, but the bulk of the people must succumb to their fate, and become more and more dependent upon others for the means of dragging on a wretched existence, receiving as doles from the more favoured sections of society a portion of what they ought to receive as the honest reward of their industry. The demoralising influence of this it is not necessary here to point out. In the course of eight or nine centuries, our colony of two hundred souls would, under ordinary circumstances, have increased to a population equal to that of our own country at the present time, and would probably be in a very similar condition. Supposing the same circumstances to continue, what will be the condition of this country two or three centuries hence, when the population will be six or sevenfold what it is now? What will be the value of land, especially in such centres as London, Liverpool, Manchester? What the rate of wages? What the price of provisions? Emigration is advocated by some as the natural relief for excess of population. But whatever may be said in

favour of emigration as opening new resources for industrial enterprise, in the advantages from which the mother country would participate, whether it affords any relief to its redundant labour is at best doubtful. The persons who emigrate are, for the most part, the energetic and enterprising, the withdrawal of whose services is a loss, not a gain, to the community. The burden of society, the weak and helpless, remains undiminished—is indeed proportionally increased.

Now let us apply another principle, and, working out our problem anew, see if it affords any correction or mitigation of these evils. Let us suppose that our colonists foresee the consequences of individual property in land, and desire to avoid them. They are led to consider that whatever value the land may acquire will be the result of the united industry carried on upon its surface, whether directly in the cultivation of the soil, or indirectly in manufactures and commerce, and should therefore belong, not to the few, who happen to stand in the relation of owners, but to the whole people. They may also have in view the great difference in value which land acquires from the concentration of industry in certain localities—impossible to foresee in the first settlement of a country. For these reasons, we will suppose our colonists to determine that the land shall not be allotted, or alienated, but remain the common property of the community. Each man may take whatever land he desires, for such term of years, at such rent, and subject to such conditions, as the community, or their representatives appointed for the purpose, may determine. In case of two or more individuals desiring the same plot, it should be allotted to him who, in open competition, offered the highest rent for it. Besides avoiding the evils resulting from

personal property in the land, this mode of settlement would have other collateral advantages; it would enable the settlers to locate themselves in closer proximity, and it would facilitate, from the first, a subdivision and distribution of labour. Some could devote themselves to agriculture, others to handicraft, to their mutual advantage. In the first instance, the rents would be little more than nominal; but as the leases expired, and the resources and requirements of the colonists increased, there would be a competition for the plots nearer the centre of civilisation, and rents would there rise, while the confines of the settlement would afford ample scope for extending industry. Like an exogenous plant, the colony would grow compactly by the periodical addition of a new belt of civilisation, until the whole of the land was brought under cultivation.

Let eight or nine centuries pass over our colony under these circumstances, when its population and industrial enterprise will have attained a development equal to that of our country at the present time. What will be its condition? In what will it differ from that which we have shown above must necessarily result where individual property in land prevails? It would differ in these respects: Land, being let only for terms of years, and by open competition or tender, would be equally accessible to all persons and for all purposes at its market value. Rents might be as high, in some cases perhaps higher, but as they would go into the public exchequer and be applied for the public benefit, instead of into private pockets for individual aggrandisement, they would be available for national expenses, for public works and institutions, for developing the resources of the country, and thus equalise and diminish, perhaps

annihilate altogether, the burdens of imperial and local taxation. The benefit would thus be distributed equally over the whole population. Although the land itself could not be divided amongst the inhabitants and no man could call a certain piece of land absolutely his own, every man, the humblest as well as the highest, would participate in the advantages accruing from its increased value, resulting from increased national industry and prosperity. The industrial classes would pay no rent in which they did not enjoy their full share of advantage. Every man would in fact be, not individually, but jointly, owner of the soil, and therefore his own landlord. If wealth accumulated, as it undoubtedly would and should do, since it could not, by investment in land, exact a tribute from the industrial classes for which it confers no benefit in return, it would have to ally itself with industry, on terms mutually advantageous. Full scope and encouragement would thus be afforded to all kinds of industrial enterprise. Nothing could stand in the way of any man's progress but his own want of skill or want of energy. Every man, rich or poor, the member of the most prolific equally with the sole descendant of the oldest ancestral family, would have the same natural opportunity. Industry being thus free from every burden except such as its own ignorance and shortsightedness might impose, and having no source outside of itself to which it could trace any evils it might labour under, would learn from experience to find a remedy for any which might exist in a proper adjustment of its elements to each other. The relation of capital to labour, natural allies and equally necessary elements in the development of industrial enterprise, must be adjusted on such a basis as to destroy the rivalry and antagonism

which at present exist between them, so that the interest of the one may carry with it the interest of the other.

Under this system however, as under any other, there must of course be a limit to the population which a given extent of land will sustain, but this limit will be the more extended as its industrial products are the more equally distributed; and this is effected under a system of national land tenure, by relieving the industrial classes from the heavy burdens imposed upon them under the system of individual ownership. But as long as there are other nations able and willing to exchange land produce for manufactures, population need not be restricted to that which the land itself can sustain. Manufactures and commerce may increase to any extent as long as such products of industry can be exchanged for a fair equivalent of the necessaries of life. If circumstances should favour such a development, there is no reason why England should not become one vast workshop, and purchase the whole, as it now does a large portion, of the land produce it consumes. In proportion, however, as the increased value which land acquires when occupied for mining, manufacturing, or mercantile purposes passes, under the name of rent, into the pockets of individuals as landowners, to that extent is the population at large deprived of a fair equivalent for their industry, for the rent must ultimately come out of the pocket of the consumer in the shape of higher prices. This places them at a disadvantage relatively to other nations where land is cheaper. Rents cannot, should not be abolished or restricted, for that would again favour the few as occupiers at the expense of the community at large, but if they went into the public exchequer instead of into private pockets the entire people would share in the benefit of the

increase instead of a few individuals only. It would then be a matter of indifference to what extent rents increased. If they should ultimately exceed all the national requirements, as perhaps they might, the surplus would be distributed among the people, the common landowner, as the result of their common and united industry, or be appropriated to such purposes for their common benefit as they, through their representatives, might determine.

That individual property in land is a natural wrong will be further evident if we consider that land is of no value without labour. There is abundance of the finest land on the surface of the earth not worth five shillings an acre, simply because there is no labour in its proximity. Other things being equal, the value of land is in proportion to the amount of industrial enterprise carried on upon it, whether directly in its cultivation or indirectly in manufacturing or mercantile pursuits. The almost fabulous and still increasing price of freehold in the City of London, for instance, is owing entirely to the magnitude of the commercial transactions carried on upon its surface. Let the three millions of people inhabiting the metropolis remove at once to another port, carrying their business connections with them; what would be the value of the freehold? This value then is inherent, not in the land, but in the industry concentrated upon it. Why should it pass into the pockets of a few who, as landlords simply, contribute nothing towards its realisation? Again, individual property in land gives to one man a power over his fellow man, which no one ought to possess. It is only for the landowners to combine and they could drive the whole population of this country across the sea. It is no answer to say that their own interest is a sufficient safeguard.

against this. The power to do wrong should not exist even in theory. Though there is no probability of this power being exercised on a large scale, it *is* exercised in certain cases to the injury of individuals. Tenants are frequently dispossessed or rejected in favour of others, not for any demerit of their own, but to suit the social or political views, sometimes merely the caprices, of landlords or their agents. Landlordism, moreover, is hardly consistent with that manly freedom and independence which is especially a Briton's pride. Why should I, a free-born man, be compelled to pay another man tribute for permission to stand upon God's earth and earn my living? As a member of a community it would be my duty as well as my privilege to share my lot with them. If I required land, whether for agricultural, building, or mining operations, or simply for pleasure, as for a park, I should expect to pay a rent equivalent to its value, which value would be determined, as in all other cases, by the ratio of supply and demand. Whatever rent I had to pay, I should know that my neighbours paid in the same proportion, and, the rents going into a common fund applied to national purposes, I should also know that I had my full share in its benefit. Thus the antagonism between landlord and tenant would cease. I should in fact be my own landlord, not solely, but jointly with my countrymen.

Supposing that the principle of nationalisation of land is acknowledged, the question arises—How can a nation like Britain, in which individual ownership has prevailed so long, resume its right? There must be nothing in the shape of spoliation. That which the nation has sanctioned down to the present time must not be repudiated. Those who, relying upon the national honour and stability, have invested their

honest savings in land must not find their confidence misplaced. The nation must honestly repurchase at a fair price the right which it has recognised. How is this to be effected? Professor Fawcett raises a mountain of financial difficulty\* ; it is, however, but a cloud in the horizon, which will disappear as we approach. No doubt if the State had first to borrow the large amount necessary to purchase the land, and pay it over to the landowners, who would then have to seek reinvestments of it, considerable financial derangement would ensue, and great loss would be incurred both by the State in borrowing and by property holders in reinvesting. This may be saved on both sides by a simple exchange of securities—Consols for land. The only social change this would involve would be that tenants would pay their rents to the State instead of to landlords, the latter would receive dividends from the Bank instead of rents from tenants. The nation would save all the expense of borrowing, also the heavy expenses of conveyance, investigation being necessary only in cases of disputed title, but, on the other hand, would lose the revenue arising therefrom. The landowners would be saved the expenses attending the sale of land and receive in exchange an investment on which they could realise at any time at a nominal cost of one-eighth per cent. The change has, in fact, been effected as regards our crown lands. These were formerly the estates of the Sovereign; the nation took possession of them and allowed the Sovereign a certain sum annually in lieu thereof, and they are now bringing a profit to the nation. The same process should be applied to the whole of the land.

The great difficulty would lie in determining the value of the land and the equivalent to be given for it. For this

\* See *Fortnightly Review*, Dec. 1872



purpose, a competent commission, commanding the full confidence of the nation, would have to be appointed. The object of this commission should be to secure to every land-owner the full value of his property realised to the present time, but on no account to discount the future. The details necessary for this valuation are not before us, and could not be discussed in the present paper if they were. A few general remarks indicating principles must suffice. All fixed, rent charges, perpetual and limited, would become charges on the consolidated fund without change. In land let for agricultural purposes at a fair rent, the rent would indicate its value, and its amount be secured to the owner. Land in the occupation of owners would have to be specially valued, and the annual value secured to the owners, who should pay a corresponding rent for such term of years as may be determined on. Manorial rights must be valued and purchased, and the waste lands utilised to the best advantage. As we do not advocate the purchase of private buildings by the State, to which we think there are serious objections, the land only, where built upon, would be taken and paid for by the State; interests in the buildings, whether in possession or in reversion, being left as they are. Perhaps the greatest difficulty would arise in the case of land in the neighbourhood of towns, which acquires a value beyond its income, in proportion to the probability of its being, sooner or later, available for building purposes. It would be unjust, on the one hand, to deprive owners, some of whom may have recently purchased with this view, of this prospective increase of value; while, on the other hand, it would be a great loss to the State to recognise it at once. The solution we would suggest is, that the present income of the land be at once

secured to the owners, and such further amount as may appear just be reserved to be paid to each as his land becomes built upon. In this way, the owners would receive this additional value at the same time, and in the same rotation as if the land had remained in their own possession, while the State would not have to pay the additional annuities till the land actually brought it in. Of course this amount should be fixed at the time of transfer, so that any additional value which the land may acquire in the meanwhile may belong to the nation. This outline sketch is sufficient, we hope, to show that this great transaction is practicable without any serious social disturbance. All existing tenancies would remain as they are, and the gross annual payment should not exceed the gross annual income of the land.

But it may be asked, what advantage can arise from this measure, if the nation simply receives the rents of the land, and pays the same amount, in the shape of dividends, to its former owners? The advantage would be that all future improvement in the value of land would belong to the nation, and would be available for the remission of taxation or payment of debt, and thus gradually diminish the burdens which press so heavily upon industry. Other collateral advantages would result from the increased circulation of the people which it would encourage, all land being offered in open competition. Men of enterprise would always be on the look-out for that which would afford them the best opportunities for the employment of their capital and the exercise of their skill, and the circulation thus induced would be more favourable to social and intellectual progress than the stagnation which prevails under patrimonial descent.

The land having become national property, the next question to be discussed is the principle upon which it should be managed. The objection put forth by some persons, that State departments are liable to corruption, cannot be admitted as a valid one. Granted that State departments have been liable to corruption, that is no reason why they should continue so. This evil has its appropriate remedy, but not in continuing a national wrong or foregoing a national right. The departments most open to the charge are those which come least in contact with popular interests, such as those connected with the Army and Navy, less so the Civil Service, least of all the Post Office. Like the latter, which, without affirming that it is perfect, may be pointed to with some degree of pride as a national institution, the Land Department would so closely affect popular and individual interests that mismanagement to any great extent would be practically impossible.

The object some parties have in view in advocating the nationalisation of land is to enable persons to acquire small plots at a low rent. This is a chimera which scarcely requires refutation. No individual could acquire land for less than its market value without a wrong to the nation; and whether it should be let in large or small plots would depend upon how it could be utilised to most advantage, and would be indicated by popular demand.

Agriculture must be regulated by the same law, free and unfettered, which governs other branches of industry. If, like them, it can be carried on more economically, and therefore more profitably, on a large than on a small scale, it is to the interest of the nation that it should be so. The management of the land on behalf of the nation must, of

course, be entrusted to persons of experience. Agricultural land should be offered for such terms and on such conditions as circumstances may dictate—in open competition to whoever will give the highest rent for it. It would thus naturally and necessarily fall into those hands which could make it the most productive. Where land is capable of improvement by the execution of such works as drainage, &c., the term should be sufficiently long to secure to the tenant an adequate return for his outlay, and a profitable employment would thus be provided for capital as well as for labour. Instead of farming being carried on on a smaller scale, the probability is that, as in other branches of industry, manufacturing and mercantile, men would find it to their advantage to combine their capital and their labour. But labour has nothing to fear from this. With the proper adjustment of capital and labour which must follow, whatever would be advantageous to the one would be advantageous to the other. The impetus thus given to agriculture would not only enhance the value of land to the benefit of the entire nation and the diminution of the burdens pressing especially on the working classes, but infuse new vigour into every branch of industrial enterprise. Building land, in like manner, should be let, subject to the necessary conditions as to building, to the highest bidder, but with this difference from the present practice—that instead of the buildings reverting to the landlord at the expiration of the lease, they should remain the property of the builder or his representative. A higher rent would thus at once be obtained for the land, and the leases might be shorter; builders also would be induced to build more substantially than at present. At the expiration of a lease, the building would be valued

and the land relet, subject to the payment of this value, or an equivalent rent, to the owner of the house. In this way, any increase in the value of the land would be early secured to the nation, while the building and management of house property as an industrial occupation would be left, as it ought to be, to individual enterprise. Mining property would be let competitively, subject to royalties as now; minerals, like the land, belong to the nation, and should therefore be paid for, a sufficient margin being left to remunerate the cost and labour of working them.

It only remains to notice the proposals put forth as remedies for existing evils in place of the nationalisation of land. First, the establishment of an encumbered estates court has been suggested. This might release certain landlords from difficulties and increase the value of the lands dealt with, but would it benefit the nation? By no means. The increased value would pass into the pockets of the fortunate owners.

Another and much advocated proposal is to simplify the method and diminish the expenses of the transfer of land. For whose benefit? Certainly not the nation's. The idea is that land would more frequently change hands. This is at best extremely doubtful. Plenty of land is at this moment offered for sale, and men buy it when they want it at the market price. They would not buy it under any circumstances if they did not want it. But what would a landowner say to a purchaser if the costs of transfer were reduced to a minimum? 'You will now have no cost of conveyance, the land is therefore worth so much more, and you must pay me a higher price for it.' Thus the whole benefit would pass into the pockets of the landowners and form a capitalised addition to

their property. In the case of an article of production, competition would probably secure the benefit of such a remission to the purchaser, but land being limited in quantity and therefore virtually and necessarily a monopoly, would be able to secure to itself the entire advantage. We sincerely hope that the nation will have resumed its right to the land before such a reform takes place, in order that it may reap the benefit arising therefrom in return for the revenue it will necessarily have to surrender.

As an illustration of the working of the landlord system, let us trace the history of an estate near London. As agricultural land it is worth at most two or three pounds per acre. As the town grows outward to it this may increase to five or six. It is next available as garden ground, when its value may rise to £10 or £15, sometimes even to £20 per acre. After the lapse of a few years, the increasing demand for house accommodation brings it under the operation of the builder. It is then let on long lease at the rate of £100 per acre and upwards, with the stipulation that houses of a certain class and value be erected upon it. At the expiration of the lease of 99 years, now frequently reduced to 80, the land reverts to the owner covered with buildings bringing in probably not less than £1,000 a year per acre. Thus what would have appeared originally a poor investment of £100, comes in the course of a century or two to be worth £20,000. Now if a man, by the application of his skill and industry, supplies the wants of, or in any way confers a benefit upon, the community, and by that means accumulates wealth, we have no reason to envy or find fault with him. But what benefit does a landowner confer upon the public in return for this increase of property? None whatever. He knows his land must be wanted

some time or other. He has only to sit still, enjoy his present income, and in due time he will be able to exact whatever terms he pleases. Take another case of almost daily occurrence in town. A man takes a lease of business premises, with a view to establish himself and earn a living. By dint of hard and persevering industry, he succeeds in forming a business and providing so far for a wife and family. After the lapse of twenty-one years, when he might reasonably hope to be able to relax his efforts and enjoy the fruits of his past exertions, his lease expires, and what takes place then? In the first place he is called upon to pay a considerable sum for dilapidations, for he must leave the premises in as good a state as he found them, perhaps better, and this is exacted even if they are so old that they must be pulled down and rebuilt. In the next place, if he desires a renewal of the lease, he must pay an increased rent, probably 20 or 25 per cent. more, on the ground that the business he himself has made renders the premises more valuable. Lastly, he will be required to expend a considerable sum in modernising and improving the premises by putting in new plate-glass windows and so forth, perhaps in rebuilding them altogether. Thus he finds that, after so many years of toil, he must either surrender a considerable portion of the income he has created to his landlord, or forsake his position and begin the world anew. Increased rent and improved premises moreover involve increased rating and heavier rates and taxes. Higher rents necessitate larger profits and higher prices; higher prices necessitate higher wages or, where these cannot be obtained, greater suffering and distress. Thus landlords, as owners of the soil, not only enjoy a handsome and certain income, but can from time to time add largely to their property at the expense of the industrial

classes. The management of these estates is usually in the hands of an agent, whose interest it is to *improve* the property to the fullest extent. One agent of a well-known ducal estate in London boasted, on succeeding to the office, that he would double the rent-roll before he left it, and he is in a fair way of accomplishing his purpose. The landlords themselves, content with their rapidly increasing income, do not trouble themselves as to the means by which it is effected, and are ignorant of the hardships inflicted. We must not however be understood to imply that a man is not to pay an increased rent if his premises are worth it, but if this increase, arising from the increase of population and industry around, in all cases went into the public exchequer, the national income would be increased and he would be relieved from a corresponding amount of taxation. Improvements in the building would be a matter to be settled between owner and occupier.

The principle advocated in this paper was also recognised by the late John Stuart Mill, and a society was, we believe, formed by him for the purpose of carrying it out, but the plan proposed was so impracticable, that its failure was no matter of surprise. He maintained, as we do, that whatever value land acquires from the increase of population and growth of industry should belong to the nation and not to a few individuals. To effect this, he proposed that the land should be periodically valued, and that all increase of value not directly traceable as resulting from the application of labour or capital should be paid into the public exchequer. A more practicable man would have seen at once the impossibility of distinguishing the source of increment, and that the attempt to do so would lead to endless contention and



litigation, costing, with the valuation, probably more than it was worth. The only practicable method is to make the land national property, and the simplest way of doing this is to give landlords in exchange an annuity of equivalent value.

The only plausible objection to this course that can be urged on behalf of the nation is, that in the event of land diminishing in value it would prove a loss and a burden to the State instead of a gain. There are evil prophets who affirm that the progress of England has culminated, and that, following the course of other great nations, its decadence is imminent, or already begun. We can see no reason why our progress should be arrested just where it is except by our blind persistence in a policy inconsistent with its further extension. If, notwithstanding the many warnings we have had, we continue to impose burdens on industry, and to force up wages and the cost of production, certainly manufactures and commerce will take to themselves wings and seek a more genial clime elsewhere, and then probably land may diminish in value. But, forsaking this suicidal policy, we can see no reason why England's progress should be arrested, or her industrial position among the nations lowered, at least till her natural resources, her coal and her iron, which have given her her pre-eminence, are exhausted. The nationalisation of our land is, we believe, the first essential step to this end. So far from this diminishing its value, we believe that, from the greater freedom it will afford in dealing with land, and the greater certainty of tenure, it will lead to an immediate increase of value. This change must be followed by an improved organisation of industry, and a better understanding between capital and labour, which will

form the subject of our next paper. The latter, however, without the former can be of little use. As long as a considerable portion of the products of industry is drawn into the private pockets of landlords, British industry will be less and less able to compete with foreign where burdens are lighter, and both British industry and British capital will be driven to seek employment on a freer soil. But supposing it were deemed expedient to provide for the possible contingency of a future diminution in the value of land, the deficit might be met, without injustice, by a charge upon the annuities given in exchange for it, and the loss would thus fall upon the same shoulders as it would have done if the land had remained in their possession. We do not think it would be necessary or prudent to insist upon such a proviso. The nation will at any time be able to provide for its necessities.

Thus we have endeavoured to show that individual property in land is inconsistent with the natural rights of man, and inevitably leads to unjust inequality and oppression; that the nationalisation of land is the only remedy for these evils, while it has also other advantages in allowing a freer distribution and utilisation of land; that it is perfectly practicable without any serious social disturbance and urgently called for.

If important for our own country, how much more so for our colonies and other rising nations, where the land has not yet been wholly alienated, and has not attained the enormous value it has in England. It behoves colonists to consider earnestly the future consequences of present alienation. That by it the descendants of the squatters of to-day will eventually become the lords of the soil, while the teeming

industrial population, whose united energies will have developed the resources of the country and given value to the land, will become comparatively their slaves. Man, having only a life interest in land, cannot alienate it for a longer period without infringing the rights of his descendants. Future generations may repudiate bargains made, without their consent, to the prejudice of their interests.

## POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the above was written, not with any view to publication, a book\* of considerable interest has appeared, in which the author shows historically that individual ownership of land is comparatively of recent date and of prædal origin, and that tribal or communal property still prevails in Russia, Switzerland, Java, and other countries. From the glowing description given of the fair side of some of these communities, Mr. Laveleye appears to favour a return to this system generally. A writer on the subject in the *Edinburgh Review*,† painting the darker side of the picture, shows the low and unprogressive condition of these communities, and infers that individual property in land is the natural and higher development from the communal. Both, in our opinion, are wrong and miss the mark. It requires but little consideration to see that, however well adapted the village commune may be to a certain stage of society, viz. a purely agricultural one, it is not suitable to a more advanced stage, where a large proportion of the people are engaged in handicraft and commerce. On the other hand the solution of the difficulty is not to be found in a departure from the principle of communal property, which is a sound one, but in a more extended applica-

\* Primitive Property. Translated from the French of Emile de Laveleye by G. R. L. Marriott. With an Introduction by T. E. Chiffé Leslie.

† *Edinburgh Review*, No. 303, July 1878.

tion of it, not in making land the property of individuals, but in making it national. The *Edinburgh Review* dilates upon the improvement in the land from the application of the owner's capital. We think it will be found more generally that the improvement has resulted from the application of the tenant's capital and industry, the landlord ultimately stepping in and enjoying the fruit in the shape of an increased rent. In too many cases landlords are either unable or unwilling to expend capital for land improvement, while the tenure is too short and uncertain to enable tenants to do so with safety, and so the land remains unimproved. If made national property and thrown open to public competition with a sufficient and reliable tenure, capital for improvement would not be wanting wherever a satisfactory return might be expected. In a purely agricultural country the population is widely scattered, the villages are isolated and have little or no communication one with another. With this condition of society communal land tenure is consistent; but it is a condition unfavourable to progress. As manufactures and commerce increase, and with them the means of transit, intercommunication increases, and the people from many isolated communities become consolidated into one. The land system must follow the same course, and from communal become national; for only so can those who are engaged in manufacturing, mercantile, and other pursuits not agricultural, retain their interest therein and participate in its improvement, which is the result mainly of their industrial efforts. This is the natural course of development, consistent with and pre-eminently favourable to social and national progress.

The *Edinburgh Reviewer* mixes up the Land Question

with the levelling theories of the Social Democrats, and, like them, and indeed like most writers on the subject, fails to perceive the fundamental difference between land and all other kinds of property. All other property is the produce of man's labour, and therefore belongs to and is rightfully at the disposal of those whose industry has created it. Land is not the product of labour; it is the gift of Nature, and every man has a right to his share, as much so as to the air he breathes, or to the ocean's highway. With equal right might a man enclose, if it were possible, a certain portion of sea, and levy a toll upon all who may desire to pass his barriers or to fish within his boundaries, as to enclose land and demand a rent from those who desire to cultivate it. In the complicated condition of modern society it is not expedient or practicable for every man to occupy his plot of land, but he does not forfeit his right or his interest therein, and the only way by which this can be preserved is by making it common or national property, letting it to those who desire to occupy it for the benefit of the whole.

# PAPERS FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY ONE OF THEM.

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In the series of Papers here commenced we propose to discuss, in a plain and popular manner, some of the more prominent social questions which are evidently pressing themselves forward for an early solution. We have imposed this task upon ourselves in order to treat them from a point of view not generally adopted, but which we conceive to be the only sound one, and that from which alone a satisfactory and final issue can be hoped for. In the treatment of disease, the superficial physician, or quack, will apply a local remedy which will speedily remove an eruption from one spot, only to appear, perhaps in an aggravated form, in another; while the true physiologist, tracing the disease to its source in constitutional derangement, will apply his remedies to restore the constitution to its normal condition, and rely upon the disappearance of the local affection as the consequence. The latter process may be apparently much slower in its operation than the former, but it is the only one sure and satisfactory in its result. Just so, in the treatment of social questions, a remedy is not unfrequently applied to remove a grievance sustained by some section of the community, but which only removes the burden to another section, whose interests are for the moment lost sight of. Hence our legislation is apt to consist of a series of oscillations between extremes, not, however, without some real progress; reform is protracted and rendered difficult by the violence of partisanship, issuing too often in compromises satisfactory to none, and as ineffective in their results as a medicinal remedy would be to a patient who at the same time indulged in a diet which aggravated his disease. Having ourselves, no preference for any class or interest, but desirous that all should enjoy equal rights and opportunities, our standpoint will be altogether outside of society, so that we may take a bird's eye view of the whole. Believing that human society, like the individual organism, is governed by natural laws, the free and unfettered action of which will conduce to and secure the equal wellbeing of the whole, our endeavour will be to discover by fair deduction the fundamental principle which regulates the matter in hand, to compare this with existing arrangements, and, where these are at variance with the principle, to suggest the means by which, with the least possible social disturbance, they may be brought into accordance with it. Apostles of progress wherever progress is possible, we are not revolutionists for revolution's sake. While recognising the true dignity and importance of the humblest honest labour and its right to social consideration, we are not levellers who would reduce all men to the standard of the weakest. If our efforts shall contribute in the smallest degree towards the rational settlement of the great questions we shall take in hand, our labour will be amply rewarded.

THE RIGHT OF THE STATE  
TO  
CONTROL ALL MONOPOLIES  
OF  
NECESSARY ARTICLES.

SHEWING

By a Reference to First Principles, the Justice of the Demand  
for the Nationalisation of the Land.

ALSO

That the Soundness of the Principle on which the Demand is  
based has been already Practically Recognised by Parliament.

BY

A. BOYLE.

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LONDON:  
LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY, 57, CHARING CROSS,  
LITERATURE DEPOT, L. REEVE & CO, 5, HENRIETTA STREET,  
COVENT GARDEN.

1888.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.



# PAPERS FOR THE PEOPLE.

*BY ONE OF THEM.*

## PREFACE.

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This Pamphlet, as far as the bottom of page 8, was written before the author was aware of the existence of the Land Nationalisation Society or its Literature. These having been brought to his notice, the part commencing with a reference to John Stuart Mill was added. And for further proof of the soundness of many of the positions he has taken up, and for details of the injurious effects of the present system of land owning, with the benefits to be expected from doing away with it, the reader is referred to the publications of the Society, as given in the list at the end of this pamphlet; in which also proofs will be found that however "Free Trade in Land," that is, freeing it from the restraints of entail, primogeniture, settlements to a certain degree, and making its transfer easy and cheap, might facilitate its acquisition by the wealthy, it would do but little towards what is most urgently required, namely, to enable the working classes of all grades, and in all places, to become occupiers of land on fair conditions with regard to rent, tenure, &c.

*Amroth.*

## The RIGHT of the STATE to CONTROL all MONOPOLIES of NECESSARY ARTICLES.

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On saying to a friend that private rights in land required greater legal restraint than at present existed, and giving as an instance of this, that some landed proprietors in the neighbourhood of Pembroke Dock, taking advantage of their being the only proprietors of eligible building sites, would give only a 60 years' lease to build substantial workmen's cottages upon, so as to be able at the end of that period to appropriate the houses when only half worn out; and characterising this as manifest injustice amounting to down-right legal robbery; it was replied:—

“If the landowner is obliged to put up with the deterioration in the value of his land, as he is now in some parts of England, where land is unlettable, why should he not have the benefit of its increase in value, where circumstances occasion that, as has been the case in the locality you mention?”

“And if the owner is to be restrained from making the most of a rise in the value of his land from accidental circumstances, would you be prepared to compensate him for such a fall in its value as I have just now mentioned, which, if your opinion was acted upon, would be only just?”

Again, “If you interfere with the rights of private property as you propose, where would you stop?”

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As the views expressed and implied in these questions, are those of the high Conservative party on the subject of the land, I propose to examine both, Whether they are consistent with that moral right on which all human law should be founded, and also whether they are countenanced by the law of this country, as already enacted?

The answer to the first of the questions mentioned is: That no diminution in the value of land anywhere affects the principle that everyone born in a country is morally entitled to have on fair terms such a share in the necessaries of existence, as is essential to his welfare, and it is the duty of the Government of the Country of which he is a native, to take care that he has an opportunity of getting that, as long at all events as the means of affording it to him hold out.

Those necessaries are, in the first instance, the four elements—earth, that is the land; air; fire—the materials of it; and water. Of these products of nature three of them—the land, the materials of fire, and water in particular localities—are limited in amount; and, what is specially to be taken into account, none of them can be manufactured or created by man's industry, at least not to any material extent.

Now, to allow, to private individuals such a monopoly of any of these necessaries of existence that they can dole them out to their fellow-countrymen, on whatever terms may suit their interest or caprice, is obviously contrary to moral justice, for it is placing the welfare of others in their power to an extent, which has invariably proved an irresistible temptation to human nature to abuse it, either by charging oppressive terms for the article, whatever it may be, or by withholding it altogether. And this is already recognized in the case of land, for whenever that is required for roads, railroads, water or gas supply to towns, it is expropriated from the owners under the authority of Acts of Parliament, wholly independent of their will, and on terms to be determined by independent authority. And the Allotments Act recently enacted, giving power to take land much on the same terms, for private as distinct from public use, shows that the propriety of giving to the nation an extension of the power already exercised by it over private property in land has been recognized by the legislature.

The only question, therefore, which remains to be answered is, to what extent, in order to do justice to the community, is it necessary to curtail the liberties of the land owner ?

“The enactment of the Agricultural Holdings and Ground Game Acts, shews that Parliament recognizes that [agricultural] tenant and landlord do not stand upon an equal footing, and that the one needs and deserves protection against the uncontrolled will and pleasure of the other.”\*

Now it is evident that those also, who require land to build dwelling-houses upon, do not stand upon an equal footing with the owners of the land, and that they too require protection against the greed of the landlord as well as the agricultural tenant ; for how can he who requires land in a certain locality to dwell upon—a locality, which it may be, is the only one that will suit him on account of proximity to his employment—prevent the injustice of having, say, half the results of his expenditure taken from him or his heirs, by reason of the shortness of the lease, when the land-owners in the locality refuse to let it to him on any other terms except that he will submit to that ? And this state of subjection is especially hard upon the poorer classes, for their employments, and connections therewith, tie them to particular localities much more than those of the upper classes do, who are consequently more independent, or in other words, less at the mercy of the monopolist.

And to further illustrate the recognition of the principle I contend for, namely, the right of the State to regulate monopolies of articles of first necessity, it has with universal approval extended its control to monopolies, which, though things of great convenience, cannot be said to be absolute necessities, namely, railway, gas, and even cab fares, under the manifest obligation of protecting the public against overcharges, which it would by itself be helpless to resist. The inference from this with regard to the legislative control of monopolies of those things that *are* necessities, is obvious.

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\* The Land Question, by R. A. JONES, Barrister at Law. An able exposition of the insufficiency of the Agricultural Holdings Acts (England) to afford just protection to the tenant, with the draft of a proposed Bill on the subject.

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Again, coal is in these islands an absolute necessary. Fortunately for us, it is, as yet at all events, so unlimited in quantity, and the sources of supply which furnish it are dispersed through so many hands, that no monopoly of it exists; but some ten or twelve years ago, a state of things arose, which for a time practically changed that. Owing, if I recollect aright, to extensive strikes in the north of England, the supply of coal was thrown into comparatively few hands. The latter, immediately took advantage of the monopoly thus created, to raise the price by degrees to such an extent that it became a serious hardship to all but the wealthy, and which, had the rise continued as it threatened to do, would have been calamitous to the poorer classes. The question was immediately raised in first class journals, whether the owners of collieries had a moral right to act thus with one of the necessities of existence, for it was understood that measures could have been taken to keep the supply up to the normal amount. It was of course evident that justice to the community forbade the command of the situation being left to the monopolists for the time being. And had the state of things mentioned continued, which fortunately it did not, and coal reached the price threatened, it would have been driven home to the apprehension of everyone in the community (except perhaps that of the owners of the collieries, which remained open), that the rights of private property in articles of first necessity are subordinate to the rights of the community, and that when the two come to be in opposition, the latter should prevail.

It may be useful to consider what this phrase, "the rights of private property," really means, for though this may be superfluous for those who are in the habit of speaking and writing correctly, there are others who attach more meaning to the phrase than it can be properly made to bear. It is thought by many that having a right to do a thing, or to retain a privilege, implies that it *is* right to do so; but this by no means follows, for a right (the word being used substantively), is merely a liberty of action accorded by some law, either by human law, or by the moral law, sometimes called the law of natural justice. Now, when a person has a right, according to one of these laws, to perform an act, or

exercise a liberty without that right being accorded by the other, it is wrong to commit the act referred to. For instance, up to a recent period, landlords in Ireland had a legal right to appropriate the value of their agricultural tenants improvements by raising their rents according to the value of the former ; but as, at the same time, they had no moral right to do so, the act was a wrong one. On the other hand, the tenant who was rackrented on his own improvements, and in consequence was obliged to leave, had a moral right to pull down the buildings which he had erected, and cart off or dispose of the materials ; but as he had not the legal right to act thus, it would have been wrong for him to do it. It is only, then, when one has EVERY RIGHT—the moral as well as the legal, the legal as well as the moral—to do or to retain anything, that it is right for him to do it.

When, therefore, the defenders of privileges to which unanswered objection has been made, contend for their retention on the conveniently indefinite grounds that doing away with them would be an infringement of "the rights of property," it would be well to ask, "Which of the rights belonging to property are meant, the legal or the moral?" And if, as will probably be the case, the reply is :—Both. It may be rejoined, that as human law may be unjust, and sometimes is so, an infringement of it to the extent of abolishing it, may be quite right ; while the assertion that a proposal is an infringement of moral right is mere dogmatism, and cannot be allowed without the objections that have been urged against the right in question being answered. The way in which some stand up for any right or liberty connected with property that has once been exercised, would appear to shew that if it were possible to have parcelled out the air into private properties, they would not only have done it, but would have cried out that it was "an infringement of the rights of property" to attempt to control the terms on which they were willing to allow us to breathe it.

I will now reply to the second of those questions, which have been made the occasion of this essay, namely, "If the owner is to be restrained from making the most of a rise in the value of his land from accidental circumstances, would you be prepared to compensate him for such a fall in its

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value as I have just now alluded to, which, if your opinion was acted upon, would be only just?" To this I reply, Certainly not, nor is there any sound reason why he should be so compensated; for that right, or liberty, which I would deprive him of is one to rob his fellow-countrymen, one which it is immoral to exercise, and which he should never have possessed. The origin of that power was landlord-made law, enacted to sanction high-handed encroachment on the customary rights of the people; and from the commencement to the present day its effects have been evil, those effects developing themselves in proportion to the growth of the population.

And to the third question, "If you interfere with the rights of property, as you propose, where would you stop?" I reply, I would stop at that point where it was no longer in the power of individuals to oppress the community in matters essential to its welfare. That it should be in the power of private individuals to do that, is not only contrary to Public Policy, but to common sense. And to the fear implied in the question, namely, that if any curtailment of those rights or liberties, that have hitherto been enjoyed in connection with landed property, is to take place without compensation the deluge of communism will be let in, I would say, there is a clear distinction between those liberties, which may thus justly be curtailed and taken away, and those which may not. The characteristics of the former are:—that they render it difficult, or impossible for the community to obtain on fair terms their due share of those gifts of nature, which are necessary for existence, which are limited in amount, and which cannot be created by any exertion of man's skill or industry. No compensation was given when the landlord's power of appropriating the value of some of his tenants improvements was taken away by the Agricultural Holdings Act (Eng'and), already mentioned, or when he had taken from him the power of eating up his tenants' crops by ground game, and it would have been absurd to have asked for it.

We have the authority of John Stuart Mill, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and other eminent political economists for saying that the only method of doing full justice to the-

nation with regard to the land is for the State to resume its control on the part of the people. Hear what they say on the subject:—

“No man made the land; it is the original inheritance of the whole species!” “The land of every country belongs to the people of that country.”——J. Stuart Mill, (Political Economy.)

“However difficult it may be to embody the Nationalisation of the land in fact, equity sternly commands that it should be done.”——Herbert Spencer.

It has been supposed till lately that the management of the land involved by taking it over would be beyond the powers of the State; and undoubtedly this would be so if the State were to attempt to manage it after the fashion of private owners. A just method of compensation to dispossessed landlords was also a difficulty. But thanks to the Land Nationalisation Society (under the Presidency of A. Russel Wallace, LL.D.,) a method of carrying out the object in view has been discovered which would be free from both objections. The landowners would in exchange for their land be given land bonds bearing interest equal to the net average income received from that source at the time the conversion was made. That is known to be from 15 to 30 per cent. below the gross receipts, the difference being occasioned by agency fees, law expenses, bad debts, and (in England), repairs and improvements. As the greater part of this difference would be saved to the State by the kind of tenancy proposed, ample margin would be left to allow for bad debts, and to pay for expenses of management, which too would be reduced to a minimum by each tenant being compelled to buy what, for shortness sake, may be called the tenant right, that is, all that was on the land in the shape of buildings, fences and gates, etc., etc., by either a cash payment or a terminable rental. This tenant right being his own property (except that the first lien on it being the rent, the power of mortgaging it would be strictly limited), the tenant would have a personal interest in taking care of it, and would naturally do so without being looked after by an agent. Thus would be avoided that cumbrous officialism, the necessity for which has been thought to be an



insurmountable obstacle to the State taking the land into its own hands. And thus too would be settled the eternal Irish Question, including Home Rule, for when the land was in the hands of the State and so safe from confiscation, the Irish might be safely left to manage their own local affairs.

Late advices from Australia shew that some of our colonies there have recognised the necessity of retaining or acquiring the control of the Land monopoly. In Van Diemens Land the Government have come to the determination, when making grants of land for the future, to grant a tenancy only, the freehold being retained by the State. And it appears by advices, which were published in the *London Daily News* of the 31st of January, 1888, that in New Zealand the second reading of a Bill had just been passed at the date of writing, entitled :—

“An Act to authorise the utilisation, and other acquisition, of private lands for subdivision, for the purpose of settlement.”

The leading principle of the Act is to empower the State to purchase any land for the purpose of settlement.

And, “The purchase of the land by the State is proposed to be effected by land bonds, as in Prussia.”

These bonds, it was stated, would bear interest at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., with a Government guarantee, so that they “would pass from hand to hand like bank notes.”

Now that every householder has a vote, it is in the power of the people by combining together to demand it, to have the land question here settled on the same lines.



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Being a comparison of the system of Landlord and Tenant with that of Occupying Ownership in their influence on the Well-being of the People By

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## TWO IMPEDIMENTS TO LAND REFORM.

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THERE are two generally accepted beliefs that stand in the way of necessary Land Reform. The first is the belief that by the sacred right of property, the Land, though technically only held under fee simple, belongs really and absolutely to the Landlord; that just as if I own a piece of furniture I may sit upon it, stand upon it, sell it, lock it up, or smash it to pieces, so if I own a piece of land I may cultivate it or leave it idle, invite human beings on to it, or hunt them off as suits my interest or caprice, or if I let it, may let it for the highest rent I can squeeze out. The Land is mine, and there is an end of the matter.

Some think that the Irish Land Act and the Highland Crofters' Act show that this belief has been abandoned; but it has not. It has hardly been shaken; for not only do many of the educated classes look upon these Acts as wicked and mischievous interferences with the rights of property tending to Socialism, but the whole ruling class (I may almost say) look upon these Acts as entirely exceptional. The right of the Landlord everywhere, except in Ireland and in certain parts of the Highlands, remains as unquestioned as before: Only in view of the extreme poverty and threatening discontent in

# PAPERS FOR THE PEOPLE.

*BY ONE OF THEM.*

( 2 )

those particular localities has it been deemed advisable to sacrifice principle a little to expediency, and to require the Landlord to forego to a jealously circumscribed extent what are still considered his undoubted rights, and are enforced by the Law in all other parts. The Law of Great Britain is still practically that Land being bought or inherited like every other kind of property is property in the same sense to be used (or unused) absolutely as the owner likes.

Passing over the essential difference between Land which represents nature herself, limited in quantity and necessary to all, and a piece of furniture which is a product of labour, which may be multiplied to any extent or gone without, I ask attention to the consequences of this doctrine.

It amounts to this, that this planet belongs to the Landlords, not to the human race.

If a Highland Lord has the right to turn all the inhabitants out of a vast region in order to turn it into a deer forest, so has an English Lord the right to lay waste a whole County or depopulate a City. It may not be likely that he will do it, but there is only his self-interest or pity to prevent him : the Law expressly allows him to do it.

In short the whole population of Great Britain exists only on sufferance of the Landlords.

If anyone thinks this is a just and reasonable doctrine, I have no more to say. I suppose no one but a lunatic would affirm it.

The proposition which I submit should form the basis of our demands is, that this planet belongs to the Human Race, that the right of the laborer to labor and to live by the fruits of his labor comes before the right of the Landlord to levy a toll upon his labor or to take the land from him for sport, and that it is a crime that cries to Heaven that the man who merely claims the land should have the power to turn the man who uses it out of the house which he has built, and off the soil that he has made productive, and to fling him a wreck upon the roadside because he has not paid an impossible rent or even a rent that he can pay, only by reducing himself to the level of the beasts, living on an insufficiency of oatmeal or potatoes, in a hut that lets

in the weather, and which he must share with the pigs and fowls. So great a crime is this that even the turning out of the poor to congregate on insufficient crofts by the barren seashores, to drift into the already overcrowded cities, or to die on the mountains because the Lord of the soil wants the land to shoot over, hardly seems more criminal.

Nothing is to me more astounding than that the upper classes generally see no wrong in this, and that the economists, men of intelligence and trained habits of thought, look upon it as an unfortunate but necessary consequence of the working of a Natural Economic Law, and even defend it as favorable to the production of wealth and the prosperity of the Country.

The other belief is that Land being once owned, it is the owner's interest to have it put to the most productive use, and that therefore the matter may be safely left to him.

Never was belief more fallacious and mischievous.

Returning to England after many years absence, and travelling through the Midland Counties, I am struck with the fact, that this, the most fertile part of the Kingdom, therefore the part that would give the highest return to cultivation, and that therefore ought first and above all to be cultivated, is for the larger part laid down in grass, the fields void of human beings; and that the tendency is to put more and more down to grass.

Why is this?

"Because," I am told, "it is found that grass is the most productive way of using the land, the way that yields the greatest net increase."

That is just what it is not.

Suppose that I, a large farmer, am in the habit of employing ten laborers at £40 a year each (total £400) to grow crops, and that, after deducting rent and all working expenses, I find at the end of the year that I have got back this £400 with 10 per cent. profit on it. Then it is clear that the land must be yielding £440 a year net increase; £400 going to the laborers as their share and £40 to me as interest on the wages I had advanced. (I am

# PAPERS FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY ONE OF THEM.

(4)

leaving out of sight, for simplicity's sake, the interest I make on my other outlay and the profit on my own labor of superintendence). These two sums, £400 to the laborers and £40 to me are our respective clear earnings after everything else is paid for.

If now by putting all my land down in grass for meat and discharging my laborers, I can make the land produce £50 only, but can keep all that £50 to myself (having no laborers to share it with), it is my interest to turn all the laborers off.

So that for a trumpery increase to myself of £10 a year, ten men and their families are turned adrift and the productiveness of the land is reduced from £440 a year to £50.

And if my conscience were to prick me at turning so many poor men adrift and causing so much poverty and sorrow for so small a gain to myself, there comes the recollection that I have a rent to meet as well as a living to make; that the land goes to him who can pay the most rent, and that the man who can pay the most rent is the man who (*ceteris paribus*) least lets compunction interfere with business, and gets most out of the land for himself, no matter who suffers; and so if I hesitate I may fail in my rent and lose my farm. And mark! The more fertile the land and therefore the more desirable (in the public interest) to be cultivated, the more certainly is it my interest *not* to cultivate it; because the more fertile it is, the more certain am I to find something (like grass) which it will produce spontaneously, so to speak, and which I can therefore keep all to myself—till the Landlord takes it from me in increased rent.

“But,” it is said, “the men discharged are set free for other work.”

True: but unfortunately the other work is not set free for the men. On the contrary the whole field of employment is narrowed. For all industry consists either in extracting the raw materials of wealth from the land (as in agriculture and mining) or in working up and distributing those materials (as in manufactures and commerce), and the less there is extracted from the land by some people the less must there be for other people to work up and distribute. So that my turning so many people off the land not only injures them but

# OUR ROOT OF EVILS.

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IRISH WORRY & ENGLISH TROUBLES:  
A TRACT FOR TO-DAY.

“To-Day! Yes, set it not aside, the lowliest voice  
May warn from danger, point the way to bliss”

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LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.

BIRMINGHAM: CORNISH BROTHERS.

1887.

~~PRINTED BY~~

## OUR ROOT OF EVILS.

At my publishers, the other day I found a pamphlet—"Farthing Dinners." Thinking about the printing of my own scribbling I asked—

"Why is the name of that London firm also on this tract as well as yours?"

"That is for the convenience of people who order it from distant parts of the country, for the pamphlet has been largely advertised."

Largely advertised! A twopenny tract about farthing dinners! evidently the gentleman who wrote it thinks that there is amongst our people a very wide-spread destitution of the mere necessities of life. I quote from the opening paragraph—"The most acute distress is not now that felt by the chronic poor, those who owe their poverty to personal misfortune or misconduct; but by those who, ready and willing to work, can find little or nothing to do; who have struggled on year after year, hoping against hope for that revival which has been so often promised, but has never arrived. Every winter has seen these sinking deeper and deeper into a slough of penury. They are now around us by the thousand in every large town, dragging on a miserable existence with the pathetic endurance which marks them off so distinctly from the professionally unemployed and the rough. They have now most of them reached the lowest depths of undeserved poverty; what scanty means they ever possessed have long since been exhausted; they have absolutely nothing to fall back upon—nothing to pawn."

And friends who visit amongst the poor in the crowded districts of our city tells us that which makes the heart sick



with sorrow ; till I seldom eat a comfortable meal without thinking of Lazarus away from our gates who does not get the crumbs the cook wastes—nor sip my wine without thinking of those faint in spirit who have nothing that “maketh glad the heart of man ;” and I fear lest to me finally it should be said, “Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things,” and lest against this nation which suffers unchecked such misery in its midst there should be written the handwriting against the wall, “Mene Mene Tekel.”

For the guinea dinners and the dinners whose cost is counted by many guineas still go on merrily amongst us, and if the poor are poorer the rich also are richer than ever, and the very rich become also more and more numerous.

“From 1862 to 1872 our trade and our wealth increased with the greatest rapidity, our exports having actually more than doubled in value in that short period. The chief result of this enormous commercial progress was the building up of huge fortunes such as were previously almost unknown, and a corresponding increase in the value of ground rents owing to the rapid extension of great cities and manufacturing towns, which added immensely to the incomes of the great landowners ; and this latter increase has continued, though somewhat less rapidly, down to the present time. In the twelve years, 1867-79, the assessments of landed property under Schedule A of the Income Tax increased from £110,696,900 to £147,921,687, or more than one-third ; while since 1860, allowing for the change in the mode of assessment in 1867, it has almost exactly doubled. The New Domesday Book shows us that in 1874 there were sixteen landowners who had each incomes of over £100,000 a year, exclusive of property in London, where the increase in value has been greatest. At the present time probably double this number have incomes above the same limit. But besides landowners we have proof that large fortunes have greatly increased among the mercantile and financial classes. Forty or fifty years ago a commercial millionaire was a phenomenon much talked of as something altogether exceptional and portentous. Now they are to be counted by scores, and excite no special remark.—*Bad Times*, by ALFRED R. WALLACE, LL.D.”

So that, although from 1872 to 1882 trade was not so brisk as in the ten years previous, yet big fortunes have gone on increasing and multiplying. Between 1863-1872 the fortunes above a quarter of a million paying probate duty were 162 ; between 1873-1882 they were 208. And the biggest fortunes of all increased most ; those above a million in the first ten years being ten, in the latter, eighteen.

. In “Ten Years of National Growth” (*Contemporary* for

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ROOT OF EVILS.

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1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

December, 1886) by M. G. Mulhall, it is stated—"Although the money value of our imports and exports in 1885 was 13 millions less than in 1875, showing a diminution of 2 per cent., yet the increase of trade was equivalent to 29 per cent. If prices had remained the same the trade of 1885 would have reached 772 millions, as compared with 597 millions in 1875. So far from any falling off in commerce, there has been a healthy increase, and the decline of prices, however injurious to some interests, has been, on the whole, advantageous to the country."

Mr. Mulhall brings statistics to prove that our manufactures and trade have both gone on increasing during the past ten years: this is shown, he tells us, by the shipping returns, by increased consumption of food per head of population; by increase of trade, indicated by imports and exports; output of coal increased in the last ten years 27 per cent., compared to the previous ten years, and of iron 25 per cent.; also an increase of 11 per cent. in our textile manufactures. And Income Tax returns show an increase in the aggregate wealth of the United Kingdom of £50,000,000 since 1875, or an average increase of £180,000,000 yearly.

It being thus conclusively proved that, taken as a whole, things are and have been in such an altogether prosperous condition with us, it is in vain, indeed, for the famished thousands in all our large towns to hope against hope for a revival which appears to be as unneeded as it is hopeless.

It remains only for those who have enough and to spare of the good things which Mr. Mulhall tells us our nation has, on the whole, so plentifully, to think whether they can be content that in the midst of all this abundance thousands upon thousands of those who are the very strength of the nation, its patient and uncomplaining workers, should suffer such straits of poverty as to be obliged to accept for their children such miserable dole of well-meant charity as farthing dinners?

Or whether they will consider whether there may not be some faults in the laws of our country which contravene in some particulars the laws of Nature and of true Political Economy; and which tend to the accumulation of the

nation's wealth in a few hands, and the consequent impoverishment of masses of our people.

Personally I am so convinced of a fundamental wrong that needs to be set right amongst us, that my own particular work—the work which I was born with a God-giving capacity for creating—becomes impossible to me. Impossible with slow patience to perfect beautiful work, whilst a cry of misery from hungry thousands makes the heart faint. Equally impossible to throw myself into any of the many philanthropic agencies at work around us; because to me, all these good people are like so many Mrs. Partingtons trying to mop out the Atlantic with their various brooms; whereas what is wanted is, first a good sea wall to protect the estuary, after which all these benevolent exertions might help to set smiling gardens where is now only barren waste. But I do not pretend to have discovered our need of this sea wall, nor how to build it. I have only picked up information here and there from wiser people, and the most I hope for in this tract is to be able, if so God help me, to set this need plainly before others less wise; praying, if so it may be, that the gift of instinct for beauty may help me to make this clear for them in words a little easier to read, a little less hard to get through, than tracts about political economy are sometimes apt to be.

The Root of Evil which compels so many thousands of willing, respectable workers in all our large towns to such undeserved poverty, so patiently endured, is the very same as that which causes all our trouble about Ireland. The wrongs against which the Irish peasant rebels so pertinaciously are the very same as those which our own labourers endure with such pathetic patience.

There is no need for different legislation for the two countries: the same wise laws which alone could bring content to the Irish peasant, would bring also prosperity and happiness to our own poverty-stricken labourers, whose appeal to us is only silent and uncomplaining endurance.

That agrarian discontent is the chief root of the Irish difficulty is almost universally acknowledged.

But how to bring about agrarian content, as universal as

the present discontent, is a problem the offered solutions of which are more various than satisfactory

The English Liberal desire to grant Home Rule to Ireland is surely a mere shifting off of the difficulty.

The Plan of Campaign, and the tactics of the National League generally, show the hoped-for result of Home Rule to which Irish peasants look as a ground of content. It is clear that the peasants believe that they have a right to the soil, and that the landlord is a mere interloper, whose claim to receive rent would be greatly curtailed or even entirely repudiated under the more sympathetic laws which they anticipate as a result of Home Rule.

But to Conservatives this proposal that tenants should simply seize the landlords' rights seems a suggestion of mere robbery, which it is unlawful even to discuss.

Yet there is in the Irish character no especial iniquity; apart from agrarian troubles, the record of crime in Ireland is in proportion rather lighter and cleaner than that of most other civilised peoples.

Therefore the very widespread domination of the National League, and its superseding of ordinary law and legal rule, would seem to indicate that the National League appeals to some sense of justice which the ordinary law fails to satisfy; and again, the tardy unwillingness which Britain shows as to coercing Ireland proves that here also there is some sort of sympathy with that self-imposed law of lawless rebellion.

In spite of centuries of wrong there is a universal instinct which tells us that every man ought to have some claim on the soil of the country which gave him birth. But as to how allow or to enforce that claim, opinions differ so widely that it seems to many entirely impossible.

When Mr Gladstone astonished the country by his proposal to grant Home Rule, he proposed also at the same time, a measure intended to grant that for which the Irish peasant desires Home Rule—*to* e, he proposed to enable Irish peasants to become themselves owners of the land they occupy, by finding the purchase money out of the pockets of the British taxpayer.

In order to buy out the Irish landlords, the British

nation would have to increase the National Debt by some £120,000,000. This would involve a permanent burden of £4,500,000 annually; or say, a threepenny increase to the Income Tax for each household for ever; and if England thus burdens herself to buy out the landlords would even this enormous sacrifice be effectual? Most emphatically must we answer no! To kill landlordism outright, the Act providing for the expropriation of the landlords should go on to provide that only the actual occupiers and cultivators of land shall thenceforward be legally capable of owning it. If letting land continues to be lawful, as soon as the present landlords are expropriated a new race of landlords will inevitably begin to spring up. It will, of course, constantly happen that amongst the large body of occupiers converted into owners by the expropriation, some will, from illness, or the wish to emigrate, or various other causes, become unable or unwilling to go on cultivating their lands, and these men will, as a rule, let them. Probably they may be able to let them at rents which will not only provide for the terminable annuities payable to Government during their continuance, but will leave a substantial surplus. If they do not let their lands, they must sell them. Such capital as exists in the country parts of Ireland is in the hands much less of actual cultivators of the soil than of the traders, jobbers, and money-lenders of the country towns. Small capitalists of this class are already accustomed to invest their money upon the land, though hitherto more by way of mortgage, or in what are known in Ireland as profit rents, than in ordinary purchases. Few of them, in fact, know anything of any other investment. It is by such men, therefore, that most of the small holdings offered for sale will be bought, and in almost all cases purchasers of this class will buy land not to occupy, but to let it.

Is it honest to burden our descendants with debt for ever, in order that Irish peasants, traders, and jobbers may become landlords?

Or, why should English, Scotch, and Welsh traders, working men, and labourers be taxed in order to make Irish peasants a present of their land?

Since, besides, there is every reason to believe that within a generation after the expropriation of the present landlords, "landlordism" will again extensively prevail in Ireland. The present large estates will, indeed, have been broken up, and there is little likelihood that wealthy men will in future invest their money on any large scale in Irish land. There will be a multitude of small landlords, instead of comparatively few large ones. And, unfortunately, everybody who knows Ireland seems to agree that men only a little above their tenants in the social scale are, in general, harder landlords than most owners of large estates. Such men, in fact, seldom have the means of being liberal, even if they have the will. And as long as there are hard landlords and tenants plunged in hopeless poverty, what ground is there for expecting that the habit ingrained for many generations of redressing agrarian wrongs, real or supposed, by murder will come to an end? Land cannot be let unless tenants who pay no rent can be dispossessed, and the dispossession of pauperised tenants leads to frightful suffering. The English public hears much of agrarian crimes in Ireland, but comparatively little of the sufferings and misery underlying them.

Until it can be made clear to Englishmen that Irish crime is a symptom for which there is no real cure except the removal of the disease causing the symptom, nothing effectual can be done.

Let us take an example nearer home to illustrate the root of that disease. In 1849, the Duke of Sutherland gave permission to some evicted cottars to settle on "an unproductive waste, not worth three shillings an acre." Some twenty years later that land was "returning annually twenty-one shillings an acre rent, and presenting a beautiful picture of fertility, peace, and prosperity."

Now, who had created this beautiful picture of fertility, peace, and prosperity? Who had turned this howling wilderness into a fruitful field? What the Duke of Sutherland had possessed was "an unproductive waste, not worth three shillings an acre," and when these poor evicted cottars had turned it into something like a garden of Eden,

this Duke compels them to pay eighteen shillings an acre for what is really and truly their own property, actually their own creation. His land was worth three shillings an acre, the cottars' toil makes it worth twenty-one shillings, and the eighteen shillings difference, which surely of right belongs to the men whose unaided toil produced it--this, their property of eighteen shillings per acre, the Duke puts into his own pocket. Surely this is a case in which the French "le propriété c'est le vol" is precisely true; surely this is theft of the worst kind, this is the robbery of the poor by the rich.

And now let us ask how this Duke of Sutherland acquired his right even over that "unproductive waste" of English land? Did the primal Duke come over with the Conqueror, and get his first right by might, like his descendant gets his last? Has he some of the noble Norman blood of those polite robbers who dispossessed the English churls, but whose manorial right of those days meant also *duty* of defending the land they had appropriated, the finding and providing soldiers for the day of battle? Or, was the first Duke a courtier, who got his land by begging or intrigue out of the spoils of the church? Had that "unproductive waste" been given in still older time, perhaps, to some abbey, in order that the monks should feed the poor by their labour? Or was the first Sutherland belike not a Duke, but a Duchess, who got her lands and her title by even less honourable ways than either robbing or begging? For even in such ways as these did our great landowners, many or most of them, gain their right over the property and lives of us English men and women, who so vainly boast ourselves "free." *Free!* what freedom have those evicted cottars on the land whose wealth they have created? They are Englishmen, yes, but the Duke can not only put the proceeds of their labour into his pocket: he may if he pleases give them notice to quit the land whose beauty of fertility they have created. He may turn them adrift; he may say that he does not want them there on that English soil of the England we so vainly call "*our*" Country. "*Ours*" indeed! Is it not clear that those who own the land own England, and



that all the rest exist but on their sufferance? Labourers they must have to till the land for them, or to make gardens, or to tend their cattle; tradespeople and merchants they need to provide them luxuries; doctors to cure them; archbishops, bishops, and priests, that they may worship with dignity, and try to secure both worlds; soldiers and police must protect their property, and statesmen must keep all these, their servants, in their proper place; even artists they will suffer to live, provided they are not too noble or independent, and if they will but follow in the wake of fashion and paint only such trashy pictures as suit the tastes of their insolent masters; but for those who have fine feeling, and lofty purpose, and high resolve, they may break their hearts with neglect, they may take their lot with the unemployed, with those English who are too many for this England that is not theirs. •

Let me give some extracts from a paper in the *Contemporary* of November, 1885, "The Crofters' Cry for more Land," by J. Allanson Picton, M.P. :—

"The scenery round the head of Loch Duich is amongst the most magnificent in Scotland. There Scur Ouran lifts its peak to a height at which nearly all the Western Isles are seen stretched out like a raised map in bronze filleted with silver. There within a few miles of Glomach, surely the grandest waterfall in the United Kingdom—a white torrent tumbling three hundred and fifty feet into a black gorge, where Nature has provided a rock rostrum in mid-air, and between the noise and the stillness one feels as though watching the passionate stream of time fall into the silence and darkness of eternity. But not here, as in Switzerland, do the inspirations of Nature harmonize with the fraternity and equality of human institutions. Let him approach how he may, and pass which way he will, the traveller here is haunted everywhere with the shadow of a huge monopoly, which lifts luxury into an almost sublime audacity, and depresses labour into despair. As we land into the bend of the loch running into Glen Chroe, we see everywhere the signs of a cultivation arrested by some blight. There are rude cottages along the hillside; and how the cottars' can

pick up a living, unless by fishing, is a puzzle, for they evidently have no crofts, and the farms at hand, on which they might be supposed to labour, are deserted. Here are large fenced fields with the hay-crop of last year standing uncut. Here are ditches choked with rank vegetation. We pass a gate still in good order, and opening on to an apparently private road leading up to a large farm-house. As we approach we note little clumps of evergreens, set as though the occupier had been a man of taste, with an eye to landscape gardening. But when we reach the house we are reminded of Tennyson's dreary picture :—

'All within is dark as night,  
In the windows is no light,  
And no murmur at the door  
So frequent on its hinge before.  
'Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.'

Grass grows in the yard, the window-panes are broken, the doors are dropping off their hinges, and the whole range of building is falling to ruin. Were it not for the modern style of everything we might imagine that we were back in 'the '45,' that we were on the track of a hostile army, and had come upon a post just deserted by Cumberland's 'lamb.' But it is neither war nor pestilence that has wrought this desolation, unless, indeed, luxury be a pestilence.\*

"What has occurred is simply one of the most recent encroachments on industry by 'sport.' For we are here on the borders of Mr. Winans' vast deer forests, and should we meet his 'stoppers,' as the people significantly call his gillies, we shall be warned off from soil now consecrated to Diana. The particularity of that gentleman as to his territorial rights has been amply illustrated by the notorious pet lamb case which arose in this very glen.

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\* Yes, indeed, luxury is a pestilence, and the most fatal of all pestilences. Fevers, cholera, and the plague kill individuals—luxury is the death of nations. And before this pestilence of luxury all the noblest life of England begins to dwindle and pale: must it be sickness unto death? Or is there yet vital power amongst us to demand and give such sacrifices as may save the nation's empire and its life?

Though the whole area is riotous with a vegetable struggle for life, not a mouth must nibble at the grass but that of the sacred deer. And so a cottar's pet lamb, straying a few yards up the hillside, gave months of occupation to all the biggest wigs in Scotland."

"In Glenelg, just across the border of Inverness, I met an old gentleman, seventy-four years of age, who now acts as school attendance officer. His mind is even more vigorous than his body, and, like most men of his age, he retains a more vivid recollection of some experiences of his childhood than of the events of last year. One of the memories that seemed most fresh was his first sight of Glenelg. It appeared to come back to him with such brightness that the words, 'I mind it as if were yesterday,' recurred in his narrative like the burden of a refrain. He was born in a neighbouring glen, divided from the broad upper reaches of Glenelg by a pass of considerable height. Up to the age of ten years he had never been out of his lonely native glen, but was then taken by his mother across the ridge into Glenelg. When they reached the top of the pass, and were able to look down, the sight he saw filled him with never-forgotten wonder. The numbers of houses, the waving fields of oats, the kailyards and potato plots, the cattle browsing on the hillsides, the men and women at their work, formed a panorama that filled him with admiration. It was the first revelation to his young mind of the busy world. Let anyone stand on the same ridge now, and all he will see is a wide expanse of rough and deteriorating pasture, with hardly a sign of human life except only the ruined fragments of long-abandoned huts."

"Glenstrath-farrer, about twenty-two miles long, is said to have supported formerly 140 families. I cannot guarantee the number, but at all events it was considerable. All this is now under deer alone, being held by Mr. Winans. Glen Cannrich, in Strathglass, formerly had eight crofting townships, but how many families there were in each I could not learn. That also is now under deer alone, being held by Mr. Winans. Glen Affrie, likewise in Strathglass, had once crofters, and this also is now under deer alone, being held by Mr. Winans."

“Surely there has been nothing like this since the creation of the New Forest by William the Conqueror”

“Indeed it is impossible to observe Mr. Winans’ scornful progress from hill to hill, or to mark the stern determination with which he enforces the rights of property over some eight hundred square miles, without suspecting that, as an envoy of the American democracy, he is bent on teaching the proud Britishers a lesson on the antiquated absurdity of their institutions. He wishes to show them that under their land laws a man who has unlimited money, and a determination to use it, may grasp whole counties far more easily than an armed invader, and exercise the strictest rights of conquest with impunity. And therefore he never misses an opportunity of fresh annexations. If a lease falls out or a leaseholder shows weakness, the landlord is besieged with negotiations for an enlargement of this American province in Britain. And when the negotiation succeeds, stipulations are made for the future acquisition of any neighbouring farms not on the instant available. No unhallowed intrusion is tolerated in these vast solitudes. What happened to a pet lamb we all know. But still further to awaken slow islanders to the humour of the situation, the British exciseman was recently ordered off, and had to retire, baffled, before the minions of the American potentate.”

“And the memory retained of these clearances, and the undying protest cherished in the hearts of the present generation cannot be estimated from Parliamentary reports. To realize how impossible is the continuance of the present state of things, one has only to walk for a few miles through a silent but once populous glen in company with three or four of the newly enfranchised voters, men who know that their class and the sympathizers with their class form the vast majority of the northern population. They show the grass-covered foundations on which once a “township” stood. They point to what the unpractised eye has not discerned—the traces of the “rigs” that once divided the arable plots. Where a ditch or a bank by the roadside exhibits a section of the soil, they expatiate on its depth and richness, and ask what an industrious man could desire better than a few acres

of that to labour on? Then they will tell the number of families who once found a living here, and often can trace their descendants to Canada, and "the States" abroad, or the pauper's cot at home"

The permission to emigrate—shortly notice to quit—that is often the full extent of blessing which either Irish or Englishman can claim of his mother-country! No wonder that the American-Irish hate us, the wonder is that so many of our own colonists still call *home* the land which can be thus bought by strangers, but the natives of whose soil have no claim on it, save but for a pauper's grave.

The unhealthy stress of population into our cities, the miserable crowding of their narrow streets and noisome courts, the oppression of wretched workers who toil ceaselessly to gain not enough to live, and all the seething hideous vice bred of such hopeless degradation on the one side; and on the other, the still more horrible crime of being the cause of all this misery and sin, and of enjoying its purchase of luxurious illeness and boundless wealth,—these things are the result of our land-owning laws, and must ever be the result of them so long as they are permitted to exist.

Is it not clear that those who hold the land upon which others must labour can command almost all the *profit* of their labour for the mere permission to live upon the land? It is the continuous increase of rent—the price which labour is compelled to pay for the use of the land—which strips the many of the wealth they justly earn, to pile it up in the hands of the few who do nothing to earn it.

"Children of Gideon!" Hopeless toilers for those who labour not, Walter Besant, in his kind pity for you, bids you band yourselves together and appeal to the *compassion* of those to whom these evil land laws give the power over your lives; but rather, British workmen, band yourselves together to demand peacefully your *rights* as Englishmen. Claim that England shall be your country—*yours* also, and not the country of the rich merely: and England cannot be *your* country so long as you permit any man to call English soil his own private property—so long as unjust land laws permit

any big American, by the mere power of his wealth, to purchase a county and send its inhabitants into exile. And Mr. Winans in the Highlands is merely an extreme example of the evils which landowning causes everywhere in this country. Nearly everywhere in Britain the beauties of nature are purchased by individuals, and the people are shut out from their enjoyment, and this to an extent which has not been permitted in any other country save our own. Passing in the train beside the Lake of Bala, I was struck with the lovely outline of mountains against the evening sky, whilst dark woods shadowed the waters of the lake. This is as beautiful as Switzerland, I thought, and one might as well stay here. So one day I stopped at Bala, and took a boat on the lake. To my surprise I found that one could not land anywhere except on the small narrow strip of pebbly beach whence the boat had been taken: somebody or another "owned" all this God-given beauty, and no one else was to be permitted any enjoyment of it. I left Bala the next morning in disgust, resolved never again to think of taking a holiday on this side of the Channel, if there were any possibility of my crossing it.

But our system of landowning is even more fatal to our having houses of our own in the town than it is to our finding enjoyment in the country.

We pride ourselves on our English word "home," but the sacredness of its associations comes to us from a time when each house was a "homestead," a steadfast home belonging to a family, and remaining the dwelling-place of the same family from father to son for generations; but at the present day no nation in the world is so homeless as we are. The least hope for, the merest possibility of having, a house of their own being shut out from the great multitude of our people, the very idea of an abiding "home" is passing away from our midst with as complete disuse as the word "homestead."

But the sturdy independence of the English character, the honest pride and proud honesty of which we have been wont to make our boast, have descended to us from ancestors who were as proud of their homes as the lord of his castle

or the baron of his mansion; and the vulgarity which has become so marked a characteristic of the English middle classes may be attributed largely to the system of leasehold houses, whereby the majority of householders, having no permanent dwelling of their own to be made beautiful or to be proud of, put all their emulation into striving perpetually to be, or at least to be thought to be, like the class above them.

In "A Dishomed Nation" \* the Rev. Barham Zincke records the astonishment with which a Swiss gentleman who was staying with him saw an announcement that a certain plot of ground was to be let on building lease for a term of years. He was curious to know what the notice meant, and had considerable difficulty in taking in and accepting the explanation. "How," he asked again and again, "is it possible for anyone to build a good house under such conditions? How can anyone have what he wants? How can there be any sense of permanency or of security under such a system? How do you provide for the motive that every head of a family should feel, and which is the most pregnant with good results of all the motives a man can feel—that of the desire to do all that he can to create, and perfect, and make their own, a home for his family? Where is the justice of the homes, which by the necessities of your increasing numbers people are obliged to build on this land, reverting at the expiration of a certain term to the heir of the man who now happens to own the land? Where is the public policy of limiting as far as possible the number of families who shall be owners of houses?"

But our land laws have not been framed with any idea of either justice or public policy. They are the result of a revolution—carried out by the landlords without either the consent or knowledge of the people; a revolution gradual, stealthy, and nefarious, in that by their own legislative power and influence over the lawyers they have changed themselves from being *landlords* into *landowners*.

Yet, in spite of unjust enactments which have obscured or nullified the fundamental laws of our English Constitution,

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\* *Contemporary Review*, August, 1880.

it still remains a fact that no private individual can *rightfully* own English land.

"Allodial (absolute) property no subject in England now has: it being a received and now undeniable principle in law that all lands in England are holden mediately or immediately of the King."—*Blackstone (Commentaries, Vol. II., p. 106)*

"All lands owned by subjects in England are in the nature of fees, whether derived to them by descent from their ancestors or purchased for a valuable consideration; for they cannot come to any man by either of these ways unless accompanied by those feudal incidents which attended upon the first feudatories to whom the lands were originally granted."—*Stephen (Vol. I., p. 232)*

Large tracts of country were originally granted to the great lords on condition of services which they were to render to the nation. It was never supposed that the land was their property, but the personal service, as well as the equipment of soldiers, which was required of them, may be considered as a sort of rent paid to the State, and as land can only rightly belong to the nation, so all rents ought to be paid to the State to serve in lieu of any other taxes, and thus benefit the whole community; and the State being sole landlord every one who desired fields or houses could have security of tenure in perpetuity, and instead of being, as now, a homeless nation, even labourers and artisans might have houses of their own, of which no one could dispossess them, in which to take affectionate pride, and be able to pass them on to their children through successive generations.

"How to Nationalize the Land" without expense to the State, without any injustice to individuals, and without depriving any class of their actual rights is explained fully in an article in the *Contemporary* for November, 1880, by Alfred R. Wallace, of which the second title is "A Radical Solution of the Irish Land Problem;" and no unprejudiced person can attentively study that article without being convinced that had Professor Wallace's solution been adopted by the Irish leaders in 1880, and carried out by the co-operation of the Government, there would have been by this present time a commencement of prosperity in Ireland, and



for England respite from the Irish worry ; and between the two countries, peace and goodwill.

And though hitherto our people submit more quietly than the Irish, yet what crying need is here also that private land-owning be abolished let the following extracts from Mr Wallace's article testify

" In Mr Froude's remarkable paper on Ireland, in the *Nineteenth Century* for September last, he gives the following case of (probably ignorant) abuse of power, apparently from personal knowledge. He says : " Not a mile from the place where I am now writing, an estate on the coast of Devonshire came into the hands of an English Duke. There was a primitive village upon it, occupied by sailors, pilots, and fishermen, which is described in 'Doomsday Book,' and was inhabited at the Conquest by the actual forefathers of the late tenants, whose names may be read there. The houses were out of repair. The Duke's predecessors had laid out nothing upon them for a century, and had been contented with exacting the rents. When the present owner entered into possession, it was represented to him that if the village was to continue it must be rebuilt, but that to rebuild it would be a needless expense, for the people, living as they did on their wages as fishermen and seamen, would not cultivate his land, and were useless to him. The houses were, therefore, simply torn down, and nearly half the population was driven out into the world to find new homes."

" This is a sufficiently striking case of the evils of landlordism, which gives a rich man the power to tear the poor man away from his ancestral home. Can we really boast of our freedom when even centuries of occupation give these poor seamen no right to live on their native soil ? "

Now how shall we remedy these things ? Shall we, having first paid above four millions sterling to buy out the landlords of Ireland, burden ourselves with yet another five, six, or seven, or more millions sterling to buy out those who pretend to own British soil ? or shall we wait till the crofters', the labourers' cry for land grows into maddening passion, and they murder us piecemeal as in Ireland ? or until the masses beneath surge and heave in one vast Terror, and the peasants

claim the land and divide it, and England become as France ?

Impossible? Hear Mr. Champion, the Socialist, last Sunday week—

“ If he thought the miserable system under which they lived, and all its attendant horror, could be done away with to-morrow by cutting the throats of that million and a quarter of people who took so much more than their share of the bounties of nature, he would, if it were possible, do it with his own hand that minute.”

And this announcement spoken to a miscellaneous London crowd was received with “ loud cheers.”

But even if peasant proprietorship could be achieved peaceably, that would be no cure at all for the evils which are the bane of our social system. Rather it would intensify and render them not, as now, merely difficult, but well-nigh impossible of remedy. It should be the Conservatives, and not Mr. Chamberlain, who ought to offer the labourer as his price for acquiescence in the existing basis of society “ three acres and-a cow.”

There are others who propose as a remedy for the existing evils of land-owning, free trade in land, abolition of entail, and easier transfer of land by purchase ; but what would all these changes mean but greater facilities to the wealthy to add field to field, to take for themselves, if they chose, whole counties for their private pleasure, and oust the poor man from any place or space to live on God's earth ?

Again, as to Mr. Gladstone's proposed remedy of peasant proprietorship : let us see how that works in countries where it already exists. Through the Emancipation Act of 1861, a law carried by the mere decree of the Russian Autocrat, the Russian peasants, who were formerly serfs belonging personally to their over-lords, were set free. 20,000,000 serfs belonging to private owners, 30,000,000 serfs of the Crown were thus emancipated.

Whilst, however, the peasants had been serfs, they had communal rights over the land ; the over-lord could sell one or another of his people from off the land, but he could not sell the land away from his people. “ We are yours, but the

land is ours," was the phrase by which these Russian serfs expressed their right to the soil of their country. But the same decree which changed the serfs into free peasants, set free also the power of their late owners over the land. From having been merely landlords they were permitted to become landowners, and though no compensation was given them for the loss of their power over their serfs, they were paid for the land which they were compelled to give the free peasants in allotments, in lieu of the communal right which the serfs formerly possessed over the estate on which they lived. Between 1866 and the beginning of 1881 the Russian Government had expended nearly £100,000,000 in order that the freed peasants should become landowners.

The despotic government thus strove to purchase amongst the lowest and most ignorant of its subjects a strength of conservatism for the arbitrary rule that becomes ever more and more intolerable to the educated and reflecting amongst its subjects.

Such peasants as can manage to prosper on their small properties might be naturally expected to favour a government which has presented them with their land, and converted them from being serfs into being landowners.

But, unfortunately for Russia, there is a very large proportion of Russian peasants who do not make their allotments succeed. The character of the Russian Slav is like that of the pure Irish Celt, with no steady habit of industry or tenacity of purpose, the chief object of life being to drink and be merry. Such thoughtless people become easily a prey to the usurer. Whilst the land was held in common no one could borrow on it: the improvident owner is always tempted to mortgage it at a pinch. The usurers are able to oppress the peasants by the help of the tax-gatherer—*e.g.*, they are obliged to sell their corn in September when it is cheap, in order to pay the tax, and buy it again in winter when it is dear, in order to live. The tax-gatherer knows that if he sells up the peasant he becomes a beggar and can pay no more; flogging is therefore resorted to, and insolvent peasants are flogged in a body. The Jews, Koulaks, mireaters, and other usurers, often of peasant origin, exhaust

the peasant in every way: they foreclose the mortgages, unite the small pieces of land once more, and reconstitute large estates, becoming landowners, whose sole object is to extort money, and having none of the kindness and fellow-feeling which sometimes existed between the over-lord and his serfs. The bondage labourers—*i. e.*, men bound to work on their creditors' land as interest for money lent—receive no wages, and are, in fact, a sort of slaves.

The peasant is being starved out; the mortality is enormous. In the rural districts of England the death-rate is 18 per 1,000. In the whole of Central Russia it reached 62 per 1,000 at the last revision in 1862. The famine, now so frightfully common, is not owing to barrenness of the soil, for the mortality is greatest where the land is best. In twenty-five years the experiment has reduced the peasant to a lower level than when he was a serf, and exhausted the once rich soil of the country. Stepniak says, "One-third of our peasants have become homeless, downtrodden, beggarly batracks. The area of cultivated land has diminished by one-fifth, and in some places by a quarter of its former amount."

This, then, is the account by a Russian who knows well the peasantry of his country, and whose sympathy is entirely with them, of the result of peasant-proprietorship after a quarter of a century's experience of it in Russia.

And should Home Rule be carried, and the National League be able to fulfil its implied promise of making the peasants of Ireland a free gift of their land, after the example of the despotic ruler of Russia, what guarantee is there that the result might not be the same vicious circle of improvident peasant-owners resorting to the usurer, and the usurer selling the peasants into beggary?

In Froude's "Oceana" is an anecdote which aptly illustrates this tendency of peasant proprietorship. Mr. Froude was talking to an Irish emigrant on the ship in which he was sailing, and asked him why he was leaving Ireland just at this time when better days were coming. "The devil is in the country," he said; "there is no living in it any way. There are good laws now. There is nothing to say against

the laws ; but do what you will with them, no one is any the better' I enquired what especially had gone wrong with himself. 'Thim banks was the ruin of me. I had rather had to do with the worst landlord that ever was in Ireland than with thim banks. There is no mercy in thim. They'll have the skin from off your back''

It is true that where the character of the peasantry is more resolute and perseveringly industrious, as in Belgium and France, there the *petite culture* does increase both the agricultural produce of a country and its accumulation of wealth. But to obtain this success the small proprietor has to live a life of such unceasing toil and drudgery that the whole character assumes the bent of a penurious thrift and when such sordid peasants obtain power to sway the policy of a nation the result is scarcely more desirable than even Irish disorder.

The way to get the most produce out of the land—yes, if mere quantity of food be all you care about, the willing ceaseless toil of those who till their own land will doubtless gain that for you ; but if souls of men and women, if unfaltering Truth and dauntless Courage, if all the nobler life of a Nation move you—pause again and look at France : there can you see writ large how peasant proprietorship will forward these things for you. Time fails me to speak of her lying politics ; her mean, ever-changing government, her debased literature. Let me take as illustrations merely a few extracts from the *Contemporary Review* for December, 1885, which lies by chance on my table—they are from M. Monod's "Contemporary Life and Thought in France :"—

"The persistent threat held out by certain Republicans to destroy the Church, either by a hypocritical fulfilment of the Concordat or by the forcible separation of Church and State, has been skilfully used by their adversaries amongst the peasantry, who dread nothing so much as having to pay their curé themselves. The Government was so well aware of this fact that in some of the departments the catechism was ordered to be recited in the schools during the last week before the elections, though only two months earlier the teachers had been strictly forbidden to use it. This

childish stratagem had, as might have been expected, no great success."

"The large sums spent in building have burdened many of the communes with debt, and the increase of local rates has not been made up for by the advantage of free education, for, as a peasant put it, 'I used to pay for my own son; now I pay for everybody.' In some places even, the parents feel insulted by a gratuity which reduces them to the level of paupers. The State, by providing free education for everybody, and not only for those who claim it, has seriously diminished its revenues, and has deprived the teachers of the very necessary addition to their salaries afforded by the capitation fee."

"The Military Recruitment Law, which imposes an equal term of three years' service on every one alike, has not yet come into operation, as it has not passed the Senate; but the mere passing of the Bill by the Lower Chamber has been enough to raise the indignation of the peasantry. The deputies imagined that these people would be delighted to see the son of the bourgeois obliged to serve as long as themselves, whereas in reality they care nothing at all about it; while they are furious at finding that they are all to be compelled to serve the full three years, in place of the present system, by which half the contingent drawn by lot serves only ten months, and the other half forty months. As a matter of fact, this law, so far from reducing our military expenditure, will greatly increase it. The only thing it is good for is to satisfy the cravings of that levelling instinct which is supposed to exist in the heart of the common people."

The French legislators of the Revolution, seeing the social misery and the financial ruin to which large landed proprietors had brought their country, divided such properties as fell into their hands amongst the peasants who were to till the soil, not permitting one individual to acquire more than sufficient for his own cultivation. And in order as much as possible to prevent the re-accumulation of large estates, freedom of bequest was taken away. A Frenchman has no power to give his property to his eldest son even by

will ; after a man's death the land he has held is compelled to be divided amongst his children or other relatives.

But the obvious drawbacks to the French system, as well as the portentous evils of our own landowning, are both avoided by State tenure.

In a series of articles in the *Nineteenth Century*, entitled "Clouds over Arcady," Dr Jessop depicted the depletion of our rural population, with the depression and misery and wretched homes of those who remain. He appears to imply that the buying up of estates by the wealthy has a great deal to do with the misery of the peasantry, and yet he goes on to reason as though this engulfing of a nation's prosperity for the sake of rich men's pleasure were a sort of natural law, like the tides or an eclipse, which the State is powerless to resist. In the *Nineteenth Century* for January, 1886, Dr. Jessop writes : " But is it true that land monopoly is on the increase, and the land of the country getting into fewer and fewer hands? The history of every nation that has emerged from barbarism to the higher life of land system and empire has been the history of a process whereby the ownership of landed property has passed from the possession of the many to that of the few."

Yes, true, Dr. Jessop, always ; and always also so long as the many owned their country it was great and noble, or happy or prosperous ; but when greed and pride and avarice had joined house to house and field to field so that for the people there was no more place, then its greatness passed away silently like a summer cloud, or fell in direful crash of storm and overwhelming ruin.

Let us instance the land whose name is so often on our lips to-day a byeword, a hissing, and reproach ; a land fair and fertile, but without a people, having only over it bands of pitiless, grasping robbers, and under them helpless, hopeless slaves—yet this land was the womb, the cradle of all our European civilisation, the art of writing invented there, architecture, sculpture, painting, all matured there for long ages, during which European barbarians slowly discovered

that instruments better than flints might be found wherewith to kill each other, or to slay and carve their savaga food.

Is it possible to stand beneath the mighty ruins of Egypt without feeling oneself in the presence of a civilisation before which our own is dwarfed into insignificance, even as its endurance was counted by more thousands of years than our own of hundreds? Architecture grand as ours is ignoble, painting as everlasting as is ours ephemeral. • And the land belonged to the people, and they were freer and happier, and under wiser laws than our England of to-day. No wife-beaters or wife-kickers there, nor that still more agonising mental tyranny that inflicts silent torture in so mang a bright-seeming English home; amongst the ancient Egyptians there was accorded to women an honour, freedom, and dignity which is amongst us unknown.

But the famine came, and Joseph—and the whole people sold their land to save their lives. • It did not seem to make much difference at first; things went on for a long time much the same as before—nay, even a higher greatness seemed reached, as with France under Louis XIV.—but the foundations were gone, and the greatness of Egypt melted away as the summer sun dries the overflowing of the Nile. \*

That was the most complete, the most signal instance; but so, through greed and avarice, causing the few to gather to themselves the land needed by the many, has passed away the greatness and civilization of all the Empires of the past that have been, and to-day are not.

Seen by the light of past history, our “millionaires counted by the scores” that “excite no comment,” are an ominous portent, existing, as they do, side by side with our thousands of respectable workmen to whose emaciated children farthing dinners are a widespread boon.

If in 1880 we had begun to give Ireland her land by Professor Wallace’s plan, the National League would have no basis of existence, and yet no landlord would be defrauded, and no British taxpayer burdened.

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\* By thus giving up their land the Egyptians made themselves virtual slaves to a despotic government: but by nationalizing the land we should free our people from virtual slavery to private landowners.



But the evils against which Irish peasants lift the terrors of a rebellion which fills England with a horror of pity and indignation are the very same as those which our peasants endure with silent misery

Yet Dr. Jessop says, "Literary country gentlemen, with a taste for philanthropy, may pathetically deplore that the wide domains of the moneyed men have been the ruin of the country; but the son of Amos at Jerusalem, and Gracchus 500 years after him at Rome, and Pliny 300 years after him, simply testified to the fact that eternal laws go on from age to age, working themselves out by the agency of the instincts or the follies, the sins or the ambitions, the greed or the needs of the children of men."

Eternal laws? *Eternal!* Greed and avarice, pride of place and lust of power—are these *eternal* laws? And must that warning also be for ever in vain: "Woe to them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the land?" Then eternally shall come also the threatened vengeance, "In mine ears saith the Lord of Hosts, of a truth, many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant."

The evils of landowning are set forth at length in Mr. Henry George's book, "Progress and Poverty." If that book were but as clearly written as it is closely reasoned, we should hear something more against landowning in England than we do hear. Unfortunately the argument is so involved, so difficult to follow, that it takes almost half as much intellect to understand it as to have written it; and yet fortunately for landlords, since now they have time to study and understand the need of reform before it shall be demanded with a mutter of anger by the people.

Mr. George's proposed remedy, however, would be totally inadequate: if we put a tax on the land another generation might remove the tax. We must declare simply that England belongs to the English, and that no private individual can claim right over any rood of English soil. Robbery of vested interests, prescription of long-established right, &c.—all those old worn-out arguments that were used to defend the slave

trade, which even Christians used to defend as a Divine institution, all these bulwarks of established wrong, will have to depart as the slave trade departed. Does it not seem half incredible that not a hundred years ago, Christian Englishmen thought that they might, not only lawfully but rightfully, buy and sell human beings? So also impossible, ere another century be passed, will it seem to sell the land on which human beings need to live.

But Mr. Winans and the Duke of Sutherland, and the rest of the great and little people who fancy that England belongs to them in parcels and not at all to the people of England, shall we rob them of what they have purchased, or of what they have been born to consider as their right? No, we will not rob them. Let every landowner keep his claim on the land for his life—also let it go to his heir who is expecting that it may be his; but let all claim on the land cease with the third reversion from the passing of the law, unless the heir-expectant of such reversion should have been more than ten years old at that time, so that he thereby has lost a reasonable expectation. And when the welfare of a whole people is to be considered, is it any very great injustice to the yet unborn or still infantile grandson of any landowner, that this law will set him partially where his younger brothers would have been wholly, even without this law redeeming the land from an unjust ownership? All owners of entailed property expect that their younger grandchildren should have to do something for their living: is it any very great injustice if also the eldest son has to do something? “If any man will not work neither let him eat” has been quoted for eighteen centuries against the poor man, but when it is proposed that rich men’s grandchildren should do a little work also, even the *Spectator* cries out about the eighth commandment; nobody at all saying anything about stealing when the Duke of Sutherland pockets the proceeds of poor men’s labour, or when Mr. Winans takes mountain and heather, cloud and sunshine, pasture and waterfall of a whole country from the people whose forefathers have possessed it from time immemorial. But because the great people have robbed in times past—we will not therefore rob

them now, we will take nothing that is theirs. the Duke of Sutherland may take the fruits of poor men's labour, but if he or his forefathers have built a house, that house shall be theirs still; if they have planted trees, only their heirs shall cut them, if they have walled a garden, none shall walk in it without their permission. Only let them understand, that in future, the *land* of England belongs to the people of England, and whoso holds a portion of that must pay rent to the people for it.

Not an unjust rent like the Duke, who claims seven hundred per cent. of the poor who have made his land valuable, so shall NOT the Duke of Devonshire pay for his land because he has made it lovely by building Chatsworth and planting its gardens; only the same rent as the wild uncultivated waste land about it is worth, that shall he pay, and his sons and his sons' sons pay for ever—and that little rent so small for them to pay, shall help to lighten the taxes of their poorer neighbours.

And much more sure shall their possession be when it is based on right and equity, than when, as now, it rests on generations of wrong and robbery; when their possession is founded as on a rock in the contentment and happiness of a people, instead of as now, resting on a volcano of injustice, misery, and vice.

Equality is something which never yet existed, and never will, and which it is not desirable ever should exist; or "reverence, that angel of the world," would cease to be. Happiest ever they who can find their superiors, so only that their superiors know the grace of goodness, otherwise they are NONE, but only most base counterfeits. But equality before the law, that is what we seek in claiming England for the English; that a poor man may not be put to prison if he steals a turnip from a rich man's field, whilst a Duke may take the proceeds of a poor man's labour, and nobody even cry shame on him.

And this is what is lovely in Switzerland—not equality, for there are rich and poor there too, though none meanly poor, none brutally rich: but this is why I love Switzerland beyond my own country—not for the eternal mountains, with

their pathless snow, nor for the deep lakes that mirror them in their waters; but for this: that there the rich man's garden has neither gate to it, nor fence nor wall about it, and the poor man's plums fall on the roadside, and there are none to make them afraid.

Conservatives! in old time your fathers led Englishmen in battles with spears and swords, with the noise of warriors, and garments rolled in blood: lead you us now, lead or follow those who lead with a nobler courage to justice and mercy, by a grander heroism of self-renunciation and silent sacrifice.

British Workmen! remember that by your votes you are masters of England's destiny; whatever you unite to ask your Government, that must sooner or later become law. If you desire that both Britain and Ireland shall be really free, and our people happy, demand for them this first necessity of civilisation—that they may possess houses, homes of their own, and lands held in secure tenure from the State, from which no landlord or tisturer can oust them. Do not be deluded by the cry of Church Disestablishment into forgetting the one crying evil that needs disestablishing; if you are to have space to live, on England's greatness which rests on your happiness is to endure—Disestablish Landlordism.

And I, too, am a landowner, and save in land, with houses, there is scarce any reliable provision for my one child, the light of my eyes, the sweet girl-joy of my declining years (tender is she and delicate, and hard is the world for women); yet were the sacrifice needed, and could it open the eyes of all the other landowners; could this sacrifice take England from the grasp of the few and give it as a possession to the people of England for ever, so that even the poorest amongst us might say of England "my own Country;" then, though as sorrowfully as Agamemnon sacrificing Epegeenie, I would give for that sake, not the land only, but even the houses also, and trust my only gladness in His hands who never faileth them that put their trust in Him.

VINDEX.

## APPENDIX.

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But the misery, bad as it is, which landowning causes in our own country is as nothing compared with the wholesale misery we have caused by forcing our land system upon a large portion of India.

There "the landlord and tenant are as monarch and subject. What the zeminder asks the ryot will give; what the zeminder orders the ryot will obey. The landlord will tax his tenant for every extravagance that avarice, ambition, pride, vanity, or often intemperance may suggest. He will tax him for the salary of his ameen, for the payment of his income tax, for the purchase of an elephant for his own use, for the cost of the stationery of his establishment, for the payment of his expenses to fight the neighbouring Indigo-planter, for the payment of his fine when he has been convicted of an offence by the magistrate. The milkman gives his milk, the oilman his oil, the weaver his clothes, the confectioner his sweetmeats, the fisherman his fish. The zeminder fines his tenants for a festival, for a birth, for a funeral, for a marriage. He levies black-mail on them when an affray is committed. He establishes his private pound, and realises five annas for every head of cattle that is caught trespassing on the ryots' crops. In every zeminder there is a naib (deputy), under the naib there are gumashtas (agents), under the gumashta there are piyadas (bailiffs). The naib exacts a perquisite for adjusting accounts annually. The naib and gumashtas take their share in the regular cesses; they have other cesses of their own. The bailiffs, when they are sent to summon defaulting ryots, exact from them four or five annas a day. It is in evidence before the Indigo Commission that in one year a zeminderi naib, in the district of Nudder, extorted ten thousand rupees from his master's ryots. . . . Yet no one raises a hand on behalf of the ryots, no one speaks a word in their interest. . . .

"The result is that the ryots exist always on the verge of starvation. They were once, it must be remembered, direct holders of their land under the Government. But Lord Cornwallis and the then Home Government of India handed them over to a body of tax-collectors (the zeminders) as tenants, thinking that our English landlord system, perfect in the eyes of a landlord government, must be best for all the world. The result has been, that under British rule the soil of India has either passed or is fast passing into the power of land-speculators and money-lenders, while the ancient landholders have been converted into half-starved, poverty-stricken serfs on the fields

which were once their own."—*How to Nationalize the Land.* By ALFRED R. WALLACE. *Contemporary*, November, 1880.

The evils of private ownership of land, even when combined with the utmost benevolence, is aptly illustrated by the history of the Burlington Arcade. It was built by a benevolent nobleman, in order that the shops might only be let to respectable ladies, either single or widows, who, having no male protectors, wished to make a living by business; and, with the same kindness of purpose, the rent of each shop was limited to about twenty pounds a year. At the present day many of these shops are rented by men; and even such women as do hold them are compelled to pay very high rents, which extra rent, however, does not benefit the present owner's estate, but goes into the pocket of some private agent.

In arguments striving to uphold the present system of private ownership it is frequently alleged that the State could not manage the renting of land. One wonders if these writers keep private couriers for fear the State should miscarry their letters? And though there may be some blunders in the Army, and not a few in the Navy, nobody pretends that the defence of the country should be left to private enterprise; and if the State should defend the country from foreign invaders, much more should it defend it from home aggressors, and deliver its people from injustice, tyranny, and wrong.

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## THE YEAR OF JUBILEE,\*

BY THE

REV. PHILIP H. WICKSTEED, M.A.

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"And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."—LEVITICUS xxv. 23.

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THE sound of the word "jubilee" has been perpetually in our ears for weeks and months past, and it would be strange if our thoughts never turned to the origin of the phrase and the ideas it represents, even were the contrast between the historical suggestions and the contemporary associations of the word less significant and less startling than it actually is.

It is interesting to note in the first place that the coincidence of sound between "jubilee" and "jubilant" or "jubilation" appears to be merely accidental. We derive "jubilant" from the Latin, and it is ultimately connected with that widespread family of native and borrowed English words, the members of which have wandered as far away from each other as "deity," "diary," "joke," "jovial," and "Tuesday." "Jubilee," on the other hand, we have adopted from the Hebrew, in which language it means a "trumpet blast," for the year of jubilee was the year proclaimed by a trumpet blast throughout the land on the great day of atonement in

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\* By permission, from *The Christian Reformer*.

the seventh month. The fact that it was ordained for every fiftieth year has made a "jubilee" the synonym in modern speech of a fifty-years celebration of any kind, while the real purpose and meaning of the institution itself has been completely lost sight of, and its proper associations have yielded to those of the accidentally approximated but foreign word "jubilation."

Let us go back to the principles and aspirations, connected with the original Hebrew Jubilee, and inquire whether in this, as in so many other instances, the Hebrews have handed down to us as a legacy problems which our civilisation must solve or perish, and indicated to some extent at least the spirit in which we must seek to solve them.

For the roots of the ideas we are about to examine we must go far back into Hebrew antiquity. The earliest systematic, or half-systematic epitome of Hebrew law and custom which we possess, already recognises and attempts to elaborate them. It is the ancient code commonly known as "the book of the Covenant," contained in the twenty-first and following chapters of Exodus; and here already we find the mind of the legislator dominated by the conception that the *Land* and the *People* of Israel are the Lord's, and that no human owner or master can have absolute rights over either the one or the other.

The land of Israel belonged to Israel's God, and no man could hold any portion of it in his own right, or absolutely, and in every seventh year the legislator would have the occupier of any plot of land make open acknowledgment that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof by resigning it wholly to him. The form of this acknowledgment was determined by many considerations. To the nomad Hebrew there may always have seemed to be something bordering upon sacrilege in harassing the sacred earth with the plough. He dared not touch any sacred thing with a human implement. He would pile turf into an altar, but would not



build up hewn stones into a table of God (Exodus xx. 24, 25). He would reverence rough stones or rocks, but held it sacrilege to pass the graving tool over them to make a chiselled emblem of his God. Still less must any man desecrate with the plough the plot of land that was consecrated to Israel's God. To do so would be on the one hand to dispute possession with him, and, on the other hand, to pollute his inviolable domain. Hence it happened that the land consecrated to Yahveh, the god of Israel, must lie wild and untilled bearing such fruits for man or beast as he willed, but owned and cultivated by no man. The ancient legislator, therefore, who embodied in his code of laws the fundamental principle that all the land of Israel was God's, commanded his countrymen, in recognition of the divine claim, to resign their own rights over the land once in every seven years, and let it lie fallow to bear spontaneously for the benefit of man and beast what unsolicited harvest it might.

Six days should man and beast work, and the seventh should be a day of rest, dedicated expressly to the divine guardian of Israel, in token that all the days were his. Then should the man-servant and maid-servant rest from the command of their lord, and rejoice with him in the equalising privilege of the Sabbath. In like manner every seventh year the land should rest in token that it belonged to God and not to man, and its free offerings that year should be deemed the common blessing sent by their God to all his people; no man's exclusive right, a free gift to every man, it should be for the poor of the land, and what they left should be for the beasts.\*

And if the land was God's, and could be held by no man

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\* Exodus xxiii. 10-12. "And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the increase thereof; but the seventh year thou shalt release it and let it lie fallow; that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave the beast of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard and with thy oliveyard. Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed."

in absolute ownership, so likewise was the Israelite God's special and holy possession, inalienable as the land itself. Therefore, the Israelite might sell his services for a term of years, but might not sell himself; therefore, the strong and wealthy might make his fellow-Hebrew his bond-servant—but not for ever. After six years' service the Hebrew slave must be set free, for he belonged to the holy people, redeemed and possessed by God, and could not be the property of man.\*

Such are the ordinances of the ancient "Book of the Covenant" concerning the seventh year. Prof. Kuenen has made it (in my opinion) as good as certain that this code of law which is now introduced into the narrative of the events at Sinai, originally stood in another place, and that the oldest tradition laid these ordinances upon the lips of Moses at the end of the wanderings in the desert, when the people were about to enter on the promised land. If this conception should gain general currency, then surely the generations to come will look back upon no sublimer creation of the historical imagination than that of the Hebrew sage, historian, legislator, and poet, who pictured Moses standing with his people on the borders of the land of their inheritance, as they were about to pass from the life of wandering herdsmen to that of dwellers in cities and tillers of the soil, calling down

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\* Exodus xxi. 2-6. "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he come in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master give him a wife, and she bear him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto God [*i.e.*, to the neighbouring sanctuary. In this earliest legislation there is no trace of the later idea of confining the cultus to a single centre.] and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." The concluding provisions of this ordinance may seem to qualify the principle that the Hebrew could under no circumstances become the absolute property of his master. It is to be observed, however, that the *permanent* union of master and bond-slave is one entered upon voluntarily and based upon affection, and its permanency is analogous to the permanency of marriage.

upon their nascent civilisation the august protection of their God, seeking to base their life upon justice and mercy, and laying down the eternal conditions of a civilisation that shall be a blessing to all and a curse to none—the conditions that “labour” and “land”—the father and mother of human wealth, as they have been picturesquely and profoundly called by an old English writer—should be the *property* of no man.

The land and the people are God’s, and cannot be held as property. A man may have a temporary right to the produce of the land, a temporary right to the services of a man, but neither land nor human beings can be the property of any save of Him who made them.

The aspirations of this earliest of Hebrew legislators were unfulfilled. Hebrews held their fellow-Hebrews in perpetual bondage. Men sold themselves into slavery to escape starvation, and were held in slavery till their death. Isaiah saw the great men of his day enclosing common lands, as great men have done in other days, till, courtier and grandee as he was, he cried out against his fellow-magnates, “Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land !” \* The divorce between land and labour, the mother and father of human wealth, went on ; by the side of growing wealth went deepening poverty—or at least, a deepening sense of poverty ; the Sabbath years of dedication to God and to his poor were neglected ; and the earth was the *landlord’s* and the fulness thereof ; the world and they that dwelt therein.

Time went on. A great religious movement gathered head, and the group of earnest and deep-souled men who had found representatives in Isaiah at the court and in

\* Isaiah v. 8.

Micah in the villages, had now swelled into a great national party that felt the power and the will to take into its hands the direction of the country's policy. Since Isaiah's day no great representative of the cause had stood at the king's side, and the reformation that had been attempted under Isaiah's influence had been followed by long years of reaction when the faithful suffered and waited in silence. But in the ever memorable eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign the zeal of the religious reformers broke forth afresh with irresistible passion and intensity, and the trumpet-note which rallied them to the fight still rings in the ears of him who reads and understands the Book of Deuteronomy. In this book a reformer of Josiah's time takes up the old Book of the Covenant, amplifies, modifies, and supplements it, and transfuses and transforms it all with a spirit of personal religion so deep and glowing that Jesus afterwards found in its most characteristic words the first and greatest of the commandments. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might."\*

The book of Deuteronomy seeks to enforce the old precept, which had never been observed, and to vindicate the essential freedom of the Hebrew, who, as one of God's chosen people, cannot be the property of man. After six years' service he must be set free.† The precept as to land

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\* Deuteronomy vi. 4, 5.

† Deuteronomy xv., 12-18. "If thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years: then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou lettest him go free from thee, thou shalt not let him go empty: thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy wine-press: as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman, in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day. And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go out from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear into the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise. \* It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou lettest him go

lying fallow every seventh year is not repeated, but the idea out of which it sprang pervades the whole book of Deuteronomy: the idea, namely, that the land was given to the people by their god, and given to the *people*, not to certain irresponsible individuals. The produce of the land, and all the goodly wealth into which those who enjoy it have entered without their own toil, must be generously shared with the poor.\* The observance of the sabbath year must be preserved by the cancelling of debts (or perhaps the remission of interest only) every seventh year.† There is evidence, though it is not regarded by all competent authorities as conclusive, that already the religious motive that had once dictated the sabbath rest for the land, had limited in a more practical and far-reaching way the conception of private property in land; for, it would seem, as the land was God's, so it could never become the absolute private property of any man to be alienated at his will; but the *family* to whom God had given it, remained for ever its legitimate guardian and trustee. A man might surrender or barter away his own private claim upon the land, for that was his, but the land itself was not his to give away or sell, it belonged to those to whom God had given it, the clan or family of which he was but a single representative.‡ Of this, however,

free from thee; for to the double of the hire of an hireling hath he served thee six years. and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest."

On comparing this passage with Exodus xxi 2-6, we note the more definite expression of the religious motive of the ordinance, the characteristic humanity and generosity of its details, and the express inclusion of the female slave under its provisions (compare Exodus xxi. 7-11). In the ceremony of the permanent engagement the local sanctuary is superseded by the master's dwelling house, since the author of Deuteronomy desired to centralise the cultus at Jerusalem and to put down the local temples.

\* See Deuteronomy *passim*, and especially vi. 10-12, and the passages cited in note \*, p. 72.

† Deuteronomy xv. 1, 2. "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he hath lent unto his neighbour; he shall not exact it of his neighbour and his brother; because the Lord's release hath been proclaimed." The law applied to Hebrew debtors only.

‡ See Fenton. *Early Hebrew Life*, cap 7.

we hear nothing in the book of Deuteronomy. The author contented himself with upholding the general principle that since the Hebrew landowner held his land from God, it was not wholly his own, but must yield a portion of its produce, whether crops or fruits, or flocks and herds, to the Levite, to the widow, to the orphan, to the poor, thus paying rent, as it were, to God.\*

Again the aspirations of the devout were thwarted by the selfishness of the strong. In a moment of terror and terrified repentance indeed the great men of Jerusalem, many years after the public proclamation of the Book of Deuteronomy, did declare their slaves free men, but when the panic was over, to Jeremiah's indignation, they forgot their own promise and the precepts of the law alike, and re-enslaved their brethren.†

Again the generations succeeded one another. The kingdom of Judah could no longer resist the great empires of the East, rebellion was followed by terrible punishment, and the chief inhabitants of the land were carried away into captivity. But they still retained their national life and religion, and still looked upon the land that had once been theirs as given them by God. As it lay there in uncultivated barrenness it was observing the sabbath rest so long denied it by the sinful greed of its inhabitants,‡ and in due time it would again yield its increase to a chastened and more worthy generation.

In these years of penitential exile the thoughts of the Hebrews turned with more devout and reverential affection

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\* See Deuteronomy xxiv. 19. "When thou reapest thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands." Also verses 20-22; xxvi. 12, 13; xiv. 28; &c., &c.

† See Jeremiah xxxiv. 8-22.

‡ See Leviticus xxvi. 34, 35, 43, &c. (written during the Captivity).

than ever to the ancient ordinances and underlying principles of their religion, and now the prophet Ezekiel began the task of systematising and codifying the laws and traditions of Israel, not forgetting that the land was God's, and might not be dealt with at the caprice of man. A whole school of legists rose up under his influence, and it was not till several generations had come and gone that the ripe fruit hung on the tree that he had planted.

The earlier disciples of this school sought to re-enforce the sabbath year and the Deuteronomic regulations as to the rights of the landless poor to a share in the earth's produce\* ; but a later legist dropped these ordinances more or less completely out of sight, and sought to supersede them by the institution of the year of Jubilee, the great release in every fiftieth year.†

In the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus, as we now read it, these earlier and later ordinances of Ezekiel's school are closely intertwined, but it is no great feat of critical dissection to separate out the law of the year of Jubilee, and when we have done so we find that in this ordinance the law of the release of slaves has become only the far-off echo of what it was. The idealists have fallen back at last, defeated by the apparent impossibility of putting their schemes into practice—but only for after generations to accept their ideals, pushed to consequences of which they themselves never dreamt, as

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\* See Leviticus xix. 9, 10, "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God." Also Leviticus xxiii. 22; xxv. 1-7, 18-22.

† Leviticus xxv. 8-17, 23-55. "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; . . . Then shalt thou send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family," &c. &c.

the only sound basis of practical industrial life. Personal slavery, which the early legislator would confine to a period of six years, which the later law-giver would only seek to break once in every fifty years, the modern spirit has declared to be incompatible with civilisation.

But if the ordinance of the year of Jubilee attenuates its assertion of the inviolability of personal freedom, on the other hand the conception that the land is God's and must not be dealt with as the absolute property of man is brought into more distinct relief than ever. Ezekiel had already laid it down that the Crown lands must be inalienable, and had also sought to protect the people's lands against the aggression of the crown\*; but the later legislator of his school went further. God has given the land to the families of Israel, and theirs it is for ever, under him. They can sell the right to cultivate the land for a term of years, but the land itself they can not sell, and in the year of Jubilee, when the trumpet sounds the release throughout the land, every man is to return to his family possession, God's supreme ownership of human beings and the land, of the father and mother of wealth, is to be asserted, and the truth proclaimed: The land is mine, saith the Lord.

Thus from its first beginnings to its last dying echo the legislation of Israel proclaims to us that the pivot upon which civilisation turns is the clearness with which men recognise and the fidelity with which they put into practice the great principle that there can be no absolute private property in men and women or in land.

Such, in outline, is the history of the year of Jubilee. How could it fail to interest us at any time? How could we fail to ponder under any circumstances upon the strange process which has degraded a word with such a history be-

\* Ezek. xlvi. 16-18.



hind it, with such a conception embodied in it, to the mere numerical significance of something that happens fifty years after something else? But how startling do these reflections become when we remember that the very thing which has filled so many hearts with sorrow and foreboding at this season, when we are called on to rejoice, is that the old problem still stares us in the face, unsolved, and demanding, Sphinx-like, that we should solve it or should die!

The year of our Jubilee is signalised not by the proclamation of release through the length and breadth of the country and the glad recognition that the land is God's, but by the ceaseless ring on the great national anvil of the forging of fresh manacles whereby to hold men's hands and teach them, to the bitter end, that the land is the landlord's.

I will not enter now upon controversial matter, or urge my own views as to the direction in which we must look for the *solution* of the problem of our Empire and our civilisation; but who can fail to recognise the fact that the problem itself, with which we are now closing in a death struggle, is the one which the very name of "Jubilee" forces upon the instructed mind, and that, if we are to solve it at all, it must be in the old Hebrew spirit which teaches us that it is above and below all a religious problem. The Jubilee will not have come and gone in vain if our hearts have heard and understood the trumpet blast of the great release which proclaims "The land is mine," and teaches us humbly and prayerfully to ask of God how we may best deal with what is His.

# LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY.

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## OBJECTS.

To affirm that the STATE holds the LAND in trust for each generation.  
 To restore to all their natural right to use and enjoy their native land  
 To obtain for the NATION the revenue derived from its LAND.

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*Treasurer.*—FRANCIS L. SOPER, F.L.S., 7, Cholmeley Villas, Highgate, N.

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*Remittances should be made payable to the Treasurer, Mr F. L. Soper. Cheques to be crossed "London and County Bank, Covent Garden."*

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## LAND NATIONALISATION: ITS NECESSITY AND ITS AIMS.

Being a comparison of the system of Landlord and Tenant with that of Occupying Ownership in their influence on the well-being of the People. By

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, LL.D.,

*Author of the "Malay Archipelago," "Island Life," &c., &c.*

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restricts the whole field of employment and reduces earnings all round.

I have not space to show how in a thousand ways the interest of the monopolist withholds the land from full productive use, substituting extensive for intensive cultivation in the same way that it substitutes pasture for crops, withholding from use part of the land here with the object of running up the value of the remainder there, insisting on excessive Rents and Royalties, though industry languishes under them and foreign competition taking advantage of the situation invades the market. I have said enough I trust, to show that the idea that it is the owner's interest to put the land to the most productive use is fallacious.

But the interest of the Landowner is not only in many cases to turn the land from more to less productive use, but often to prevent its being put to any productive use at all.

When a Highland Lord receiving £1000 a year rent from sheep farmers and crofters is offered £1200 a year by a Southern Lord to turn the land into a deer forest, and the farmers and crofters accordingly are swept away, it is said, "This may be hard on them, but it must be good for the Country at large because the land is now bringing in £200 a year more, which is so much added to the National wealth."

There is nothing added to the National wealth, but quite the contrary.

All that has happened is that one rich man has (so to speak) bribed another rich man *with wealth already existing* to prohibit poor people from producing any wealth at all over a given area, in order that the land may be turned into a wilderness for his amusement. There is no more wealth produced either on that land or anywhere else in consequence of this arrangement. It is a mere unproductive or rather wantonly destructive bargain between two great men to the ruin of the helpless poor and the contraction of the National industry. So far from there being a net gain of £200, there has been a loss of thousands; first of the £1000 which the farmers and crofters would have *produced* for rent, and second of the thousands more they would have produced for their own maintenance, comfort, and improvements.

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OBJECTS.

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Here if you will but look ; here in the examples I have given of the injurious interests of Land Monopoly, is the whole explanation of Trade depression, scarcity of employment and pauperism. The Land is being withheld from full productive use, and industry being dried up at the fountain head.

I do not for a moment mean to say that it is necessarily wrong to put down in grass for cattle or even in heather for game, land that is fit for cultivation.

When as much land is under cultivation *as is wanted* ; that is when all the people of the country have full employment either in extracting the raw material of wealth from the land or in working up and distributing it, the surplus land (and there will be plenty of it) may be left down in grass or heather or whatever the occupiers' interest or fancy may suggest. The wrong is in the present power of the Land Monopolist to withhold from full productive use land that is *wanted*, and so to restrict employment and force down earnings.

It is said that the people who have been turned off the land (the laborers of the Midland Counties, the farmers and crofters of Scotland,) would only have consumed all that they produced and so would have added nothing to the National wealth.

That is not true: for where employment is plentiful and wages consequently high, a considerable portion is always saved up or put to uses that do not immediately die out. But suppose it were true. So also do the Landlord and the employer consume their share? What indeed do people produce things for but to consume them? Whether they do so a little sooner or a little later makes small difference. The great aim of human labour is not to pile up wealth but to satisfy human wants, and that only ought to be piled up which is not wanted at present.

The tendency of so called Political Economy is to deify wealth; to regard the people as mere instruments for the production of wealth, instead of wealth as a mere instrument for improving the condition of the people; to represent that part of the annual produce of the country which goes to the

maintenance and enjoyment of the laborer as so much loss—as cost of production, instead of as profit of production which has been put to its natural purpose; to make the mere accumulation of goods, no matter how unequally distributed, the test of properly directed industry, instead of placing it in a high standard of equally distributed comfort and enjoyment.

There are signs, however, that the people are beginning to recognise and assert their rights, above all that the right of every human being to earn a living comes before the right of a rich man to increase his riches (though under just laws the two things need not come into collision,) and that if the State chooses to make nature herself (that is the land), a private monopoly and exclude the working man from it, it must find him employment, and at as high wages as he could have earned from the land if it had been open to him.

The monopoly of the land is at the bottom of all our troubles; at the bottom of Irish and Highland poverty and discontent; at the bottom of the depopulation of the country and overcrowding of the towns; at the bottom of pauperism and sweating, of commercial crises, of misery and drunkenness and vice; at the bottom of almost every political and social evil you can name.

Force open the land.

Laugh to scorn the claim of any class to withhold from use the resources of nature, saying "The earth is ours. We do not choose that this part of it shall be used."

Force open the land.

As to the way in which it is to be done, several ways of doing it have been proposed; it is not my place here to decide which of them is the best. Only, one way or another, let it be done.

A. J. O.

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OBJECTS

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Board has settled with its constituents what land is required by them and by other persons joining in their petition, the Commission is called upon to decide the terms on which such land shall be obtained. In the words of the Bill (Sec. XXXIII.), "The Land Commission . . . shall send a sub-commission to consider in concert with said Land Board, or Boards, such petition, and to allocate the land petitioned for, or such portion thereof, or such other land as they shall see fit, among the petitioners or parties named as aforesaid." As land is not to be compulsorily taken from any arable farm or sheep run, the rent of which does not exceed £200, the reason for the discretionary powers of the Commission is obvious. Briefly stated, the Land Board, in obtaining land for its constituents, is not permitted to interfere recklessly with existing agricultural interests. In a similar spirit, provision is made to preserve the "amenity" of residences, farm steadings, etc.

When the sub-commission has decided that applications for holdings made through the Land Board ought to be satisfied, it shall make a valuation of each proposed holding, separating the "ground value" from the "tenant right." I have already explained that the latter is to be acquired by the new tenant, the former is to be acquired by the Local Land Boards, and, in the words of the Bill, "shall in all coming time remain under their jurisdiction *qua* the limits thereof as public trustees."

Now we come to the important question of the monetary terms on which these Boards are to take the place of the present landlords. The Bill states that the sum fixed to be paid to the landlord shall be supplied by the Treasury, and "shall be repaid in 49 years at the lowest rate of interest at which money is advanced out of the Treasury, on the security of the parish rates and parish fund as aforesaid, and of the lands to be taken over." As a Bill of this magnitude could not possibly be carried, excepting as a Government measure, wisdom is shown by its author in not attempting to indicate the exact terms on which landlords should be expropriated. I shall venture to assume, however, that those terms will not exceed twenty years' purchase of the "economic rent" which the Commissioners are to discover; which, also, tenants are to pay to the Land Boards. On this assumption it is easy to see the financial stability of the transaction.

Thus for example :—

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} 20 \text{ years' purchase of } \\ \text{economic rent of } \pounds 100 \end{array} \right\} = \pounds 2,000$$

Interest on  $\pounds 2,000$  advanced by Treasury at  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ , plus  $1\frac{1}{2}\%$  sinking fund =  $\pounds 80$ . The annual sum payable by the Land Boards to the Treasury will therefore be  $20\frac{1}{2}\%$  less than their annual receipts in the shape of economic rent. And this in the initial stage of the transaction !

Now, I do not commit myself to any opinion on the point whether Highland Landlords have a just title to compensation so liberal as that here indicated. It is quite enough for my present purpose that such compensation *can* be given with perfect safety alike to the individual user of the soil, and to the Land Board which exercises the delegated authority of the State over the soil

But it must be kept in mind that, with every landlord replaced by a Land Board, there will be removed not merely a despotic power over the lives of those who labour on the land, but also a great depressing influence upon industry. Men who labour sluggishly now because they can never be sure that the fruits of their activity will remain with them, will work earnestly and cheerfully as soon as they get a permanent title to the results of their work. And activity in one direction will lead to activity in others. Not to dwell on the possible development of a *varied* industrial system in the Highlands, where there is much in physical surroundings and racial qualities that is suggestive of some parts of busy Switzerland, I can safely assert that the fishing industry of Orkney and Shetland—the latter especially—is capable of enormous extension. The landlord, however, is ever on the watch to rob the fishermen of their just reward. Enterprise in an industry that, under normal conditions, should be highly profitable to all concerned, is rarely exhibited. This for the simple reason, long ago noted by Adam Smith, that rent in Orkney and Shetland is paid, not out of the harvest of the land, but out of the harvest of the sea ! The landlord supplies no capital, affords no facilities to those engaged in a pursuit that however profitable, is always perilous. He simply says to the Shetland or Orkney fisher-farmer, "My good fellow, if you will be so absurd as to seek a more productive method of living than is provided by this almost barren croft of yours, then, I must tax your industry accord-

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ingly. You must pay me a rent at least 75%, more than the agricultural value of the soil on which your home is planted, because, you know, it is not convenient for you to remain at sea always."

Now, my reason for referring to these matters of repressed industry in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, is not to excite indignation against Landlordism—this is being done, and with abundant cause, by others. All I want to enforce here is, that by the simple act of substituting for the present system, local authority, popularly controlled, great addition will necessarily be made to the wealth of those districts concerned. And some of this added wealth will in a perfectly natural and automatic way be deposited in the coffers of the Local Land Board. Innumerable rills of "unearned increment" will spring into existence with the removal of the desolating influence of landlordism. These will directly contribute to the financial resources of each and every Land Board, indirectly to the fiscal resources of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

One point has yet to be dealt with before I conclude this *résumé* of Mr. Ross's Bill. It is that of the various and complicated secondary interests connected with an estate in land. These are provided for by a single clause in the Bill. The representative landlord, who may be merely a life tenant; who may, further, have mortgaged his own interest, is not to receive the compensation awarded by the Land Commissioners into his own hands. The Bill declares that the sum "shall be invested in consols in the name of the landlord, and the certificate of such invested money shall be lodged in the Register House, Edinburgh, and shall be registered in the Register of Sasines as in full substitution of the land so taken over." The object of this, as stated in the remaining part of the clause, is to transfer to a legal arena the settlement of all those claims on the land which at present hinder its rapid sale. The land itself is at once put to the best industrial uses (*i.e.* by the Local Land Board). Monetary interests in the land simply take a fresh and more definite form—that of consols, while everyone's proportion of those monetary interests is as strictly conserved as now. Here, surely, is a point worthy of the attention of those who advocate what is called "Free Trade in Land." They, with strange ignorance of economic principles, with strange



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**OBJECTS.**

To obtain for the individual his right to use Land.

To obtain for the Nation its right to the Land Revenues.

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**PRESIDENT: ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, LL.D., F.R.S.**

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# LAND NATIONALISATION

IN

## SCOTLAND.

BY

WILLIAM JAMESON,

*Hon. Secretary of the Land Nationalisation Society.*

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London :

THE LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,

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PRICE ONE PENNY

# LAND NATIONALISATION

IN

## SCOTLAND.

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WE have a very odd Government. It asks to be allowed to spend an indefinite number of millions sterling on ironclads, at a moment when our American cousins are busy in taming unruly dynamite for the purpose of blowing any possible fleet out of existence. It permits Lord Wolseley and Mr. Chamberlain to act as a sort of roving commission to test public opinion on the question of a conscription, and it is the meanwhile organising schemes to export large quantities of our very best fighting material to other lands. Our Highland regiments are full of cockneys: clansmen are to be sent with all speed to Manitoba or New Zealand, in order to settle the annoying Crofter question. Orkney and Shetland should supply the very pick of our naval reserve. Yet year by year Orcadians and Shetlanders slip the fetters of landlordism, and fly to the colonies of their own accord. Nothing is done to dissuade them.

Now, personally, I lean somewhat to the views of the Society of Friends on the subject of War. Still, bearing in mind the present attitude of continental nations in the matter of armaments, both naval and military, bellicose patriotism can undoubtedly make out a strong case in justification of what it calls "adequate national defence." Even a Quaker, however, might be roused to indignation, if, year by year the rulers of these islands made a free gift of our best ironclads—such as they are—to the United States, or half emptied our arsenals in order to present munitions of war to Australasian colonies. Yet, the Government at this present moment is deliberately weakening the national defences in a manner far more alarming even than this. For, fighting machinery can be renewed at will. Fighting men cannot. The Highlanders and Islanders of Scotland form an item

in our fighting resources of the very greatest importance. Their expatriation permanently weakens our strength for war. Nevertheless, a Government of all the patriots thinks it cannot get rid of them fast enough!

Can any explanation be given of this inane conduct? Yes, the explanation is simple enough. The Government is trying in Scotland, as in Ireland, to serve two masters. And it cannot. It cannot serve the State and the Landlord. *Latus fundia perdere Italiam.* The great estates are in all directions insidiously destroying the industrial forces of the Empire. They are openly destroying the fighting reserve of the Empire in the northern parts of the United Kingdom. The Government must meekly lend a helping hand in this patriotic task; for it is the bond slave of Landlordism. That the present House of Commons offers no serious opposition while all this is going on cannot be wondered at. The House is crammed with Landholders.

We are frequently reminded that Party spirit disappears whenever the Empire is menaced. Surely then, appeal can be reasonably made to patriotic men, whatever their political bias may be, to restrain the mischievous action of the Government in the north, and to insist on such measures being forthwith taken as will securely and permanently establish the Highlanders and Islanders of Scotland on their native soil. Higher reasons than national security unquestionably can be urged for conserving, nay increasing, the Crofter population. As a question of national defence, however, this business admits of no delay, no hesitation.

Now the practical failure of the Crofters' Act shows clearly that while the conflicting interests of landlord and tenant remain, it is hopeless to look for a prosperous and contented race of Crofters. The landlords are resisting the administration of that Act at every turn, and a despairing Government, fearful of offending the landlord interest by rapid and vigorous enforcement of the Act, would shuffle out of its difficulty by deporting the tenants. The hard logic of facts forces us then to the conclusion that if the users of the soil are to remain on equitable terms, the landlords must go; in other words, their control of the soil must be taken entirely and permanently from them.

But many thoughtful politicians imagine that the only satisfactory alternative to a system such as the present one

lies in what is called the abolition of dual ownership—that is, the establishment of a peasant proprietary. The machinery of the State is to be employed to create a system that on both economical and political grounds is radically unsound. On economical, because it abolishes *rent*, which, equitably adjusted, is a means of handicapping all men fairly in the race of industry; on political, because it introduces a multitude of fresh vested interests in land, and thereby increases to an enormous degree the power of Landlordism—big Landlordism—at the polling booth. Lord Derby, among others, has openly approved of a peasant proprietary for England, because it will make the agricultural labourer *conservative!*

Happily, "little landlordism" is not the sole alternative to "big landlordism" now available as a solution of the Crofter question. The principle of Land Nationalisation has been embodied in a Bill entitled "An Act to alter and amend the laws relating to land in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland." This Bill, prepared by Mr. J. McGilchrist Ross, of Alass, a gentleman who, besides being an ardent Land Nationaliser, has had very lengthy experience of local government in the Highlands, has been submitted to the Executive of the Land Nationalisation Society, whose amendments of the original draft have been very freely accepted by Mr. Ross. The Bill, then, combines the results of accurate local knowledge with economic principles, the soundness of which has been recognised by every economist of note, from Turgot to John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. Says Herbert Spencer, "However difficult it may be to embody the theory of Land Nationalisation in fact, equity sternly commands it to be done."

That the difficulty is not so great as it appeared when Mr. Spencer in his "Social Statics" expressed the opinion just referred to, may, I think, become apparent to those who will have the patience to follow me in a brief explanation of the chief provisions of Mr. Ross's Bill.

Now the very first section of that Bill strikes boldly at the *controlling power* of Landlordism by declaring that: "From and after the 1st day of January (—) there shall be a *Local Land Board* in every landward parish in the counties of Argyle, Inverness, Ross and Cromarty, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney, and Shetland." In the sections that

immediately follow, care is taken that each Land Board shall be truly representative of the interests of the parishioners. It is provided that the Board shall be elected for a period of three years by every householder, male and female, who has resided in the parish for six months prior to the election. Men and women shall be eligible to serve on the Board, which shall consist of one member for every five hundred electors. Five shall, however, be the *minimum* number of members in any parish.

Here, then, we have the principle of self-government made operative in a region where for centuries past all the caprices of petty despotism have had the fullest indulgence.

Before explaining the method by which the present system of private land control is to be disintegrated, it may be useful to consider: (1) the means by which this new public and representative land authority—the popularly elected Board—is to be provided with tenants; and (2) the permanent relations of such tenants to the Land Board. These are points the importance of which cannot be over-rated; because, many persons who admit very readily that Land Nationalisation is a desirable ideal, dismiss it as a practical impossibility when they are asked to assist in realising it. We are frequently told that even if all landlords were got rid of, multitudes of men would find it just as difficult as now to obtain the use of land. Indeed it is said that existing tenants would soon find to their bitter cost that the State made a worse Landlord than the individual; that mismanagement, official corruption and unfairness generally, would characterise a system of State control of the soil.

An answer to the first of these objections is supplied in the Bill under consideration. Section XXIX. declares that: "It shall be lawful for the majority of the householders in any Township to petition the Local Land Board, through its clerk or inspector, to take over from the Landlord or Landlords of such Townships and adjacent lands, all the land of such Township, and such land in the neighbourhood thereof as they shall specify, and it shall be lawful for any *other person known to such householders, and with the consent of the majority of the same, to join in such petition.*" The words in italics are full of significance. I do not hesitate to assert that, embodied in an Act of Parliament, they would convey glad tidings of great joy to the heart of many a Highlandman,

who has by the present system been driven from his native glen—thereby increasing the number of those already struggling as wage-slaves in our great centres of industry. He has but to join in the petition of those of his clansmen who have not yet shared his fate, in order to obtain access to his native soil, under conditions with which the laird can no longer interfere. He will then be truly a freeman for the first time in his life, and an effective addition to the defences of the empire. Here I may remark that it has been stated on good authority that the Gael is peculiarly liable to become physically debased by the pernicious influences surrounding him in the slums of Glasgow and of other over-crowded towns.

As the Bill before us enables the Land Board to acquire land now used for deer forests or sheep runs, it is evident that not a single acre capable of cultivation need remain unoccupied. It is not proposed, however, to make a clean sweep of deer forests, etc. ; but the right of men to live by the produce of the soil is distinctly asserted to be superior to all sporting or commercial rights. Wherever, in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, men can make a living from the soil, deer and sheep must be removed, provided men wish to make a living there.

Turning to our second point ; viz., the permanent relations of tenants to the Land Board, it will be seen by those who study the Bill that the powers of the Land Board are very carefully defined.

1st. As regards Rent. This shall be strictly what is known as "Economic rent ;" that is a rent that contains no element of charge for what a tenant himself has directly done in giving value to a particular holding. This rent shall be subject to periodical revision by the Board ; but the tenant shall also have the power to claim a re-valuation.

2nd. As regards "Tenant right." This, comprising all the results of human labour put on to or into any given Holding, shall be the private property of the occupier, if he has himself created it, or if it has been created by his predecessor in title. If, however, this tenant right belongs to another person, then the occupier must acquire it by purchase ; on easy terms of payment, however ; roughly speaking, by the building society method. (*Vide* Sections XXXVI., XXXVII.)

3rd. As regards Security of tenure. The Bill so happily, to my mind, decides this most important but somewhat difficult point, that I cannot do better than quote from the relevant section (XLV.): "No occupier shall be removed out of his holding so long as there is sufficient value therein in buildings, value of improvements and stock, equal to the amount of any arrears due by him, and the Local Land Board shall have power to remit the whole or any part of such arrears." Now this practically amounts to a perpetual tenure for the industrious man, who has maintained or added to the value of his tenant right. He cannot be summarily ejected in consequence of a bad season causing him to be backward with his rent. On the other hand, the lazy man who does not accumulate much value on his holding in the way of improvements, will have to suffer for his sloth by ejection if his rent is not duly paid.

4th. As to Sub-letting. This, a most vital point in any scheme that seeks to abolish landlordism, is also dealt with in a happy phrase. Sec. XLVII. declares "that every occupier must usually reside upon his holding." Thus it is made impossible for a man to acquire a holding simply to let it again, while on the other hand a crofter who occasionally became a sailor (a not infrequent practice in Orkney and Shetland, for example) would not in consequence be obliged to vacate his croft absolutely, but could make temporary arrangements with a neighbour for its cultivation during his absence.

There are other functions of the Local Land Board indicated in the Bill that it is unnecessary to dwell on here. They would probably be assigned to a County Council, should such a body be established in Scotland. But I trust sufficient has been said to convince unprejudiced minds that Land Nationalisation, as an alternative to Landlordism, can be made a workable reality; organised by Statute, sustained by sympathetic popular control, and entirely independent of any interference, as regards detail, on the part of the Government of the day.

It now remains to be shown how Mr. Ross's Bill proposes to disintegrate the present system of land tenure in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The official liquidators, so to speak, of the landed interest are the existing Land Commissioners; their number is to be added to and their functions necessarily enlarged. As soon as a Local Land



Board has settled with its constituents what land is required by them and by other persons joining in their petition, the Commission is called upon to decide the terms on which such land shall be obtained. In the words of the Bill (Sec. XXXIII.), "The Land Commission . . . shall send a sub-commission to consider in concert with said Land Board, or Boards, such petition, and to allocate the land petitioned for, or such portion thereof, or such other land as they shall see fit, among the petitioners or parties named as aforesaid." As land is not to be compulsorily taken from any arable farm or sheep run, the rent of which does not exceed £200, the reason for the discretionary powers of the Commission is obvious. Briefly stated, the Land Board, in obtaining land for its constituents, is not permitted to interfere recklessly with existing agricultural interests. In a similar spirit, provision is made to preserve the "amenity" of residences, farm steadings, etc.

When the sub-commission has decided that applications for holdings made through the Land Board ought to be satisfied, it shall make a valuation of each proposed holding, separating the "ground value" from the "tenant right." I have already explained that the latter is to be acquired by the new tenant; the former is to be acquired by the Local Land Boards, and, in the words of the Bill, "shall in all coming time remain under their jurisdiction *qua* the limits thereof as public trustees."

Now we come to the important question of the monetary terms on which these Boards are to take the place of the present landlords. The Bill states that the sum fixed to be paid to the landlord shall be supplied by the Treasury, and "shall be repaid in 49 years at the lowest rate of interest at which money is advanced out of the Treasury, on the security of the parish rates and parish fund as aforesaid, and of the lands to be taken over." As a Bill of this magnitude could not possibly be carried, excepting as a Government measure, wisdom is shown by its author in not attempting to indicate the exact terms on which landlords should be expropriated. I shall venture to assume, however, that those terms will not exceed twenty years' purchase of the "economic rent" which the Commissioners are to discover; which, also, tenants are to pay to the Land Boards. On this assumption it is easy to see the financial stability of the transaction.

Thus for example :—

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} 20 \text{ years' purchase of } \\ \text{economic rent of } \pounds 100 \end{array} \right\} = \pounds 2,000$$

Interest on  $\pounds 2,000$  advanced by Treasury at  $3\%$ , plus  $1\%$  sinking fund =  $\pounds 80$ . The annual sum payable by the Land Boards to the Treasury will therefore be  $20\%$  less than their annual receipts in the shape of economic rent. And this in the initial stage of the transaction !

Now, I do not commit myself to any opinion on the point whether Highland Landlords have a just title to compensation so liberal as that here indicated. It is quite enough for my present purpose that such compensation *can* be given with perfect safety alike to the individual user of the soil, and to the Land Board which exercises the delegated authority of the State over the soil.

But it must be kept in mind that, with every landlord replaced by a Land Board, there will be removed not merely a despotic power over the lives of those who labour on the land, but also a great depressing influence upon industry. Men who labour sluggishly now because they can never be sure that the fruits of their activity will remain with them, will work earnestly and cheerfully as soon as they get a permanent title to the results of their work. And activity in one direction will lead to activity in others. Not to dwell on the possible development of a *varied* industrial system in the Highlands, where there is much in physical surroundings and racial qualities that is suggestive of some parts of busy Switzerland, I can safely assert that the fishing industry of Orkney and Shetland—the latter especially—is capable of enormous extension. The landlord, however, is ever on the watch to rob the fishermen of their just reward. Enterprise in an industry that, under normal conditions, should be highly profitable to all concerned, is rarely exhibited. This for the simple reason, long ago noted by Adam Smith, that rent in Orkney and Shetland is paid, not out of the harvest of the land, but out of the harvest of the sea! The landlord supplies no capital, affords no facilities to those engaged in a pursuit that however profitable, is always perilous. He simply says to the Shetland or Orkney fisher-farmer, "My good fellow, if you will be so absurd as to seek a more productive method of living than is provided by this almost barren croft of yours, then, I must tax your industry accord-

ingly. You must pay me a rent at least 75<sup>o</sup>/<sub>o</sub> more than the agricultural value of the soil on which your home is planted, because, you know, it is not convenient for you to remain at sea always."

Now, my reason for referring to these matters of repressed industry in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, is not to excite indignation against Landlordism—this is being done, and with abundant cause, by others. All I want to enforce here is, that by the simple act of substituting for the present system, local authority, popularly controlled, great addition will necessarily be made to the wealth of those districts concerned. And some of this added wealth will in a perfectly natural and automatic way be deposited in the coffers of the Local Land Board. Innumerable rills of "unearned increment" will spring into existence with the removal of the desolating influence of landlordism. These will directly contribute to the financial resources of each and every Land Board; indirectly to the fiscal resources of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

One point has yet to be dealt with before I conclude this *résumé* of Mr. Ross's Bill. It is that of the various and complicated secondary interests connected with an estate in land. These are provided for by a single clause in the Bill. The representative landlord, who may be merely a life tenant; who may, further, have mortgaged his own interest, is not to receive the compensation awarded by the Land Commissioners into his own hands. The Bill declares that the sum "shall be invested in consols in the name of the landlord, and the certificate of such invested money shall be lodged in the Register House, Edinburgh, and shall be registered in the Register of Sasines as in full substitution of the land so taken over." The object of this, as stated in the remaining part of the clause, is to transfer to a legal arena the settlement of all those claims on the land which at present hinder its rapid sale. The land itself is at once put to the best industrial uses (*i.e.* by the Local Land Board). Monetary interests in the land simply take a fresh and more definite form—that of consols, while everyone's proportion of those monetary interests is as strictly conserved as now. Here, surely, is a point worthy of the attention of those who advocate what is called "Free Trade in Land." They, with strange ignorance of economic principles, with strange

blindness to actual facts, seek a way out of our land difficulties by imitating a system that is failing before our very eyes, alike in the United States and in our Australasian Colonies. For land monopoly in those countries has reached even greater proportions than with us. Yet Land Nationalisation, following the lines indicated in the Bill that we have been considering, can be made to afford all those facilities for opening up the land to the best industrial uses which free traders in land desire. At the same time it leaves no open door by which the "shoddy millionaire" may enter and exercise even harsher despotism than that from which the community throughout the three kingdoms now suffers at the hands of territorial magnates. At the same time, also, it can solve all the difficulties of primogeniture, entail, mortgages, and the like, by transferring them from the land itself to Bonds or Consols. These Bonds or Consols may be made the basis of future legislation affecting the devolution of property just as well as the land itself. Meanwhile, the industrial population can "enter and take possession of the land."

Now, "bloodless economists" may, if they can, regard with indifference the fearful struggle for the means of subsistence now going on in our great and over-populated cities. They may indeed contend that it is well for us as a nation that the weakly and debased residuum of our civilisation should be "cast as rubbish to the void." I, for one, holding that there is something peculiarly sacred in all human life, cannot possibly bring myself to look upon the basest, meanest of mankind from the position of the "Bloodless Economist." Nevertheless, for those who profess themselves to be supremely interested in maintaining the standard of physical efficiency throughout the community, that position is a tenable one. How long, then, do such persons intend to remain false to their own principles by upholding the reckless policy of depopulation which our rulers are carrying out in North Britain? There, at any rate, we find no human rubbish that should be cast to the void; but, on the contrary, the very flower of physical manhood and womanhood. Is this to be destroyed for the sake of a lot of grasping lairds, who have lost all sense of tribal duty; or cherished in the interests of the Empire, as the Bill we have been considering proposes?

WILLIAM JAMESON.

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# LANDLORDISM.

WHAT IT IS; WHAT IT DOES; AND  
WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH IT.

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## LANDLORDISM.

IN considering the Land Question we must regard the people as divided into two distinct sections :—those who own land and those who do not. The real Land Question lies in the relation of these two sections of the community to each other. When we consider that land is essential to every man, as a dwelling-place and as the source whence all the necessaries of his life are derived, it is evident that every man, down to the very poorest, whatever his occupation may be, is deeply interested in the land, and that those who possess it have an immense power and advantage over those who do not. The latter class are, in fact, entirely dependent upon the former for the means of existence. Further, as land is limited in quantity and cannot by any possibility be increased, while population increases rapidly, the relation between these two classes becomes more and more strained ; the demand for land and its produce becomes more and more urgent, and the landlord's power accordingly more and more arbitrary.

Mr. Arthur Arnold, however, tells us that, while in France and in the United States of America there are only landowners and tenants, in England we have no *landowners*,—only *landlords* and tenants. The distinction is a fine one, but it is significant, and, properly considered, will conduce materially to a solution of the question. It is true, the Nation is the only landowner, and has absolute power to resume possession whenever she thinks fit. What is it then that landlords actually possess ? It is not the land itself, but a *Power over the land*, or rather *over the people who dwell upon it*. The land itself only marks the boundary within which this power may be exercised. We may discuss this power without personal reference to those who happen, for the time being, to be the depositories of it. Landlords are doubtless responsible to the nation for the way in which they use their power, but they are not personally responsible for its existence. While the power exists it must be in some hands, and may as well be in those of its present holders as in any other.

What then is this Power which we may not inaptly call Landlordism ? It is the power to determine absolutely who shall and who shall not dwell upon the land. It is the power

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to exact whatever portion of the tenant's earnings the landlord pleases in the shape of rent. It is the power to impose upon tenants whatever conditions he pleases, such as improvements in his property, for which improvements, though he has contributed nothing towards them, he may eventually demand a higher rent. Let us look a little more closely into the working of this power. We are told that the greater portion of the land of this kingdom is in the possession of about 30,000 individuals. Throwing off five or six millions of the population as against small owners, we have 30,000 landlords to 30,000,000 of people—that is, one landlord to every 1000 persons. These 1000 people are under the absolute control of the one landlord. No one can remain on the land without his gracious permission. He can eject from his borders any he pleases for political reasons, for religious reasons, for personal reasons, or for no reason at all but his own caprice. Upon those whom he condescendingly allows to remain, he has power to impose whatever obligations he pleases, in the shape of rent and improvements in or additions to his property. He must necessarily leave them sufficient to keep them alive and induce them to work on, or he would get no rent at all; but beyond this he can take every shilling they earn as rent. And, for the most part, however hard the terms may be, they have no alternative but to submit or expatriate themselves; for, if they step off one man's land, they must step on to somebody else's only to find the same conditions existing. It may be objected that landlords as a rule do not exercise their powers in this arbitrary and despotic manner. Perhaps not; some, however, do, and all may. Many a despotic ruler has governed his people wisely and well, but that does not make despotism right. Many slave-owners also treated their slaves with great humanity, but that does not make slavery right; and I ask, Is it right or reasonable that thirty millions of freeborn Britons, who have washed out the despotism of kings with their blood, should still bend their necks to this despotic yoke of landlordism? Is it right or reasonable that freedom-loving Englishmen who, at the cost of twenty millions, struck the fetters from the hands of the slave, should still be subjected to such a servitude as landlordism at home? I may be reminded of the good that some landlords do in improving their lands, and of the interest they take in the welfare of their tenants. True, some landlords are model men—all honour to them; but some



are not. If a man devotes his time and capital to the improvement of land, he thereby enters the lists of the industrial classes, and deserves his reward as much as the manufacturer, the merchant, or the artisan. But this is no part of landlordism. He may do all this without being a landlord. He may be a landlord and do nothing. As a rule, improvements are left for tenants to make, the landlord contenting himself with reaping the benefit at the earliest opportunity. In speaking of landlordism, then, I speak exclusively of the power possessed by landlords, not of how they use it, nor of anything they do. The real fundamental Land Question is—Ought such a power to exist? Can it exist consistently with the natural rights and liberty of man? If any man answers in the affirmative, and asserts that it is right that the great majority of the nation should be dependent upon the absolute will of the few as to where they shall live, how they shall live, upon what conditions they shall live, then there is no final solution to, no permanent settlement of the Land Question. You may limit the power of landlords by legislation or by Land Courts, but as long as the two parties exist, there will be a perpetual struggle for freedom on the one hand, and resistance on the other. There can be no effectual solution of the Land Question but by the total abolition of Landlordism.

If so, the next question is, What order of things is to take its place? Perhaps I shall not be suspected of going very wildly wrong if I take the Duke of Argyll as my finger-post. At a meeting recently held under the auspices of influential landowners to form a limited liability company, whose business should be to purchase estates and resell them in small portions, the Duke of Argyll propounded two principles. Arguing in favour of increasing the number of landowners, his Grace said that it was a good thing to make a man a freeholder, to give him an interest in the soil; that it made him less revolutionary, more conservative, that is in a right sense, not a party sense. Very good. If this is true, then the more men we can make freeholders the better. If it is a good thing to make a hundred men freeholders, it is a better thing to make a thousand; still better, a million; best of all, the whole nation. Then we should be conservative in the highest degree, and perfectly secure against revolution. But it would not be expedient to cut up the land so as to give every man his slice. Certainly not. Nine out of ten would not know what to do with it, and would

find themselves much worse off than at present. The Duke felt and admitted that in many cases it might not be expedient or profitable for a man to own a plot of land to cultivate single-handed, so he propounded another principle, the principle of co-operation. And he spoke well of co-operation, pointing out what it had done in cheapening supply and aiding manufacturing enterprise. And he said, Why should not ten or a dozen men form a co-operative association to own a larger plot of land to be worked for the common benefit? Very good again. But if a principle is worth anything, it will bear carrying out to its fullest extent. If ten or a dozen men may co-operate to hold land, why not a hundred, a thousand, a million? Why should not the whole nation form this co-operative association, and hold the land to be worked by those most competent to utilize it for the common benefit? What do we come to here but Land-Nationalization? And so the Duke must admit the principle of Land-Nationalization, or eat his own words. But the land, we are told, is the nation's already; we have not to make it so. What is it then that stands between the nation and its willing workers? Nothing but this incubus of landlordism, which excludes numbers from the soil they would gladly cultivate, repels capital which might be profitably employed in its improvement, and draws off every advantage gained from the national into the private pockets of the wealthy landlords.

Let us next glance at the remedies proposed for the admitted evils of our land system. First there is Mr. Arthur Arnold and his so-called "Free Land League." The first object of this organization is to simplify and diminish the cost of conveyance. Who will benefit by this? None but landlords. Landlords will say to purchasers, Now you will have no cost for conveyance, you can therefore afford to give a higher price for my right in the land. Purchasers will look at it in the same light, and thus the only result will be to transfer to landlords the fees now paid to lawyers, and increase to a large extent the saleable value of their property. No wonder that landlords favour this scheme. Another object of this association is to abolish the right of primogeniture and restrict the power of entail. The former is virtually a dead letter, operating only when a landlord happens to die intestate. The latter will simply liberate future landlords from the control of their predecessors. Neither of these projects will in the

slightest degree affect the relation between landlords and their dependent lack-landers. This association would be more appropriately named "The Free Landlord League."

The next organization is that referred to above, set on foot by some great landlords in the form of a limited liability company, the professed object of which is to purchase estates in the market and resell them in small portions, spreading the purchase-money over a series of years. Now every one knows that a limited liability company is a costly piece of machinery; it must have paid officials and offices for the conduct of its business. To the cost, therefore, of the estates they purchase must be added the cost of conveyance to them, their office expenses, the interest they offer to their shareholders, four or four and a half per cent., the cost of conveyance to their purchasers, and so much of the principal as may be necessary to liquidate the whole within a given time. Now if farmers on a large scale, with the aid of animal and mechanical labour-saving power, and paying a moderate rent, cannot make agriculture pay, can it be expected that men of small or no means, destitute of these advantages and paying a much heavier rent, can make it profitable? The consensus of opinion on all sides respecting peasant proprietors, both at home and abroad, even where the land is already their own and they have nothing to pay, is that the life is one of incessant toil and privation, a severe struggle for existence without any of those features which render life happy, enjoyable, or progressive. If such is the case in countries where the system is of natural growth under the most favourable circumstances, what is it likely to be if artificially introduced under less favourable circumstances in a country which has in reality passed beyond that stage of civilization?

Then there is Mr. Chamberlain's scheme to invest local authorities with power to purchase land and let or resell it in small allotments. This can be carried out only near villages or towns where land is most costly, and if such land is taken exceptionally and compulsorily from landlords, heavy compensation will be demanded, which, with other necessary expenses, will greatly exceed the value of the land for any agricultural purposes. If loss is incurred, who is to bear it? the ratepayers or the taxpayers of a wider area? A new species of poor-rate and pauperism. Where is the local authority disinterested enough, and free from the influence of

landlords and their tenants, to be entrusted with such a power as this? Who would fix the price of the land? the landlords? surveyors? arbitrators?—perhaps Mr. Chamberlain himself. Such partial dealing with the land can do no good; it may do much harm. Suppose a few hundred labourers are placed upon allotments of land by this or other means, would that afford any perceptible relief to the teeming millions of our great towns and cities? The stronger and abler labourers flock from the country to the towns because they there get a better remuneration for their labour. They push out of employment the feebler class, who would do no better on land than they do in town.

Mr. Broadhurst's proposal to give leasees compulsory power to purchase the freehold of their premises may be dismissed with a word or two. Whether it will be any advantage to the lessee depends upon the terms upon which he acquires the freehold. If carried out, the lessee becomes the landlord, and can exercise all landlord's powers over future tenants. It is simply the substitution of one landlord for another, with no advantage to any one beyond, but with this disadvantage, that with the multiplication of such landlords, each claiming the right to do what he likes with his own, great injury may be done to property.

These proposed alterations in the law may cause some land to change hands, but whether they will lead to any wider distribution is extremely doubtful. There will be the same opportunity and the same inducement for the wealthy to accumulate land as now, and they will doubtless avail themselves of it. Again, suppose the number of landlords increased ten or a hundredfold; that will not make the land more accessible to those who want to utilize it. It may have the opposite effect, for great landlords *et c.* afford to be generous if they are so disposed, whereas small ones cannot, and tenants may therefore find themselves under harder conditions than before. The only way in which the land can be made accessible to all who wish to utilize it, whether on a large or a small scale, is for the nation to pension off the landlords and take it under their own care and management. Every legitimate want could then be satisfied without difficulty and without extravagant cost.

The schemes above referred to leave the main question untouched. They simply shuffle the cards, or pass them from hand to hand. Landlordism with its baneful influence still remains.

Nor will any special legislation with a view to contract or regulate the power of landlords, or to limit the rents they shall receive, be of any avail. These partial measures disturb existing relations, but settle nothing. What an anachronism is a Land Court! If we are to have Land Courts to fix fair rents, why not Labour Courts to fix fair wages, Capital Courts to fix fair interest of money, Price-current Courts to fix fair prices? The same law, the law of supply and demand, which regulates wages and interest and prices, will regulate rent. The fair rent of land is what any one will be willing to give for it in open competition with his fellow-man. Whoever has it for less has an undue advantage. The only effectual remedy is the total abolition of landlordism.

How is this to be effected? Happily we have a valuable precedent in our crown lands. Formerly a large part of the country belonged to the sovereign, and was as much his property as land is now the property of landlords. But sovereigns, setting little store upon what cost them nothing, conferred large portions of it on courtiers and favourites, and then came to Parliament when they wanted money. Parliament at length determined that no more of the crown land should be thus alienated, took them under their own management, and allowed the sovereign a fixed income in compensation. These crown lands, though Mr. Arthur Arnold says they, in common with all corporate property, are the worst managed in the kingdom, now produce, I believe, a profit income of some £20,000 a year. If the whole of the land had been thus taken, as it might and ought to have been, instead of £20,000 a year, the nation might by this time have been making nearer twenty millions a year. We might now have been free from income-tax, house-tax, customs and excise duties, and the national debt might have been greatly reduced, if not extinguished altogether. This is what must be done now. Better late than never, but the sooner the better. The nation must resume possession of the land, and take it under its own management. It can then give freedom of action to those fundamental economic laws which govern the land in common with all human affairs, and, without difficulty, provide for all legitimate demands whether for small or large allotments. How can this be carried out? Will it not produce great social and monetary disturbance? Not at all. Parliament will decree that from and after a certain quarter-day, all rent of land will be due and payable

to the public exchequer. Six or twelve months previously, all persons having any claim upon land will be required to send in full particulars of their claims and of all charges upon them. A register of these particulars will be made and the gross rental of the country ascertained. From this gross rental a deduction will be made for the cost of management, as paid by landlords, and for contingencies, such as losses from bad tenants or from no tenants, and deductions of rent in bad seasons. Then, as in the place of a security difficult and costly to realize upon, we shall give a security which can be sold any day for the nominal sum of half a crown per cent., some consideration may be allowed for this. Interest paid for loans on mortgage will also be deducted. The net rental income being thus ascertained, perpetual annuities to the amount will be secured rateably to all having claims upon land. All fixed rent charges, whether perpetual or terminable, would be paid in full, and the reversion of the latter secured to the rightful owners. Mortgagees would receive notice that their loans would be paid off. They are entitled to the capital sum advanced, but this need not be paid in cash. If so paid the owners would have to place it somewhere, perhaps at their bankers at one per cent. We may save them this trouble with advantage to themselves by giving them consols at the price of the day, on which they can realize when they please. Thus can this great change be carried out without any either social or monetary disturbance beyond what takes place when an estate changes hands or a mortgage is paid off.

Do landlords object to this mode of settlement? We reply that the only legitimate *property* that landlords have in the land is the net income they derive from it. And since this income has been created mainly by the growing industry of the nation, it would not be unreasonable if they were required to surrender some portion of it back to the nation. The nation has full power over it as it is, to limit it either through land courts or by means of a land tax. Do they call this confiscation? What is it when a landlord diminishes the income of his tenant by increasing his rent? What is it when a landlord takes possession of tenants' improvements, of houses and buildings towards which he has not contributed a single brick? If landlords have speculated in the future, they have bought castles in the air, and must suffer the conse-

quences. We are not bound to indemnify them for that. If landlords resist a reasonable settlement now, they will unquestionably have to submit to harder terms hereafter. As the people realize more fully the tyranny of landlordism, and the ignominious servitude to which they have to submit, they will become less rather than more considerate.

Some persons object to granting perpetual annuities on the ground that it entails a perpetual burden on the nation. They advocate terminable or life annuities. To this I reply that the annuities will be no additional burden to the State, inasmuch as the land will fully provide for them, and I think perpetual are preferable to terminable annuities, because 1st, we are bound to give as good a security as we take away: 2ndly, it will remove one serious ground of objection; 3rdly, the annual amount will be less. If we gave terminable or life annuities, we should have to give a larger sum, which would tax the present for the benefit of a future generation. Future generations, with a liberated land, will be well able to take care of themselves, and will have full power over these, as over all other annuities, to redeem, convert, or tax, if need be, for national purposes. Another proposal is to convert freeholds into life interests for two or more lives. This would be inequitable, inasmuch as some lives would drop early, while others might be jointly protracted for a century or more. All the evils of landlordism would be perpetuated for an indefinite period, and the nation would be debarred from making those effectual and economic arrangements for the management of the land which are essential to its advantageous possession.

There are some who would compromise this matter by levying a tax upon landlords' rents. To them I would say, "Freedom before money." No payment can compensate for the want of liberty; no monetary advantage can make the yoke of servile dependence sit easy on the neck of an otherwise free people. We want to be free to make those arrangements relative to land which shall give employment to the greatest number of our toiling population, and afford them the largest return for their labour. This cannot be done while the ghost of landlordism remains. Taxes as rent would ultimately find their way back to the pockets of our despotic masters if we allow them to retain their power. We must be our own masters or nothing.

What, it may be asked, are the advantages which may be

reasonably expected to accrue to the nation from this great change? First, the land being liberated from personal control would be free and open alike to all comers and for all legitimate purposes, in large or small portions. It would be let by public tender for such fixed periods and on such conditions as may appear expedient in the public interest. The rent being thus fixed by the tenants themselves, there could be no ground of complaint, while competition would ensure the full value being obtained. While it is but just that tenants should be compensated for the improvements they make, the creation of anything in the shape of tenant right is inexpedient, being open to the same objections as landlord right. The obligatory payment of a sum for tenant right would be an impediment to many men of energy and enterprise, but of small means, locking up their capital unprofitably or throwing them into the hands of money-lenders, to their detriment or ruin. Lands, therefore, upon which the outlay of capital for improvements would be expedient, should be let subject to such works being satisfactorily executed, and for a term long enough to ensure to the tenant an adequate return for his outlay during his tenancy, the tenant fixing the rent accordingly. At the expiration of the term, the land would revert to the nation improved but unencumbered, and would command a higher rent in compensation for the lower rent paid during the preceding term. Secondly, an immediate material advantage would accrue to the nation under the head of management. The whole of the land being managed by a central board, responsible to Parliament and the nation, with a paid staff, the cost ought not to be more than half that paid by landlords for land-stewards, agents, &c. Then, while landlords usually pay four or four and a half per cent. for loans on mortgage, which of course would be deducted from the gross rent, the nation would pay annuities at three per cent., there would be a saving of one or one and a half per cent. on all mortgages. Under these two heads there ought to be an advantage to the country of something like four or five millions per annum without diminishing the present net income of landlords. Lastly, much land now useless and unproductive might be turned to profitable account. The encouragement and security offered for improvement at home, could not fail to attract capital now invested abroad. Capital being helpless by itself, would attract labour, and employment would be found for many hands



at present unwillingly idle. The impetus thus given to industry and national progress would soon be felt throughout all classes of society, and lead to that revival of trade for which we have waited so patiently and so long. In all the future advantages which would accrue to the nation, the present landlords would largely participate, and would thus be fully compensated for any present loss they might sustain by the change.

Some may object to commit such a power to a government department, on the ground that government departments are not trustworthy. This would be reasonable where the government is a power independent of, and irresponsible to the people; but, happily, in England a government department is and must be just what the people permit it to be. We have already a department of Woods and Forests, which has the management of the crown or national property; but at present it can act only along landlord lines, and must not be a hard landlord. It has only to be enlarged sufficiently to undertake this greater work on clearly defined principles laid down by Parliament. The country would have the pick of the ablest and most experienced men to act on its behalf, and as every act would be public, corruption or mismanagement would be impossible, except with the connivance of the people, or from their neglect to exercise that watchful supervision which their interests require.

To sum up:—

1. Landlordism, by the intervention of personal control, deprives us of freedom of action.
2. Landlordism drains off the proceeds of our labour in the shape of ever-increasing rent, for which no service is rendered in return.
3. Landlordism confiscates the products of labour in the shape of houses, buildings, and improvements, without any compensation whatever.
4. Landlordism subjects us to an ignominious, servile dependence upon the arbitrary will of another.
5. Landlordism repels capital from land, and thereby deprives labour of its employment.

Free Land—what does it mean? Does it mean that the eldest son of a landlord who dies intestate shall not succeed to the whole power of his father, but share it with his younger brothers? Does it mean that landlords shall not have power to fix the descent of their despotism to generations yet unborn?

Does it mean greater facility to landlords for buying and selling the fettered victims of their rule, the flesh and blood of the toiling millions dependent on their will? Let us not be deceived by a false cry. We ask for bread and they offer us a stone; we demand fish and they give us scorpions. The only Free Land is land free from personal control; land open to every one who will bid a fair rent for it, a rent fixed in open market and paid to the national exchequer for the national benefit. Will Mr. Chamberlain give us free land in this sense? If so, let him place himself at the head of this movement and we will support him. There is no one more able; no one more worthy, as the champion of Free Land, to occupy a pedestal beside the glorious hero of Free Trade. Victory is as certain in the one case as it was in the other.

Fellow-countrymen! are you disposed longer to endure this despotic yoke of landlordism? Are you content to submit to this degrading servitude? If not, let us be up and doing. The time is propitious. Let us with a firm, unanimous voice assert our freedom. Let us form our National Free Land or Anti-Landlord League, with ramifications throughout every county, town, and village. Put this paper into every hand; read it; think about it; discuss it with your comrades in private and in public. Make anti-landlordism the watchword on every political platform. Enrol the name of every one you can get to adhere to the principle. Affecting, as it does, the very foundation of our national existence, its importance is paramount above all other questions. Let a bill be ready for introduction on the first day that Parliament meets. Let every member be armed with a petition bearing every obtainable signature within his constituency. Let us spare no effort till we have liberated our country from this last relic of feudal despotism, and our people from a debasing servitude. Let us relax not our energies till we have obtained FREE LAND in a true sense; till we have made every man a *freeholder*; have given every man a country he can truly call *his own*; a country to love,—a country to defend,—a country to live for,—aye, and if it need be, a country to die for!

"They who hate landlordism should do something for its overthrow."

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## HOW FRIENDS CAN HELP.

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1.—*By becoming members of the Society.*

The minimum subscription (one shilling) is so low as to be within the means of every sympathiser. Lovers of justice should provide "sinews" for our war against injustice.

2.—*By enlisting new members, and forming Branches.*

If all members would take a *personal* interest in the Society's progress our numerical strength and moral influence would quickly increase.

3.—*By distributing our literature.*

Members are supplied on special terms, often gratuitously. We want volunteer distributors in all parts of the country. Good is done if you *judiciously* disseminate only a dozen tracts.

4.—*By writing to the local newspapers on land nationalisation.*

If the correspondence is continued by others, the names and addresses of friends should be forwarded to the office.

5.—*By becoming a local correspondent of the Society.*

Local correspondents are of immense help in supplying the Society with information relating to the movement, such as encroachments on commons, roadside wastes or footpaths; attempts to get allotments; meetings on the land question, &c.

6.—*By sending the names and addresses of local reformers.*

Literature is gladly sent to those who are likely to appreciate a radical settlement of the land difficulty.

7.—*By promoting meetings or debates*

Either by addressing meetings or by seeing to the general arrangements for meetings to be attended by the Society's Lecturers. Will helpers please use their influence in Political Associations and Clubs?

8.—*By introducing 'Land and Labor' to Reading Rooms, &c.*

9.—*By questioning political candidates.*

10.—*By reminding parliamentary and municipal representatives of their election pledges.*

We not only want to get good promises, but also to see that they are kept.

JOSEPH HYDER, *Secretary.*

## THE ETHICS OF COMPENSATION (TO DISPOSSESSED LANDLORDS).

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WHERE a great wrong has insensibly grown up till it has covered the whole country, and sent its roots into every corner and cranny of the Social fabric, it cannot be torn up, however gradually and carefully we may set to work, without inflicting loss and hardship somewhere. All we can do is to minimise these evils as much as possible.

Assuming that the Land is to be restored to the people, the question arises of State Compensation to dispossessed owners. Various schemes have been proposed which profess to avoid this difficulty altogether; still, it is a question whether they do; and a question also whether they will be accepted; and whether or no, we find in practice that wherever Land Nationalisation is publicly discussed, a large part of the discussion turns on the question whether Landlords are morally entitled to compensation or not. Therefore we have thought it would be well to set forth how the matter appears to us as a question of pure Ethics.

One party says: "Landlordism is robbery. To compensate robbers is absurd. It would not only be a wrong to the victims who would have to pay it, but it would be perpetuating the robbery, which would go on under the name of interest instead of rent, henceforth for ever."

Another party says: "The wrong was in the system, not in the individuals. The present owners of land have come into possession, unconscious of any wrong, by the same means exactly as owners of other kinds of property have come into possession, with the undoubted sanction of the whole nation and the guarantee of protection by the State. Others have been as deeply implicated in the wrong, and have profited as much by it, as the men who happen at this moment to be in possession. To make scapegoats of these, then, and throw the whole consequences of a universal error upon their shoulders would be mean indeed. *That would be a robbery.*"

Each party makes out a good case, and seems at first sight to have justice on its side. Yet one or the other must be wrong.

Note that the use of the word "robber" prejudices the question, embitters the controversy and delays its settlement. For the word "robbery" implies not only a wrong, but an intentional wrong; a robbery implies a robber, and a robber is everywhere understood to be a criminal. If you, reader, took my umbrella believing it to be yours, you would be depriving me of what justly belonged to me, but you would be very indignant if you were called a robber; and though I claimed it, still so long as you continued to believe it was yours, you would hold it in spite of me till I proved to yourself or to a jury that it was mine: and still everyone would recognise that it was a case of disputed ownership only, not of robbery. Much more so, if when you took it I had seen you take it, and not being aware at the time that it was mine, had acquiesced freely and had joined with other people to pass laws to protect you in the ownership of it.

Therefore in treating of private ownership of land, which I condemn as heartily as anyone, I shall describe it as a wrong, not as a robbery: for a wrong may be done unintentionally, but a robbery can not.

Is it absurd to compensate for the abolition of a wrong? Not necessarily. It depends on who it is who has to pay the compensation.

If compensation means that the victims of the wrong are to pay the doers of it for merely ceasing to do it, then it is absurd indeed. The compensation in their case, if there is to be any, should be the other way. But if it merely means that all the parties implicated in the wrong and profiting by it shall share the cost of restitution among them, instead of throwing the whole burden of it upon those who happen, by pure accident, officially to represent the wrong at the moment, then I see no absurdity in the proposal, but strict equity.

What is the compensation to the landlord to be for? Not for the land. That, by consent of both sections of Land Nationalisers, is something that never by any moral right belonged to him; that no power on earth had the right to grant to him.

It is for the loss of an investment into which he has entered with the consent and approval of the nation, and under the guarantee of its protection. The oft-quoted case of the man who has innocently bought a stolen horse does not apply. The State does not guarantee the title, as between man and man, to any particular horse; in that matter it is understood

that a man buys at his own risk. But it does declare horses, as horses, to be legitimate subjects of ownership and sale; and therefore to turn round suddenly and confiscate all horses on the ground that they were not legitimate subjects of ownership after all, would be a wrong.

Just so is it with the land. The nation as a whole (and not the landowners only) has believed and declared that private ownership of land is just and necessary, and that land owners shall be protected to the uttermost, and has even gone out of its way to encourage and induce people to acquire land.

However, let us suppose that the case of the stolen horse does apply.

There are here two rights involved then; a greater and a less. The right of the real owner to get back his own, and to get it for nothing; a right which is absolute and holds good against all comers; and the right of the deceived purchaser for redress; which is a relative right, and holds good only against—somebody, whom we have to discover.

The weak point in the non-compensationists' case is the assumption that if compensation for the restoration of the land is to be paid, it must be paid by the sufferers. It assumes that all who can properly be held responsible are either dead and gone, or lost in the crowd and unrecognisable, and that there remain, practically, only two parties—the owners of land who levy toll, and the non-owners who pay it.

This, I propose to show, is a great mistake. There are a vast number of persons as deeply implicated in this matter as the existing landowners, as easy to recognise, and nearly as easy to get at; and it is partly from a dim consciousness of this fact that so great indignation is evinced even amongst non-owners of land at the proposal to throw the whole cost of restoration on existing landlords.

We are not concerned to find out who it was who originally took or gave away the land, or how they did it, any more than we are concerned to find out who the parties, then living, were who suffered by it. For, both the doers of that wrong, and the sufferers by it, are dead, and their wrongs have died with them.

Nor are we concerned to find out who it is among the living who are *morally* responsible for the *continuance* of the wrong; for we all share this responsibility equally. That is

to say, not only did the governing classes, who made the laws, perpetuate in all honesty and good faith the system which they found existing, believing it to be right and necessary; but the governed, who had no voice in the making of the laws, sanctioned and approved their action, believing as thoroughly as did their rulers in the righteousness and necessity of the system.

There was not one among them (we may say) who did not believe ownership in land to be as good and proper in every sense as ownership in goods, the product of labour; there was not one who would not unhesitatingly have bought and held land himself if he had had the chance; and when this class emigrated to distant colonies, and founded Democracies of their own, their first act was to establish and perpetuate this same system.

It is not a moral responsibility, then, that we have to fix; for either there is none or it is shared by all alike, but it is a pecuniary responsibility. It is a civil, not a criminal, action that we have to try. What we have to seek is not a person to be punished, but a property to levy upon. We have in short to find who it is, besides existing landowners, who have *profited* by the wrong, and to levy on the profits.

Who are these people?

1. There is the mortgagee. It is commonly assumed that the mortgagee stands in quite a different position, as regards the responsibility, from the nominal owner. But surely they are in the same boat. The mortgagee's capital is as actually and unmistakably invested in land as the land purchaser's is. His income is only rent transferred. The whole transaction, in short, is a practical sharing of the ownership and division of the proceeds. True, it was only capital till it was invested in land, but so also with the purchaser. The mortgagee may be a poor man whose hard-won earnings are all sunk in the mortgage; but so with the man who nominally owns the land. He may have invested his money in an Insurance Co, and the Insurance Co. invested it in the land; but this does not alter the nature of the investment. He knew, or ought to have known, that his Insurance Co. meant to invest his money in land. The income comes from land monopoly, whether we call it rent as in the one case, or interest on land mortgage in the other.

The ex-landowner, again, who draws his income from capital realised by the sale of land, is even deeper in it than the man to whom he sold. For land always sells at an advance price; and for years after the sale, the man who sold will be drawing income from profits not yet made, while the purchaser may for years make little or nothing by his purchase.

The farmer, the mine renter, or other capitalist tenant, again, who has bought from the landlord the privilege of exercising monopoly right over the land for a stated period, forbidding the laborer to work on the land except as a hired servant, is implicated up to the neck. And so on with a number of others.

But we need not waste time in thus tracing out individuals; there is a simple test that covers the whole case.

All wealth exceeding the amount which its possessor could have produced by his own labor, has been produced by the labor of other people, who have been wrongfully deprived of the full fruits of their labor in consequence of land monopoly. The person who owns this surplus may never have owned a foot of land, but he has been enabled to secure the services of labor at inadequate prices, through the withholding of the land by those who did own it; in consequence of which, the laborer, denied access to natural opportunities, has been compelled to hire himself out for whatever he could get, and work for other people's enrichment instead of his own. The wealth owner, therefore, has profited by land monopoly as fully as the land owner.

It is true that he too has paid toll to the landlord, but it was a toll that was well worth his while to pay. It was his little contribution towards the system by which he grew rich.

But it is not only as a receiver, but also as a spender, that the wealth owner profits by land monopoly. For how comes it that he can command so vast a quantity of luxuries and enjoyments with a given income? How comes it that he can get strong men to do nothing but wait upon him? How comes it that he can build a stately mansion, fill it with handsome furniture and works of art, and surround himself with luxuries of all kinds? Clearly because wages are so low as to bring all these enjoyments within his reach. Had the laborer been a free man, free to apply himself to land, free to choose between working for another and working for himself, he would never have rendered all those services for



that money; the wealth owner's income would not have gone nearly so far; the wealth owner, in short, would not have been nearly so rich, even with the same income. So that he has benefited doubly by the land monopoly in which he has had no visible share: (1st) by getting a much larger income than he could otherwise have got; and (2nd) by being able to secure a much larger quantity of goods and services with that income than he could otherwise have secured.

It is objected that of the large fortunes held in private hands much has been obtained, not by despoiling labor, but by increasing its productiveness.

The laborer's exertion, it is said, is a fixed quantity; that is to say, an average laborer can, with given tools, produce so much in a given time.

If, then, a capitalist provides a machine, or an inventor devises a method by which the produce of labor can be doubled, the excess is due solely to the machine (or to the method); and should go to the capitalist (or to the inventor).

This seems a strong argument. The weak point in it is that it proves too much.

For suppose we reverse the proposition. The capitalist's machine, or the inventor's idea can, of itself, produce nothing at all. Labor is necessary to give effect to it. Consequently the whole produce resulting from its use is due to labor, and therefore by the same reasoning, the whole produce should go to the laborer, and the capitalist or inventor get nothing.

Conundrums of this kind do not help us. The broad fact remains that *all* wealth is due to labor. Discoveries and inventions only enable the *laborer*, that is the man who actually *works* (with head or hands), to produce more.

If the laborer were a free man, as we propose to make him, with a career of his own before him, and not obliged to sell his labor for whatever he could get, he would be master of the situation, and capital and brains would receive just sufficient reward to induce men to go on saving capital and making inventions.

As a matter of fact, brains (or invention) get no more than this now. It is only when an inventor can secure a monopoly of his invention that he gets any special profit; and then, of course, he gets it as a monopolist and not as an inventor. Generally it is the capitalist who buys the invention for a mere song, creates a monopoly, and pockets the fruits. Capital buys its brains as it buys its labor; for capital is

still king: but only because land monopoly enables it to reign. Capital of itself has no power over labor. Destroy the monopoly that flings labor at its feet, and labor will be king. Wealth will henceforth be the reward of effort and of self-denial only, as it ought to be, and the accident of possessing capital, or land, or brains, will, of itself, secure its possessor no more than his due share.

APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING.

THE landowner, as landowner, is *no more* responsible than other people for the existence of the institution he represents; and so can claim compensation. But as wealth owner he is *as much* responsible, and so will have to contribute to his own compensation. In other words, his own share of contribution will have to be deducted from his receipts.

For the rest, in order to make the cost of compensation pass over the heads of the actual sufferers (of the laborers who have been exploited) there are three ways at least of doing it, which we may choose between or combine:—

1. A levy on all incomes exceeding the amount which it is estimated its possessor could have earned by his own labor. It need not necessarily be what is known as the Income Tax (a tax which is objectionable in many of its principles and features), but a levy in some equitably adjusted way on incomes.

2. A tax on windfalls as distinguished from earnings, that is on property inherited; a tax which might be on a progressive scale as in some of the colonies.

And 3. (So long as indirect taxation continues) by duties levied on luxuries which are only within reach of the rich.

It has been objected that the laborer would have to bear it after all, for all wealth comes from labor.

True it is that all wealth comes from labor; but this cost would fall upon the produce of *past* labor; upon produce which, though created by the laborer, has been diverted from him and lost to him; and long before the time arrived at which the enfranchised and rapidly prospering laborer began to come within the sphere in which the cost fell, the whole debt of compensation would have been paid off; for compensation of any sort is due only to existing people. We owe nothing in this matter to the generations yet unborn.

# LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,

14, Southampton Street, Strand, London.

## PUBLICATIONS.

Land and Labor: (The organ of the Land Nationalisation Society.) Monthly, One Penny. Trade supplied by G. Vickers, 172, Strand.

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## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

DR. ALFRED R. WALLACE,

*At the Ninth Annual Meeting, June 19th, 1890.*

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THE progress of our cause, and of our Society, on which I was able to congratulate you last year, has been fully maintained during that which has just passed. Whether we consider the increase of our members, the useful work we have done by lectures and the distribution of literature, the more intelligent appreciation of our aims by many classes of reformers, or the influence of our teachings in County Councils and in Parliament, we cannot but feel that the worst period of struggle and difficulty through which the Society has passed is now left behind us, and we are at length receiving the reward of our patience and perseverance in the general recognition of the worthiness of our aims, and a more frequent acknowledgment of the soundness of our principles and the value of our proposals.

Before laying before you a few remarks on matters of general interest connected with our movement, I wish to call attention to two items of the Society's work during the past year, which are to me especially gratifying—the issue of a revised programme, and the establishment of our literary organ, "Land and Labor." The programme which was issued on the foundation of the Society in 1881, contained some disputable matter and was deficient in systematic form and logical completeness. For the last five or six years it has been proposed to amend it, but the difficulty of harmonising the various opinions that prevailed were long insuperable. Thanks, however, mainly to the exertions of our Honorary

Secretary, Mr. Moberly, and of our Vice-President, Mr. Ogilvy, these difficulties have at length been overcome, and I venture to think that the programme as now issued, and which appears to have met with the almost unanimous approval of our members, sets forth our whole case in a very compact, logical and forcible manner.

For some months past we have had a kind of triangular duel going on in the daily papers and monthly reviews, in which Professor Huxley and Mr. Herbert Spencer, while attacking Henry George, have strongly opposed each other. I venture to think that even Professor Huxley's skill in metaphysical or dialectical argument would be severely taxed if he ventured to oppose either the data, the arguments or the conclusions of this programme. I trust it may be very widely distributed, since it is calculated to attract the attention of thinkers and politicians who have no time to study our other literature.

The issue of the monthly paper, happily entitled "LAND AND LABOR," is of the greatest importance to our cause, and must be a matter of rejoicing to every land nationaliser. Without the invaluable services of Mr. A. J. Ogilvy, as Editor, its establishment would have been almost impossible, and I trust that all our members will do their utmost to render the paper self-supporting.

There is undoubtedly now a very general movement of opinion towards our standpoint, though many who have been influenced by our teaching, still think it necessary to declare that they are entirely opposed to us. Thus, we have that advanced liberal, John Morley, declaring at Newcastle, last November, that he was dead against Land Nationalisation and would vote against it, and in the following May we see him both speaking and voting for Mr. Reid's motion for giving Town and County Councils power to acquire compulsorily, "whatever land is, in their judgment, needed for the requirements of the inhabitants." But this is essentially Land Nationalisation, and nothing else. It is the first step which we have long advocated, and it is a step which must inevitably lead on to complete nationalisation under local management, so soon as public opinion demands it. Mr. Morley's opposition to the name of Land National-

isation, while a few weeks afterwards at the Eighty Club he spoke strongly in favour of the thing itself—of giving power to municipal and local authorities to acquire compulsorily such monopolies as water and gas works, as well as land for public purposes, and to parish councils, when they are constituted, power to purchase or hire land for letting to the poor instead of the practically inoperative Allotments Act—all this is but another indication of the way in which public men remain totally ignorant of all proposals which they think to be a little in advance of the time, to be beyond the sphere of practical politics. Even Mr. Gladstone—that omnivorous reader and student—has evidently not studied our literature, or he would not be so ignorant as he is, both of the need of some land reform of the nature we advocate, and of the practical proposals by which we obviate the difficulties supposed to attend state management. Still more extraordinary, our great philosopher, Herbert Spencer, who has to some extent studied this question, puts forth difficulties and bugbears which we have long since proved to have no existence. In his letter to the *Times* explaining his views, he says:—“Nationalisation of the Land effected after compensation for the artificial value given by cultivation, amounting to the greater part of its value, would entail in the shape of interest on the required purchase-money as great a sum as is now paid in rent. Add to which there is no reason to think that the substituted form of administration would be better than the existing form of administration. The belief that land would be better managed by public officials than it is by private owners is a very wild belief.” Now I think it would be difficult to compress more ignorance or misapprehension of the methods of land nationalisation we advocate than is to be found in this short sentence; and as the first Land Nationalisation Society established in England our proposals should be carefully considered by any opponent of the scheme. The objection as to the interest on the purchase-money being greater than the present rent, is opposed to the fact that both interest and principal are paid and redeemed in Ireland for 20, 30, and sometimes 40 per cent. less than the recently reduced rents; and though we do not compare England with Ireland in this respect, yet the

fact that the Reports of the last Royal Commission on Agriculture state, that the costs of agency, repairs, and improvements in most large estates amount to from 25 to 35 per cent. of the gross rental, irrespective of necessary abatements of rent during periods of depression and total losses from bad debts and unoccupied farms, shows that here too there is a wide margin between gross and net rental, at least nine-tenths of which would be saved under our system. The other objection as to management by public officials being worse than management by private owners exhibits a total ignorance of our proposals, under which no management whatever, in the sense of interference with the occupier in his dealing with the land, would be necessary or permissible. The present method is comparable to the letting of a house on a yearly tenancy, and involves supervision or management in order that the property may not be deteriorated and that the rent may be punctually paid. Our method is like that of letting a plot of building land at a fair ground-rent in perpetuity. It requires no management, the fact that the owner has a lien on the buildings upon the land ensuring punctual payment of the rent.

#### THE LINE OF LEAST RESISTANCE.

Coming back to Mr. Reid's motion in the House of Commons, I wish to call your attention to its importance as illustrating the practical nature of our proposals. Our friends and fellow-workers of the Land Restoration League are accustomed to urge that their method of taxation, beginning with 4/- in the pound, is in accordance with English political methods and follows the "line of least resistance." If this were true it would be a strong argument in their favour; but I altogether doubt its truth. Our method of compulsory purchase by local authorities has been brought to the test of public opinion in the place where accustomed political methods have the greatest weight—the House of Commons—and has found 159 supporters in a house of 334 members. Let the advocates of taxation bring forward a motion declaring that it is expedient to reimpose the tax of 4/- in the pound on the full annual value of all land in England and Wales, rural and urban, and see how many

supporters they will have. I venture to say they will not have 159, and I shall be very much surprised if they have so many as 50. After such a comparative trial we shall be able to say which proposal really does follow "the line of least resistance," and if our proposals are found to have that advantage, we may, I trust, see our way to a union of the two societies in one harmonious body.

#### LAND TAXATION—WHO WILL PAY IT ?

One of the most important points of difference between the followers of Henry George and ourselves is on the question whether the landlord can throw the burden of a heavy land-tax upon the tenant. This question has been the subject of much discussion during the past year. The United Committee for the Taxation of Ground Rents and Values has issued a series of "Extracts from Authorities," and also a pamphlet by Mr. Fletcher Moulton, Q.C.; while in the *Democrat* of last March is an article entitled: "Can the Land Value Tax be shifted?" It is evidently, therefore, not out of place to say a few words on this subject, more especially as I myself, with the majority of the members of this Society, hold that those who adduce these authorities are wrong as regards the particular kind of taxation here referred to, and we believe that the source of their error can be very easily shown.

Our opponents' strong point, in this matter, is the appeal to authority. Adam Smith says: "A tax upon ground rents would not raise the rents of houses. It would fall altogether upon the owner of the ground rent, who acts always as a monopolist, and exacts the greatest rent which can be got for his ground."

Ricardo says: "A tax on rent would fall wholly on the landlords, and could not be shifted to any class of consumers. . . . It would leave unaltered the difference between the produce obtained from the least productive land in cultivation and that obtained from land of every other quality."

John Stuart Mill says: "A tax on rent falls wholly on the landlords. There are no means by which he can shift the burden upon any one else."



Professor Thorold Rogers and most other writers on political economy have followed these great authorities, repeating their statement in slightly modified words; and in the recent articles I have referred to, either these authorities are accepted as conclusive, or if any attempt is made to prove that the same results would follow the imposition of a 4s. or higher land tax, the logic is at fault, and the attempted proof utterly breaks down. This I shall hope to show you in a very few words.

The whole essence of the question at issue is contained in the concluding words I have quoted from Adam Smith, that the landlord "always acts as a monopolist, and exacts the highest rent which can be got for his land." It follows, therefore, that however much you tax *him*, however much you impoverish *him*, you do not, by that act alone, enable him to extract more rent from the tenant, who is not benefited by the landlord's tax. Now this was the only kind of tax contemplated by the early writers. Governments were always in want of money, always seeking to impose new taxes; and having taxed the poor as much as they could bear, if they put a special tax on land the landlord must pay it since the tenant was already rented and taxed up to the hilt. He could bear no more. Adam Smith, and Ricardo, and Mill never contemplated the case of a landlord-government taxing land, not to supply their own dire necessities, but to relieve the tenant. Such a thing was inconceivable to them, was beyond the range of their practical politics, and therefore they did not deal with it. But this is the very essence of the modern proposal. The 4s. tax is not to be a war-tax, or, what is much the same thing, the money obtained is not to be thrown into the sea. It is not proposed to tax the landlords in order to ruin them without benefiting the rest of the community, who are all tenants. That would be pure "cussedness," as our American friends would say. But the tax on landlords is for the express purpose of relieving tenants. Just as the landlords are made poorer by it, the tenants are to be made richer, taxes are to be transferred from tenants to landlords, and would be exactly equivalent to a reduction of rent. What then would happen—the landlord, as Adam Smith says, acting "always as a monopolist and exacting the greatest rent which can be got for his

ground"? Is it not absolutely certain that, he being poorer and the tenant richer, he would raise the rent and thus get back the tax he had just paid? Mr. Fletcher Moulton says this is a fallacy. He urges, that "under the proposed system the ground value will represent the full rental value that the landowner can obtain for the use of his land, *unburdened by any rates*. This is a sum which will be determined by considerations relating to the land itself, and by these alone. In ascertaining the rental which he can afford to give for the *free* use of the land, the proposed tenant will not be affected by the question, what portion of that rent will be retained by the landlord, and what proportion will be paid over in rates?" Of course he would not; nobody has ever suggested that he would. But Mr. Moulton has slipped in the words, "unburdened by any rates," and thereafter ignores them. Are tenants now "unburdened by any rates"? And if their rates are removed and put on the landlord, does not this affect the tenant's power of paying more rent, and the landlord's power, "acting always as a monopolist," to obtain more rent? Surely the "simple fallacy" is on Mr. Moulton's part, not on ours.

The writer in the *Democrat* also trusts mainly to the authorities, and in his arguments also misses the main point. He says, "A tax upon land value, or economic rent, would not raise prices, but would simply transfer to the State a portion or the whole of that premium paid for the use of better land which now constitutes the unearned incomes of the landlords." Here, "transferring to the State" is spoken of as if it were a foreign State, or a private individual who would spend the money on himself. But the State in this case is the community, consisting almost wholly of tenants who are to benefit directly by reduction of rates and taxes. They would therefore be able to pay higher rents, and the landlord, "acting always as a monopolist," would exact those higher rents so as to bring back the respective position of landlord and tenant to what it was before the tax was imposed. The only other argument used, that if it would have the effect we urge the landlords would not object to it, is hardly worth answering. Landlords are not a specially intellectual body of men, and why should they not be blinded

by the alleged "authorities" as well as the followers of Mr. George? Besides, there would be some loss to the landlords, especially to those who had granted leases. All we urge is that in a very few years the landlords would necessarily recoup themselves under the inevitable laws of supply and demand, they being left in possession of a monopoly of what is essential to all men. In his "Scheme for the Abolition of Landlordism," in the *Westminster Review* for May, Mr. Charles Wicksteed hit the nail on the head by his suggestion that all receipts for taxes on land should be applied in the purchase of land, not in relieving tenants of rates and taxes, and thus prevent the landlords from recouping themselves by raising rents. This simple proposal has satisfied one member of the Land Restoration League that the imposition of the 4s. or any other tax, to be applied in relief of other taxation, would be useless, and would ultimately leave the landlords as much masters of the situation as they are now.\* It is to be hoped that others will be equally convinced and equally candid in acknowledging it, and thereafter retire from an untenable position. †

There is one more subject on which I wish to say a few words—the Report of the Committee of the House of Lords

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\* See a letter signed "H D." in *Land and Labor* for June.

† It was objected at the meeting that in the revised Programme the Society is pledged to support, among other partial and temporary measures, "the taxation of land-values," and that I am inconsistent in praising this programme and then showing that the taxation of land-values in order to relieve tenants would be of no effect. But I have not objected to the taxation of land-values in furtherance of land nationalisation. This may be done, either, as Professor F. W. Newman has recommended, by taking payment of the tax in land instead of in money; or by buying land with the proceeds of the tax as recommended by Mr. C. Wicksteed, or by the method explained by Mr. Ogilvy in our Tract xxvi., "TAX AND TAKE - BOTH." By either of these methods we may tax land-values effectually. It is only the proposal to transfer taxation from tenants to landlords, while leaving landlords possession of their monopoly, that I have shown would be useless, as was previously shown by Miss Helen Taylor in our Tract xix. p. 5. This is a great problem in economics which we have to solve, since its true solution is of vital importance to the success of our movement. If we merely take from the landlord what he can, and assuredly will, recover from the tenant in a few years, we shall be wasting time and energy to no purpose and may thereby delay effective land nationalisation for half a century.

on Sweating. This report tells us little that we did not know before, but it is something to get the facts officially confirmed. Many of the facts which so horrified us during the "Bitter Cry of Outcast London" agitation are here repeated, as they were repeated before the Commission on the Better Housing of the Working Classes, and there seems to be absolutely no improvement. This is of course denied; and nothing is easier than to produce evidence of improvement among certain classes or in certain districts; but the demonstrative proof that there is no general improvement is given by the Registrar General, who records the deaths in London "in workhouses, hospitals, lunatic asylums, and other public charitable institutions," as follows: In 1872, 12,029, being 17 per cent. of the total deaths; in 1881, 16,965 or 21 per cent. of the deaths; and this enormous increase underwent a still further increase in the last year recorded, 1888, when the deaths were 17,728 or 22½ per cent. of the total deaths. These official figures cannot be explained away, and they prove that the condition of the London poor is getting worse and worse—not only in absolute numbers but relatively to population. The fact is further illustrated by a statement made by John Morley in his recent speech at the "*Eighty Club*," that accurate statistics show that over 40,000 children go to the London Board schools in a condition of starvation—and this is the wealthiest city in the world, after half a century of free trade and unexampled commercial prosperity!

In their final conclusions the Committee state: (1) That the earnings of the lowest classes of workers are barely sufficient to maintain existence; (2) that the hours of labor are such as to make the lives of the workers periods of almost ceaseless toil, hard and often unhealthy; (3) that the sanitary conditions under which the work is conducted, are not only injurious to the health of the persons employed, but are dangerous to the public; and they add—"We make the above statements on evidence of the truth of which we are fully satisfied." They see clearly that the main cause of this dreadful state of things is "the excessive supply of unskilled labor," especially of "cheap female labor," owing to which "abundant materials exist to supply an unscrupulous employer with workers helplessly dependent on him." Ample

proof is given of this in the evidence, it being shown, again and again, that the necessities of the work-people oblige them to take work at any price they can get rather than remain idle and starve.

The reason I have referred to this report is, to point out the utter inability of the Committee even to suggest any remedy, except as to the unsanitary nature of the workshops, which no doubt may be improved by efficient inspection. But that will not in any way tend to raise wages, or to reduce the horrible toil of 14, 16, or 18 hours daily for a bare and miserable subsistence. The chairman of the Committee, the Earl of Dunraven, demanded legislation of some kind in the House of Lords, but the Lords having got the report of the Committee, evidently thought that was enough, and that it was unreasonable to ask them to trouble themselves more about the matter. A bishop declared that something ought to be done, and that there must be some way of doing it. A noble lord declared that true statesmanship lay in telling these poor people that legislation could benefit them very little, and that the only remedy was in their own hands in the form of thrift, and abstinence from marriage till they were capable of supporting families. And then the Lords dropped the subject, and were evidently glad to get rid of it. This attitude of helplessness is shared by the press, and by politicians in general. None of them have any but the vaguest and most milk-and-water remedies to propose; and it is this utter helplessness before the misery and degradation of the people that is leading the more thoughtful towards us. We, at least, have no doubt as to the remedy. We propose to strike at once at the very root of the disease—the congestion of population in the great cities wholly at the mercy of capitalist employers of labor,—by throwing open the land to the people. We have given abundant evidence that the land of this country is not half nor a quarter cultivated, and that it can support ten times the rural population that now live upon it; and by thus drawing back the country-born people to the land we shall at once raise the wages of unskilled labor in the only way it can be permanently raised, by diminishing the supply. Mr. Charles Booth, in his remarkable statistical work on Labor

and Life of the People, has shown that 343 per thousand of Londoners were born in the country, and that in the ten years 1871-81, no less than 107,753 persons had come to London from the country, mostly from the agricultural districts, in addition to those who had died during the period after coming there. Here is the real cause of the evils enquired into by the Lords; but the Lords, as great landowners, are themselves responsible for much of it, and of course they cannot or will not see it. But we who do see it, who feel absolutely certain that ours is the one and only immediate and practical remedy for this terrible disease of our so-called civilized society, must compel our legislators to see it; and we can do this in no way so effectually as by influencing the voters, and inducing them to make this question of "the land for the people," the test question to all candidates for parliament.

When we see such men as John Morley advocating the very measures we suggest—though not yet prepared to call himself a land nationaliser—we may be sure that the time of enlightenment is at hand, and that many now present will live to see the greater portion of our programme become the law of the land.

#### SMALL HOLDINGS.

The report of the Select Committee on Small Holdings has been issued, and here again we find some recognition of truths which we have urged on our legislators for years. They find that "the demand for small holdings appears to be general in all parts of England and Wales, but seems to be less active in Scotland," and they state that "it is probable that if legislative facilities were offered and assistance given in the way of loans on reasonable terms, they would be widely availed of by the more enterprising and thrifty of the population. *The Committee are strongly and unanimously of opinion that the extension of a system of small holdings is a matter of national importance.*" They further state that,—

"It is desirable, in the interests of the rural population, to whom it offers the best incentive to industry and thrift, and it is calculated to add to the security of property by increasing the number of persons directly interested in the soil. It

will undoubtedly tend to raise the character of the laboring class, and to stay the migration from the country to the town, which has already caused some deterioration of the rural population, and the Committee *recommend the intervention of the Legislature.*"

In considering further facilities for small holdings, the Committee have discussed Mr. Jesse Collings's Small Holdings Bill, many of the provisions of which they recommend. Whether any thing will be done to carry out these recommendations by the present parliament is very doubtful.

During the past year we have lost a true friend and advocate in that sweet singer and lover of humanity—Charles Mackay; and I cannot do better than conclude with one of his hopeful stanzas:—

"The earth is good, and bountiful, and fair  
Her choicest blessings are the destined share  
Of all her children, who in love combine  
Wisely to labor; thus the law divine  
Of the new Era. Mighty thoughts have sprung  
From the world's throbbing heart upon its tongue—  
I see their triumphs, and I join their cry.  
Friends of the People—watch! The hour is nigh."

## LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,

24, Southampton Street, Strand, London.

### OBJECT:

To restore the Land to the People and the People to the Land.

*President*—ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, LL.D., F.R.G.S., D.C.L.  
*Treasurer*—FRANCIS L. SOPER, F.L.S., 7, Cholmesley Villas, Highgate, N.  
*Hon. Secretary*—H. G. MOBERLY.  
*Secretary*—JOSEPH HYDER.

Frederick Shaw & Co., Printers, Dockhead, S.E.

## OPINIONS OF LEADING THINKERS.



Cardinal MANNING :—

“The land question means hunger, thirst, nakedness, notice to quit, labour spent in vain, the toil of years seized upon, the breaking up of houses, the misery, sicknesses, deaths of parents, children, wives, the despair and wildness which spring up in the hearts of the poor, when legal force, like a sharp harrow, goes over the most sensitive and vital rights of mankind. All this is contained in the land question.”

Sir WILLIAM BLACKSTONE (*Commentaries*):—

“Accurately and strictly speaking, there is no foundation in nature or in natural law why a set of words on parchment should convey the dominion of land.”

“Allodial (absolute) property no subject in England now has; it being a received and now undeniable principle in law, that all lands in England are holden mediately or immediately of the King.”

Sir EDWARD COKE (*Institutes*):—

“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.”

Lord Chief Justice COLERIDGE (*Speech to Scottish Juridical Society, 1887*):—

“These (our land laws) might be for the general advantage, and if they could be shown to be so, by all means they should be maintained; but if not, does any man with what he is pleased to call his mind, deny that a state of law under which such mischief could exist, under which the country itself would exist, not for its people but for a mere handful of them, ought to be instantly and absolutely set aside.”



The Right Hon. Justice STEPHEN :—

“ All lands owned by subjects in England are in the nature of fees, whether derived to them by descent from their ancestors or purchased for a valuable consideration ; for they cannot come to any man by either of these ways, unless accompanied by those feudal incidents which attended upon the first feudatories to whom the lands were originally granted.”

Right Hon. Justice LONGFIELD (*Cobden Club Essays*) :—

“ Property in land differs in its origin from property in any commodity produced by human labour ; the product of labour naturally belongs to the labourer who produced it, but the same argument does not apply to land, which is not produced by labour, but is the gift of the Creator of the world to mankind ; every argument used to give an ethical foundation for the exclusive right of private property has a latent fallacy.”

WILLIAMS (*Real Property*) :—

“ The first thing the student has to do, is to get rid of the idea of absolute ownership [of land]. Such an idea is quite unknown to the English law. No man is in law the absolute owner of lands.—p. 16.

“ All landowners are merely tenants in the eye of the law.”—p. 55.

Judge HUGHES (*Speech at Church Congress, 1888*) :—

“ The first thing which the democracy will write upon the slate, will be the nationalisation of the land.”

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE (*Malay Archipelago, 1868*) :—

“ We permit absolute possession of the soil of our country with no legal rights of existence on the soil to the vast majority who do not possess it. A great landholder may legally convert his whole property into a forest or a hunting-ground, and expel every human being who has hitherto lived upon it. In a thickly populated country like England, where almost every acre has its owner and occupier, this is a power of legally destroying his fellow creatures ; and that such a power should exist, and be exercised by individuals, in however small a degree, indicates that as regards true social science, we are still in a state of barbarism.”

Professor W. A. HUNTER, M.A., LL.D.:—

“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.”

JOHN STUART MILL (*Principles of Political Economy*):—

“The essential principle of property being to assure to persons what they have produced by their labour and accumulated by their abstinence, this principle cannot apply to what is not the produce of labour, the raw material of the earth.” “No man made the land; it is the original inheritance of the whole species.” “The land of every country belongs to the people of that country.”

HERBERT SPENCER:—

“Equity does not permit property in land. For if one portion of the earth's surface may justly become the possession of an individual, held for his sole use and benefit, as a thing to which he has an exclusive right, then other portions of its surface may be so held, and our planet must then lapse into private hands. It follows that if the landowners have a valid right to its surface, all who are not landowners have no right at all to its surface.”—(*Social Statics*).

“Briefly reviewing the argument, we see that the right of each man to the use of the earth, limited only by the like rights of his fellow-men, is immediately deducible from the law of equal freedom. We see that the maintenance of this right necessarily forbids private property in land. On examination all existing titles to such property turn out to be invalid; those founded on reclamation inclusive. It appears that not even an equal apportionment of the earth amongst its present inhabitants could generate a legitimate proprietorship. We find that if pushed to its ultimate consequences a claim to exclusive possession of the soil involves a land-owning despotism. We further find that such a claim is constantly denied by the enactments of our Legislature. And we find, lastly, that the theory of the co-heirship of all men to the soil is consistent with the highest civilisation; and that, however difficult it may be to embody that theory in fact, Equity sternly commands it to be done.”—(*Social Statics*).

“There is reason to suspect that the inhabited area, which cannot be produced by labour, will eventually be distinguished as something which may not be privately possessed.”—*Letter to the “Times,” November 7th, 1889.*

**THOROLD ROGERS:—**

“Every permanent improvement of the soil, every railway and road, every bettering of the general condition of society, every facility given for production, every stimulus supplied to consumption raises rent. The landowner sleeps, but thrives.”

**Professor ZACHARIE** (*the eminent German Jurist*):—

“All the sufferings, against which civilised nations have to struggle, may be referred to the exclusive right of property in the soil as their source.”

**SHELDON AMOS:—**

“If the land is looked upon as susceptible of permanent appropriation by some persons, other persons must, by the same theory, be regarded as possibly excluded from it—that is, banished from the territory of the State.”

**EMILE DE LAVELAYE** (*Primitive Property*):—

“The general principles of jurists commend the universal custom of primitive nations, which reserved to the tribe the collective ownership of the soil.”

**Bishop NULTY:—**

“The land of every country is the common property of the people of that country.”

**RICHARD CÖBDEN:—**

“I warn ministers, and I warn landowners and the aristocracy of this country, against forcing upon the attention of the middle and industrial classes, the subject of taxation. For great as I believe the grievance of the protective system, mighty as I consider the fraud and injustice of the Corn Laws, I verily believe, if you were to bring forward the history of taxation in this country for the last 150 years, you will find as black a record against the landowners as even in the Corn Law itself. I warn them against ripping up the subject of taxation. If they want another League

at the death of this one—if they want another Organisation and a motive—then let them force the middle and industrial classes to understand how they have been cheated, robbed, and bamboozled.”

**GRANT ALLEN** (*Contemporary Review*, May, 1889):—

“Not one solitary square inch of English soil remains unclaimed on which the landless citizen can legally lay his head, without paying tax and toll to somebody; in other words, without giving a part of his own labour, or the product of his labour, to one of the squatting and tabooing class (the landlords), in exchange for their permission (which they can withhold if they choose) merely to go on existing upon the ground which was originally common to all alike, and has been unjustly seized upon (through what particular process matters little) by the ancestors or predecessors of the present monopolists.”

**Mr. GLADSTONE** (*Speech at West Calder, November 27th, 1879*):—

“Those persons who possess large portions of the earth's space are not altogether in the same position as the possessors of mere personalty. Personalty does not impose limitations on the action and industry of man and the well-being of the community as possession of land does, and therefore *I freely own that compulsory expropriation is a thing which is admissible, and even sound in principle.*”

(*Speech at Hawarden, October, 1889*):—

“I fully admit this—I stated it long ago in Midlothian, and I say it now without the slightest doubt—that if the time came when the British nation found that the land should be nationalised, and it would be wise to do it, they have a perfect right to do it.”

(*Speech at the Manchester Conference, 1889*):—

“The Allotments Act (1887), although it is inefficient, yet contains the *good principle* that where in the judgment of a competent public authority, land is necessary, then it shall be taken (with fair compensation) whether the owner desire it or not.”

**HENRY GEORGE** (*Progress and Poverty*):—

“If one man can command the land upon which others must labour, he can appropriate the produce of their labour as the price of his permission to labour. The fundamental law of nature that her enjoyment by man shall be consequent upon his exertion is

thus violated. The one receives without producing, the others produce without receiving. The one is unjustly enriched, the others are robbed."

THOMAS CARLYLE :—

"The notion of selling for certain bits of metal the Iliad of Homer, how much more the land of the world Creator, is a ridiculous impossibility."

"The widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner; a perfumed seigneur, delicately lounging in the *Ceil de Bœuf*, hath an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and call it rent."

ISAIAH (*ch. v., verse 8*) :—

"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, ~~and there be no~~ place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth."

J. A. FROUDE :—

"Under the feudal system the proprietor was the crown, as *representing the nation*; while the subordinate tenures were held with duties attached to them, and were liable, on non-fulfilment, to forfeiture."

"Land, never, was private property in that personal sense in which we speak of a thing as our own, with which we may do so as we please."

"Land properly speaking, cannot be owned by any man, it belongs to all the human race,"

FREDERIC HARRISON (*Lecture to the Edinburgh Philosophic Institution, January, 1884*) :—

"They must be ready to act on the ancient principle of the English Law that the nation was the ultimate owner of the soil."

ROUSSEAU (*Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes, 1753*) :—

"The first man who, having enclosed a plot of ground, took upon himself to say 'This is mine,' and found people silly enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. How many crimes, how many wars, how many murders, how much misery and horror, would have been spared the human race if some one,

tearing up the fence and filling in the ditch, had cried out to his fellows: 'Give no heed to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that the produce belongs to all, *the land to none.*'"

Professor F. W. NEWMAN:—

"The history of the gradual, stealthy, but really nefarious revolution, in which *landlords*, by their own legislative power and their influence over lawyers, changed themselves into *landowners*, needs to be popularised."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON:—

"Whilst another man has no land, my title to mine, your title to yours, is at once vitiated."

ROMAINE DELAUNE:—

"The true proprietor of land is not even the existing nation—it is the race, past, present and future; the earth lends itself to all, and to each, passing from hand to hand, and from age to age, but gives itself to none."

JOHN LOCKE:—

"No man could ever have a just claim over the life of another by right of property in land."

Sir HENRY MAINE (*Village Communities*):—

"The terrible problem of pauperism began to press on English statesmen as soon as the old English cultivating groups (in which land was collectively, and not privately, owned) began distinctly to fall to pieces."

JOHN RUSKIN (*Time and Tide*):—

"Bodies of men, LAND, water, and air are the principal of those things which are not, and which it is criminal to consider as, personal or exchangeable property."

The Right Hon. JOHN MORLEY:—

"I have always thought our forefathers made a great mistake when they did not reserve the minerals to the nation."—*Interview at Newcastle, November, 1889.*

"The question of the unearned increment will have to be faced. It is unendurable that great increments which have been formed by the industry of others should be absorbed by people who have contributed nothing to that increase."—(*Speech in House of Commons, May 6th, 1890.*)

# LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,

14, Southampton Street, Strand, London.

Object:—

To restore the land to the people, and the people to the land.

PRESIDENT: ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, LL.D., F.R.G.S., D.C.L.

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## PUBLICATIONS.

Land and Labor: (The organ of the L. N. Society.) Monthly, One Penny.

Land Nationalisation, by Dr. A. R. Wallace, 11d or 1s. 9d., post free.

Land for the People: how to obtain it, how to manage it, by C. Wicksteed, 9d.

A Colonist's Plea for Land Nationalisation (No. xxiii), by A. J. O., of Tasmania, 3d

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Those who desire a just solution of the Land Problem are earnestly requested to become Members.

Remittances should be in favour of F. L. SOPER. Cheques to be crossed the London and County Bank, Covent Garden.

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REPORT  
OF THE  
LAND NATIONALISATION  
SOCIETY.

1890-91.

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OBJECT OF THE SOCIETY.

TO RESTORE THE LAND TO THE PEOPLE; AND  
THE PEOPLE TO THE LAND.

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PRINTED FOR THE LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY, AND PUBLISHED BY THEM AT  
THE OFFICE, 14, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, W C



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TENTH ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE  
**LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,**  
Held at the NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB, JUNE 18th, 1891.

A. R. WALLACE, LL.D. & D.C.L. (OXON), IN THE CHAIR.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
*For the Year ending May 31st, 1891.*

RIENDS of the Land Nationalisation movement can have no cause for despondency when viewing the advance it has made during the past twelve months. Everywhere there are signs of a growing demand for land reform, and, what is more important, for reform of a much more radical character than was considered necessary a few years ago. More and more do men see that any mere attempt to patch the present land system is doomed to failure, and that the true course lies not in mending it, but in ending it. Thus the object for which the society was founded is within measurable distance.

**Financial.**

The Society has been enabled to exert more influence than in previous years by reason of the largely increased support which it has received; and the Committee, in thanking all its helpers, begs especially to thank those members who have so generously aided it with the means to carry on a more extensive propaganda.

The subscriptions to the General Fund from June 1st, 1890, to May 31st, 1891, amount to £363 6s. 6d. The subscriptions to the Special Fund, started to carry on the open-air meetings last summer amount to £79 2s. 6d.; and the receipts for the Van Fund amount to £140 2s. 0d.; further sums are promised, but have not yet been received. Particulars of the three funds are printed herewith.

The total income of the Society, including sale of literature, has been £640 10s. 5½d., which is an increase of £252 18s. 3½d. on that of last year, and is most gratifying to all those who have at heart the cause of "the land for the people."

The total expenditure has been £627 os. 1½d.; outstanding liabilities exceed £50, and the balance in hand is £196 16s. 10½d., which is imperatively needed for the very heavy expenses that will be incurred in the conduct of the coming campaign. It would greatly conduce to good working if the Committee could rely upon subscriptions just before the winter lecturing season commences; for during the past winter it could not arrange for all the meetings it considered necessary, owing to the smallness of its balance then, the lack of certainty as to its receipts, and the greatness of the cost to be incurred by the projected Van campaign.

### Membership.

During the year we have enrolled many new members, and the total membership shows considerable increase on last year's register. Some of the members have not yet renewed their subscriptions, and we regret that the Society has lost several members by death.

There is every need for continued exertion to add to the Society's numbers. There is a very large number of persons who are believers in the reform we advocate, but who have not yet helped by their adhesion. This is to be deplored, as, in addition to the financial needs of a great and just movement, its success would be materially hastened if all our sympathisers were in touch with us. We need a very strong membership to support the work, to back our demands, and to spread the knowledge of our principles. Therefore the Committee would earnestly appeal for co-operation of co-thinkers everywhere.

### Branches.

The Hackney Branch has continued its activity and reports having held two public meetings, eight debates and four drawing-room meetings, which have been well attended and have proved of much service in permeating that important Metropolitan constituency with Land Nationalisation ideas. The Swaffham Branch has lost several of its most active members; but, under the presidency of Mr. Bell, does not lose any opportunity which presents itself for the advancement of the cause.

### Literature.

During the year a very large quantity of fresh literature has been printed at considerable expense, and every care has been taken to ensure its judicious distribution.

The Committee's best thanks are due to Mr. Hutchinson for his gift of 50,000 of leaflets Nos. 38 and 39, which proved very useful last summer. 50,000 more of each of them have already been printed this year. All the meetings been preceded by a thorough house-to-house distribution of tracts. At the meetings themselves a plentiful supply was provided, and eagerly accepted. Thus very many people have been enabled to read our arguments when they could not hear our speakers. The following is a list of the tracts which have been added to the Society's publications:—

XXXII —The Ethics of Compensation (A J O) ..	..	..	8 p p
XXXIII —Dr Wallace's Presidential Address (1890) ...	..	..	12 p p
XXXIV —The revised programme ... ..	..	..	4 p p
XXXV —Opinions of Leading Thinkers ... ..	..	..	8 p p
XXXVI —How Friends can Help .. ..	..	..	leaflet
XXXVII —Landlordism and Wages (J Hyder) ... ..	..	..	4 p p
XXXVIII —Address to the Workers of England (M Hutchinson)			leaflet
XXXIX.—Address to the Workers (No. 2) ..	dp.	..	leaflet

### Land and Labor.

The Society's monthly organ, *Land and Labor*, has been carried on for another twelve months, and the Committee acknowledges its deep obligation to Miss Helen Taylor, who enabled that result to be attained by generously promising to defray what deficiency there might be on its account, so that its cost should not fall on the General Fund. On the regretted departure of Mr. Ogilvy for Tasmania in August last, Mr. Moberly kindly consented to take his place as Honorary Editor. The paper has proved of considerable value, as a means both of communication between members, and of promulgating Land Nationalisation doctrines in a way which otherwise would hardly have been possible.

It has been quoted in the press, and thus its influence has been widely extended. As it is the only paper which is devoted to Land Nationalisation pure and simple, the Committee is anxious that Land Nationalisers should render what help they can to extend its circulation and to make it self supporting.

### Lectures.

During the year one hundred and twenty-six public meetings have been arranged for in towns and villages in all parts of the country, and the Committee's best thanks are tendered to those lecturers who kindly volunteered their help. The names of the lecturers and the number of lectures given by each are as follows: Miss Helen Taylor, 1; Rev. Dr. Pan Jones, 2; Rev. Joseph Ellis, B.A., 7; C. M. Bailhache, LL.B., 1; F. L. Soper, 1; L. J. Burke, 1; Adam Brazier, 1; Joseph Hyder, 111.

In the summer of 1890 a special series of meetings was arranged for, towards the cost of which a special fund was raised, of which particulars are given. The meetings then held were

regarded as of so hopeful a character that an effort was made to start a fund for the building and equipment of a lecture van. Notwithstanding the heavy expenses thus involved, the Committee was enabled, by the very welcome generosity of several of its members, to carry out its project, and at the end of March the first Land Nationalisation Van was duly started upon its tour in charge of the Secretary as the chief speaker. Thus far, some very useful work has been accomplished and much new ground has been broken. Some large meetings have been held in the counties of Middlesex, Berkshire, Hants, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wilts, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire, and Monmouthshire. Dr. Fan Jones has kindly arranged for a seven weeks' course of meetings in Wales, and during this time the Committee is planning a special series similar to those held in the summer of last year. The following are some of the places which have been visited by our lecturers during the year :—

SWAFFHAM	DAVENTRY.	SALISBURY.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.	RUGBY	WIMBORNE.
HALSTAD.	WARWICK.	BLANDFORD.
INGATESTONE.	STRATFORD-ON-AVON.	YEovil.
BRENTWOOD.	COVENTRY.	GLASTONBURY.
PRUDHOE.	BEDWORTH.	FROME.
BARNET.	WHITTLESEA.	TROWBRIDGE.
ST. ALBANS.	MARCH.	BRADFORD-ON-AVON
WATFORD	LYNN.	DEVIZES.
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD.	WELLS.	CALNE.
TRING.	SEVENOAKS.	CHIPPENHAM.
AYLESBURY,	BRIERLEY HILL.	MALMESBURY.
DUNSTABLE.	KEIGHLEY.	STROUD.
LEIGHTON BUZZARD.	EPSOM.	TEWKESBURY.
FENNY STRATFORD	STAINES.	EVESHAM
STONY STRATFORD.	WOKINGHAM (2).	ALCESTER
TOWCESTER.	NEWBURY.	HENLEY-IN-ARDEN.
WELLINGBOROUGH.	ANDOVER.	DROITWICH.
NORTHAMPTON.	ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCHÉ.	

### Labor Electoral Congress.

The Society was represented by the Secretary at the Fourth Annual Congress of the Labor Electoral Association, held at the Westminster Town Hall, on May 18th, 19th, and 20th, and Mr. Hyder moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Councillor Flood, of Warrington, and carried without a dissentient :—

“ That the control of the nation's land, which no man made, but which all men need, should be vested in the hands of representative public authorities, who should be compelled to recognise the inalienable right of all men to use a part of their native land, with security of tenure, upon paying a fair revisable rent into the public exchequer, thus creating a fund which would defray all charges of government both national and municipal.”

### Western Australia New Constitution Act.

We greatly regret that the Western Australia Bill passed with its most objectionable features intact, in spite of the energetic opposition offered to it in Committee and in the House by Sir George Campbell and others. Thus has slipped by another opportunity for the institution of a just land system under the most favourable circumstances imaginable. We constantly hear men say, "Oh, yes, I quite agree with your theories, but they can never be put into practice in an old country like England. However, in a new country the land ought decidedly to be national property."

The chance has gone, and the work of alienation will go on merrily to the complete satisfaction, doubtless, of sixteen thousand adults to whom has been recklessly handed the absolute control of a territory far more extensive than the whole of India.

### Allotments (Amendment) Act, 1880.

We have frequently had to point out that the Act of 1887 was, from our standpoint, a complete failure. Nothing else could be expected, seeing that the powers of compulsory purchase were put into the hands of the very men, farmers and landlords, who had all along been opposed to making the labourer independent by opening the land to him, knowing that such independence would increase the farmer's labour bill and diminish the landlord's rent-roll. The reluctance of the sanitary authorities to use their powers forced itself upon the Government's attention and the Act was amended so that pressure might be brought to bear upon them. But still the Act is utterly ineffective to give the labourers their full rights, and much has yet to be done. We are pleased to note that the first efforts were made to force the opening of the rate-supported schools for public meetings, when Mr. Channing got a clause inserted throwing open these schools under certain conditions for the purpose of discussing the Act.

### Small Holdings Bill.

The Report of the Small Holdings Committee was printed in June, and gives the result of the examination of thirty-nine witnesses from all parts of the country. Very noteworthy are some of its conclusions.

- 1.—The extension of a system of small holdings is a matter of national importance.
- 2.—The intervention of the Legislature is called for by the special circumstances of the case.
- 3.—In conjunction with a system of purchase, Local Authorities should be empowered to let land in small holdings not exceeding 10 acres.

4.—A system of ownership is preferable in most cases to any system of tenancy.

5.—A proportion of the original loan should remain as a perpetual feu or quit rent payable to the Local Authority.

6.—Sub-letting and sub-division must be forbidden.

7.—The Local Authority should have power to resume possession of the holding at any time for public purposes or for building land on payment of compensation based on its agricultural value.

It will thus be seen that the Report contains some good points, and is certainly an advance upon previous ones of a similar character. There are, however, several weak features in it, of which the chief are:—

1.—Its recommendation of ownership (albeit slightly limited) avowedly to ensure security of tenure, and in spite of the clearest evidence that State or Municipal tenancy would give all the just security that an "owner" can enjoy.

2.—Its failure to recommend the granting to Local Authorities of *compulsory* powers, without which no land legislation can be effective.

Following upon the recommendations of the Committee, Mr. Jesse Collings introduced a Small Holdings Bill, which provided for the advance by the State of £5,000,000 for the establishment of a system of small holdings, and it was remarkable that not a single member dissented from its main object, and it passed its first reading without a division, although a number who supported it pointed out its chief defect, the absence of compulsion.

### Leasehold Enfranchisement.

Few events of the past year are of greater significance than the result of the debate and division upon the question of leasehold enfranchisement. We have all along protested that the legislation advocated by the Leasehold Enfranchisement Association is most dangerously reactionary, and if passed, would put serious obstacles in the way of true land reform. The admitted hardships of tenants on leasehold estates serve well as illustrations of landlord extortion. But they are not to be removed by a mere change of landlords or by an increase in their numbers as is irrationally suggested. For it must be remembered that the leasehold system enables landlords to appropriate values created by the community as well as values created by the tenants. The Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill would protect some only of the latter, but would still leave the former in private hands, which would be quite as rapacious and extortionate, and more numerous.

Therefore we rejoice that Mr. Haldane should have introduced an amendment which would have safeguarded the public rights to the communal land values, and further, that he was supported by

thirty-eight of the new Radical party, including Mr. Reid and Mr. Asquith. Although the amendment was rejected, the Bill was defeated by the opposition, upon Land Nationalisation lines, of Mr. Haldane and his supporters, who have earned the thanks of those reformers who want no fresh obstacles to be placed in the way of the people's demand for a truly just land system

### Right of Public Access to Mountains and Moors.

Mr. Bryce's Bill, which is intended to secure the right of public access to mountains and moors in Scotland, was again put down for discussion, but, unfortunately, through the Government's appropriation of private members' nights, was excluded from debate. Subject to certain provisions against malicious damage, the Bill declares that no owner or occupier of uncultivated mountain or moorland in Scotland shall be entitled to exclude any person from walking or being on such lands for the purpose of recreation or scientific or artistic study. We shall be glad to see the rest of the United Kingdom included. As a step tending towards our goal we heartily welcome this Bill, and trust that it will yet become law. We are glad to know that many who are not Land Nationalisers are in complete accordance with us in holding that the exclusion of the public from some of the most beautiful and health-giving parts of their native land, in order that a few deer or grouse may not be disturbed, is an altogether unwarrantable exercise of landlords' strict legal rights.

### Deer Forests.

Mr. Angus Sutherland did our cause good service by directing public attention, by means of a Parliamentary resolution and debate, to the question of the depopulation of the Highlands. He denounced the landlords' action in turning nearly 200,000 acres to purposes of sport since the Crofters' Commission Report, and simply asked that the Government should act upon the recommendation of that Commission. He was supported by other Radical members, who described the condition of affairs produced by the present landlordial tyranny as constituting a national danger. But the idea was pooh-poohed by the Government, who, through Mr. Chaplin, would not admit the existence of such a danger. Yet what are the facts?

The Commission was unanimous on one point: "That the Highland peasant of the present time, through past evictions has been confined within narrow limits, sometimes on inferior and exhausted soils; that he is subject to arbitrary augmentations of rent; that his habitation is usually of such a character as implies physical and moral degradation; that he suffers from insecurity of tenure, want of compensation for improvements,



high rents, defective communication, withdrawal of the soil for purposes of sport, &c." And most of these evils still continue. But the Government adopts the opinion which the *Times* expressed in commenting on the above-mentioned Report: "In Ireland, legislation is necessary, because we are threatened with civil war, whereas no such danger exists in Scotland."

Therein lies the secret. Existing Governments seem to have an aversion to reforming any abuse until the people unmistakably show their will. Not till the country was in danger of civil war did the Government of the day pass the great Reform Bill; the mutinous action of justly discontented men led, as much as anything, to the freeing of our ports; the downfall of Hyde Park railings preceded the Reform Bill of 1867; and a prominent politician said, in 1884, that he would believe in the reality of the popular demand if he saw the railings go down again. And our history is but repeating itself when Mr. Chaplin, a large landlord, refuses to put any check upon the selfish, wasteful, and dangerous action of Scottish landowners. But, as Sir George Trevelyan reminded him, the people will yet have a different answer.

### Landlord Confiscation.

Then Mr. S. T. Evans introduced a Bill to check landlordial confiscation of chapels built upon leasehold land, and quoted instances of gross injustice and undoubted hardship. Again the Government opposed in the interests of the sacredness of contracts freely (?) entered into by both parties. As Sir Hussey Vivian pointed out, the contracts between landlords and tenants are not free except in name. And so did the arguments commend themselves that sufficient Conservatives, who were left a free hand in the matter, voted for the Bill that it passed its reading and the Government was defeated by the extraordinarily large majority of 108. Let but this Bill's supporters be logical and they will have to vote against all confiscation by landlords. If it be wrong to appropriate other people's chapels it must also be equally wrong to appropriate houses or factories or farmbuildings, or, in short, any improvements effected by the land-users. However, the result of that debate is most cheering as it is.

### Trade Unionism and Land Reform.

The rapid growth of trade combination consequent upon the great dock strike is a matter of common knowledge, and marks a notable advance in the labour movement. While gratified at such progress we could not but regret that too much importance seemed to be attached to the organisation of the employed, and too little to the absorption of the unemployed.

All must lament that the reverses which labour has since sustained were due to this one fact, which we pointed out on all possible occasions. Experience has convinced the labour leaders of the truth of this contention, and we are glad to record the new work of the Dockers' Union in the country districts. They are now seeking, not only to organise the labourers, but also to teach them that the land is wrongfully withheld from them, and that the villages must be made more attractive by the removal of landlordial barriers and vetoes. It is a matter for our hearty congratulation that the Dockers' Manifesto to the labourers gave first place to the restoration of the land to the people. A number of the Union organisers have asked for and obtained quantities of our literature for distribution in the course of their work.

### Land Speculation.

As illustrating the evil results of land speculation no event of the past year was more potent than the Argentine revolution. The whole trouble started with a land "boom," or land gambling mania. Great territorial lords got the Government to borrow vast sums of money with the ostensible object of opening up the country, but with the real object of enhancing the value of their property. A land-grabbing fever set in with results disastrous in every way, and the ruin of thousands of English families was within measurable distance owing to the critical position of Baring Brothers, the great bankers, who had advanced heavily to the Argentine Government. We think it right that this remarkable phase of landlordism should receive more than a passing observation or notice.

### Landlord Encroachments.

We are glad to know that public opinion has been so educated that encroachments by landlords upon commons, footpaths, and roadside wastes cannot now be carried on, as they once were, without arousing a strong measure of public indignation and resistance. It is our duty as Land Nationalisers to keep a vigilant eye upon such encroachments. The Executive invites information of any case in which such reprehensible action is impending or in progress, and records with pleasure, as deserving of imitation, the course pursued by a member of the Society, the Rev. Haydn Williams, of Whitby. When the lord of the manor commenced an encroachment upon the old Abbey Plain there, Mr. Williams took the initiative and had a summons served upon him. We want more popular champions to supplement our work for the extension of the communal boundaries by similar resolute action to prevent their contraction. When the public land-borders are moved at all it must not be inwards but outwards, until from sea to sea no land remains as private property.

### Trades' Union Congress.

It is very gratifying to us to record that the opening addresses of the presidents both of the Labor Electoral Congress and of the Trades' Union Congress, laid very special stress upon the essential evils of landlordism and upon the great good which land nationalisation would do for the interests of the working population.

The Trades' Union Congress, which was the most numerously attended and representative of any previously held, again recorded the need for the reform we advocate. Such panaceas as free trade in land, and peasant proprietorship, have no chance whatever of finding favour in these Labor Parliaments, and it is certain that in proportion as the National Parliament becomes democratised so will such old-fashioned and exploded remedies find less favour there.

### Land Reform in Parliament.

There have not been wanting signs that our doctrines are permeating the community, and, through it, its national assembly. More and more is the public interest in the land being recognised, and there are indications that the House of Commons contains a small but active number of members who are determined to resist the old selfish landlordial policy which has hitherto been favoured by that assembly.

The Committee has had under its consideration the possibility of getting the House to debate upon the direct issue of Land Nationalisation by means of a declaratory resolution, and a member has promised to introduce such a resolution at the first opportunity.

### Compulsory Expropriation.

In our last report we were able to record a remarkable evidence of Parliamentary progress, in the fact that no less than one hundred and fifty members of Parliament voted for Mr. R. T. Reid's historical resolution of May 6th, 1890, which asserted the need for competent public authorities being empowered to *compulsorily* take land, not merely for agricultural allotments as in the Allotments' Act, but *for any purpose whatever*, whenever such action should be deemed necessary in the public interest. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the value of that vote as a precedent in our favour, for, by it the main body of the Liberal party stands pledged to a very considerable extension of the principle of landlord dispossession, which, in a lesser degree has received the legislative sanction of a Conservative Government with the House of Lords at its back. Armed in argument with such a precedent, our case for a *complete* scheme of land resumption is greatly strengthened. And, while drawing attention to

this matter, we would also emphasise the importance of the decision of the London County Council not to part with any land which it now owns. It is the imperative duty of every Land Nationaliser to use his influence upon the various County Councils and other public bodies so that they may be forced to a similar determination to *retain* what land they now possess.

### Irish Land Purchase.

The thanks of Land Nationalisers are especially due to Mr. Edmund Robertson and Mr. Seymour Keay, who did their best to introduce amendments into the Irish Land Purchase Bill, otherwise, a Bill for the wholesale manufacture of landlords, with a view to eliminate its worst feature and chief characteristic.

Unfortunately, the speaker held that their propositions to vest the fee-simple of the land in the hands of public authorities were against the principle of the Bill, and consequently inadmissible as amendments. The only course that was left open by the forms of the House was to attempt to prolong the time of tenant-repayments and so to make more remote what Dr. Wallace justly called the "Quixotic" alienation of the national patrimony to men who have absolutely no more claim to it than have its present lords. At the least, such an amendment would have given more time for the creation of a healthy public opinion which would, undoubtedly, condemn and prevent such an absurd and unwarrantable proceeding.

Unhappily, Mr. Keay was defeated in his laudable intention, and largely by the action of the Irish party which has long parted with the cry of "the land for the people" with which the Land League was founded by that earliest Land Nationaliser, Michael Davitt. It is only too evident that the Irish Agrarian movement as represented in the House of Commons, simply aims at the wresting of the land from a small set of large proprietors to establish a large set of small proprietors, and that it selfishly and utterly ignores the rights of the landless labourers and artisans of Ireland, who will, we are afraid, have to learn the painful lesson that the oppression of the land monopoly will still remain, and in some respects, will even be intensified. For the wrong of land lordism does not consist, as some appear to imagine, in the extent of the land which is owned by private individuals, but, by the fact that *any* of the land we all need is owned at all by them.

The Bill has met with an amount and energy of opposition, which, if rightly directed, would, we believe, have been successful. Unhappily, it has been based more upon party exigencies than upon the fundamental principle of justice. We wish that Liberal and Radical organisations which denounced schemes of land purchase had used their power to direct what they could not prevent,

and when they saw that some scheme of land purchase was inevitable, had endeavoured to mould it so that the community retained the land for which its credit was pledged. It was, of course, necessary in the interests of the tenants, to protest against the payment of extravagant compensation to landlords, but it was still more necessary to make prominent the wider interest which the nation has in the non-creation of a new set of monopolists. This latter necessity was almost completely forgotten by the many critics of the Bill who devoted their attention to the former, and thus a splendid opportunity has been lost.

The Society has stood almost alone in its attempts to remedy this serious omission, and deeply regrets that more support was not rendered by those who agree with its ultimate object, but who did not sufficiently recognise that an amount of force which is powerless to stop a stream can very effectually *turn* it into another and better channel.

### Land Taxation.

The question of land taxation was discussed in two important debates in March, upon two motions of Mr. Provand and Mr. Stuart, which declared for an increase in the taxation of land. They were noteworthy as calling forth several valuable declarations upon the incidence of a land tax. Mr. Chaplin said:—"The occupier pays a certain sum for the use of land, and in that sum are included rates and taxes. If the rates are high the landlord gets less rent, and if they are low he gets more rent." And he expressed the willingness of the Government to divide rates between landlords and tenants as in Scotland, that is to increase the part paid immediately by the landlord, believing that the direct assessment of land would not necessarily impose an additional burden upon landlords who could recoup themselves to the extent of the easement of their tenants' burdens. Mr. Gladstone endorsed that view, and he declared that "Any money which goes to the relief of rates is, in the long run, a sheer, unmixed, undiluted gift to the landlords." This opinion the Executive holds to be correct, and it is supported by the great bulk of the witnesses who have been examined by the Town Holdings Committee.

We consider that whatever fund is raised by the taxation of land, it should be employed in aid of purposes other than those now served by existing rates, or the breach it seems to make in the landlordial fortress will prove to be an unreality. There is no way in which the money so raised can be employed to the ultimate advantage of the community, except by gradual freeing the land of the country from individual control. Only in this way can the landlords be prevented from shifting the tax upon the backs of their tenants.

### The Press.

It is a very good sign that many newspapers are gradually coming round to an open avowal of the Land Nationalisation faith, and readily admit correspondence and articles upon the question. The process of conversion has been for some time observable. Party newspapers are much like party politicians in being under the necessity of watching the trend of events in order to shape their own course accordingly. Not from altogether interested motives, however, could we fairly assert that they act in these matters. The majority of men are not thinkers and do not take any interest at all in new movements. And Editors are no exceptions to this rule. They only examine a strange doctrine when the success which has already attended its preaching compels their notice. It is therefore extremely inspiring that we now have for powerful allies a small but growing section of the London and Provincial press which is steadily getting men accustomed to attacks upon what was, not so very long ago, considered the sacred and indestructible system of landlordism.

### Work for the Future.

The Committee cannot conclude its Report without expressing its earnest hope that all the Society's sympathisers will endeavour to extend its usefulness, and increase its membership. The forces against us are strong, and to overcome them needs much strong and continued effort. But it is certain that the democracy needs but to be educated on the question of Land Nationalisation, and will then decree the downfall of the foundation monopoly against which we war. Therefore our chief object will be to arouse public opinion by means of meetings, and the wide dissemination of literature. To do this effectively we need very much more help than we have at hand, encouraging as its growth has been. Landlordism is hardly inferior to slavery in its power for harm, and our movement yet needs a wider diffusion of that enthusiasm and zeal which led to the emancipation of the slaves. Let Land Nationalisers be true to the faith they profess and this work will yet attain vast proportions, and will not cease to grow until Landlordism is entirely destroyed. To effect this, every member should endeavour to add to the Society's financial strength so that it may arrange for many more public meetings than it has hitherto been able to do, and to disseminate the literature upon the subject on a much more comprehensive plan.

**ANNUAL MEETING**  
OF THE  
**LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY,**

*Held on June 18th, 1891,*  
AT THE NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB.

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS OF DR. ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE.

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THE Report which has been presented to you this year is so full and so satisfactory that I need only congratulate you on the steady progress of our cause. And now that the country towns and rural villages are being aroused by the visits of two vans devoted to the great land question—our own and that of our friends and fellow-workers of the Land Restoration League—we may look forward with some confidence to the time when no Liberal candidate will have a chance of election who is not a thorough and radical land reformer. I trust that the lecturers and speakers at these van meetings will take every opportunity of enlightening the rural voters as to the real nature of the ballot, and do all in their power to convince them of the fact that their votes are now their own, and that, whatever landlords and agents may say to frighten them, the vote of any individual can never be ascertained except it is divulged by himself. We have already sufficient adherents to make us a power in the country, and we must now endeavour to make that power felt at the polls. When we can do that we shall see a wonderful change in the attitude of political parties, and even of the Government, towards the land question. Our arguments will then be admitted to have great weight; our proposals will then be treated as worthy of respectful consideration; and we ourselves, instead of being looked upon as wild fanatics aiming at the destruction of all that is most venerable and sacred in our institutions, will be classed among sober and earnest reformers, whose fundamental principles are indisputable, and must at no distant period become embodied in law to the great benefit of the community.

Nothing can more clearly show the tendency of public and political opinion than the fact which has been referred to already in the Report, that Mr. Jesse Collings' SMALL HOLDINGS BILL was read a second time in the present session without opposition. For this Bill really involves some of the more important principles

we advocate, though these are somewhat obscured by the form in which they are stated—a form adopted to avoid opposition from those who still hold to creating peasant proprietors rather than holders under the State or the municipality. The local authorities are, by this Bill, given power to purchase land and to sell it for small holdings of from one to fifty acres; but they are really to lease it in perpetuity at a rent calculated on the interest of three-fourths of the value of the land, the remaining fourth being paid by the tenant. This fourth part may be considered as representing, roughly, the value of improvements and of compensation for disturbance, which, under any circumstances, the tenant would have to pay, and also as affording good security against loss to the public by failure to pay the rent. If by putting it in this form opposition can be avoided there is little objection to be made on our part. But there are three important defects in the Bill. In the first place fifty acres is too high a limit since, as has been pointed out with great force by Mr. Bear, it would lead to the setting up of capitalist farmers by means of public credit, and would make it more difficult to supply suitable land to all real workers who might require it. Secondly, and this I think a much more important point, there is no provision made for the periodical revision of rents when land changes in value owing to the direct action of the community or to its mere growth, except by the inconvenient, costly, and harassing method of re-purchase and re-letting by the local authority. And lastly, the Bill is altogether permissive. The local authority *may* do this or not, but they are not compelled to do it. This is a fatal obstacle to any immediate utility of the measure if it passes. But, nevertheless, we should advocate it even with this grave defect; for the Bill itself contemplates being worked not by existing but by future local authorities, and, when parish or district councils are established and the councillors are chosen by universal suffrage, this matter of Small Holdings will determine the elections, and the workers of all kinds being in a large majority will be in a position to obtain all they want. Powers of compulsory purchase of land at fair agricultural values must however be given, or the Bill will be useless at all times; and as it is certain not to pass this session, and probably not while the present Government is in power, it is to be hoped that in another Parliament it may be possible to have it modified in the directions indicated. Its great superiority to all such Allotment Acts as have been or are likely to be brought in by this or by the next Government, is, that it will enable all would-be dwellers in the country to obtain land on fair terms, in practical perpetuity, to live and work upon, and thus to realise for the rural labourer that highest dream of his life, the possession of a “homestead of his very own.” This is not, as Mr. Chamberlain and other of our opponents urge, a Bill



to set men up in business at the public cost. It is, on the contrary, in the first place, a mere matter of justice to enable all Englishmen who desire it to make a home for themselves on their native soil; secondly, it would *not* be at the public cost, because it would at once leave a considerable margin of profit to go in relief of taxation; and, thirdly, it would benefit the whole community by striking at the very root of pauperism, and by leading inevitably to higher wages, and, as a consequence, to a greatly increased home trade.

At our last annual meeting I ventured to discuss a subject of great theoretical and practical importance, the incidence of land taxation under the existing conditions of land-monopoly, and had the satisfaction of receiving the energetic support of that excellent land nationaliser and land restorer, Mr. T. F. Walker, of Birmingham. On the present occasion I propose to lay before you some considerations on another phase of our great subject, which I trust may receive equally effective support, while I think it will not excite so much, if any, antagonism.

One of the most striking characteristics of the times in which we live is the extent to which the teachings of Socialism in its various forms are permeating society. Thoughtful men and women in ever-increasing numbers are becoming convinced that the time-honoured panaceas of politicians and economists are absolutely powerless to cure the terrible diseases of our modern social system. As wealth ever grows, poverty and starvation grow with it. Royal Commissions again and again report, but nothing ever comes of their reports. Men still die of starvation in the wealthiest and most luxurious city in the world. The proportion of all the deaths of the country which occur in workhouses, has, the Registrar General tells us, steadily increased from 5.6 per cent. in 1875, to 6.9 per cent. in 1888.\* In London the increase has been even more appalling, from 9.5 per cent. of the total deaths in 1872 to 12.6 per cent. in 1888. Every eighth death in London now occurs in a workhouse! In the face of this official demonstration that increase of wealth brings increase of want, and that all the charity, all the education, all the advance of science, and all the remedial legislation of the last fifty years have done nothing to check its inexorable advance, is it to be wondered at that the opinion should gain ground that the whole fabric of society rests on a rotten foundation, and that the only way to get rid of the horrors of starvation, misery, and vice everywhere around us is by a radical measure of reform which shall destroy the régime of individualism and competition that has so completely failed to secure the general well-being, and replace it by a complete system of co-operative socialism? They think that all

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\*Fifty-first Annual Report of the Registrar-General, p. 71.

the difficulties and possible dangers of such a social revolution must be faced as the only effectual means of putting an end to the terrible contrasts of wealth and poverty which not only persist, but increase, in all civilised communities, where millions spend their lives in excessive and debasing labor in order that other millions may live in luxury, and in complete or partial idleness.

Now these earnest Socialists, while they are of course Land Nationalisers, are very much more. They think and believe that Land Nationalisation alone would do very little to remedy the evils that so impress them, and they urge that capital as well as land—all the machinery for creating wealth, should be equally nationalised. They therefore give us only a half-hearted support, and look upon it as almost a waste of time and energy to advocate our views. Their position may be illustrated by the remark of Mr. J. E. Williams of the Social Democratic Federation, who, after I had read my paper\*\* at the Industrial Remuneration Conference in 1885, asked me "to consider very seriously whether if we left all the machinery, all the railways, all large factories, and all the mines of the country in the hands of the rich capitalists, the working classes would still continue to be oppressed."

I now propose, briefly, to show that I *have* seriously considered this question. And I think I shall be able to satisfy some at least of our Socialist friends that, once get the land into the hands of the people and the capital of the country will very soon follow it into the same hands. To make matters simpler, and more pleasant, I may say that I am in principle a thorough Socialist myself; but I am none the less firmly convinced that the shortest and easiest, perhaps the only road to Socialism is, in this country at all events, by the way of Land Nationalisation.

*Misconceptions as to Capital.*—It will be necessary to make a few preliminary observations on the nature of capital, what it is and what it is not. And first, money is not capital. A man may have a houseful of money, but it is not capital till it is converted into tools or raw materials, and even then it will not be productive capital unless it can command both labor and intelligence to utilise it. We often hear the threat that if workmen strike for higher wages capital will go out of the country. That is an idle threat. True capital—railroads, factories, mills, &c., will not pay to carry away; and as for rich people taking money out of the country, that would hurt no one even now, and if we had possession of the land it would be an absolute benefit to us.

Again, few persons realise how perishable and fugitive is capital. It wants constant looking after and constant renewal. Every few years new and improved machinery replaces the old, and even buildings have to be constantly repaired, and, at longer or shorter

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\*\* How to cause Wealth to be more Equally Distributed."

intervals to be altogether re-built. We see how comparatively unimportant is the value of capital existing at any one time, when we observe the rapid renewal of that which has been destroyed by a great fire, like that of Chicago, or by a foreign invasion like that of France by Germany. In a very few years everything is replaced and everybody seems as well off as before. We also see how rapidly capital is created by the fact that so many wealthy men who now own mills and houses by the score began life with nothing. Capital, like all wealth, is created and grows solely by means of labor and intelligence applied to land or to the products of the land. It is one of the misleading errors of political economists that the three factors of wealth are land, labor and capital. The true factors, as long ago pointed out by our vice-president, Mr. Volckman, are land, labor, and intelligence. These existed before capital was created; and had capital been a *necessary* factor in the production of capital, then it could never have come into existence at all. It follows that, when the workers have free access to the *land*, and as the *labor* is certainly all their own, they only need the *intelligence* to produce in a very short time all the capital that is needed. It would be an insult to the working men of England to suppose that they have not the necessary intelligence;—it would moreover be contrary to all experience and all history, for whence has usually come the intelligence that has created the wealth of England, if not mainly from the ranks of the workers? Hargreaves and Arkwright, Watt and Stephenson, were not landlords or capitalists, though these last have derived much of their wealth from their inventions.

Under present conditions the value of both capital and land to their respective owners, depends entirely on the amount of labor they can command. Both land and machinery are worthless, if left unused, while the former sometimes, and the latter always rapidly deteriorates in value. The landlord and the capitalist are therefore absolutely dependent upon the laborer, and if the laborer can be put in such a position as to be independent of them, he really becomes their master, instead of being, as now, their slave, and they will have to come to him and beg him to enable them to make something, however little, out of their property. The laborer will then be, as he ought to be, master of the situation; and Land Nationalisation will enable him to obtain this position just as surely, and perhaps even as rapidly, as if land and existing capital were both nationalised together.

Let us then briefly consider how Land Nationalisation would work in this respect. I would first remark that when Mr. Williams spoke of us as leaving the mines and the railways in the hands of rich capitalists, he forgot that mines are part of the land and that we have always urged that the arguments in favour of Land Nationalisation apply with still greater force to all the

mineral treasures of a country, because the use of them is not use only but actual destruction, and by largely exporting them for the aggrandisement of individual owners, we are simply robbing future generations. He may be quite sure that when the land is nationalised the minerals will not be left in private hands. Neither will the railroads and other means of communication. Public opinion is growing so rapidly on this question, that railroads will probably become public property even before the land. Many people think there is a financial difficulty in the way of this transfer, but this is a delusion. The Government might take over the administration of the railroads, in the interests both of the shareholders and the public, without requiring to raise or expend a single pound. They would simply amalgamate all the companies, and work all the lines by one central authority, paying the shareholders fixed dividends, estimated on those of the past five or ten years, and devoting all surplus profits, which would be certainly large, partly to the reduction of fares and to increasing the accommodation of the public, and partly to buying up the interests of shareholders. When these were all paid off the whole of the railroads might be either worked at very low fares so as to give a small profit, or, as is now very forcibly advocated in Australia, all travelling might be absolutely free, the expense being defrayed out of the general revenue.

We will now return to the effects of Land Nationalisation.

When every man who wished it, could have land on fair terms to cultivate or to live upon, we should soon find the country repopulated by men living on their own homesteads, and deriving a considerable portion of their subsistence from the fruit and vegetables, pigs and poultry, which they were able to grow during their spare hours, and with the help of their families. A large proportion of the millions who have migrated during the last twenty years to the great towns, driven away for the most part by the existing land monopoly, would surely return to their native towns and villages, and obtain their subsistence, either wholly or partially, by the cultivation of the soil. Many would still work in the towns, but, by means of cheap or even free trains and short hours of labor, they would be able to live five or ten miles away in the country or even further, and enjoy at once the advantages and pleasures of town and country life. Then for the first time in modern history the workman would be free. The capitalist would not, as now, own the house he lived in, and in any dispute about wages be able to hold over him the threat of eviction. Few would then be unemployed, and the capitalist could not, as now, get thousands of fresh men willing to work for any wages rather than starve. Under such conditions wages would inevitably rise until they absorbed all the product of labor, except the fair wages of superintendence and a very small interest on capital.

No less important would be the absolute destruction of political despotism. Every man would be free to vote as he pleased, and the workers would then become, as they ought to become, the preponderating political force in the country.

But having reached this point, a movement would inevitably arise towards the acquisition of the necessary capital by the workers themselves. There are, I believe, many processes in manufactures which can be carried on just as well in the workman's own house or workshop as in a large factory. Factories are of course useful and economical to the capitalist, enabling him to absorb to himself the surplus produce of thousands of men and machines. But the workers would benefit more if they worked for themselves, at their own homes, and with their own machines; and by a little co-operation the whole of the processes of many a factory could thus be carried on. Motive power could be conveyed to each of these workers from some central station, either by water, air, or electric transmission, and each man could thus work as many or as few hours as he pleased, alternating his machine work with out-door occupations, and thus adding both to his health, his enjoyments, and his profits.

But this would only be one mode of co-operation. With independence and higher wages, workers of every kind could soon save enough to start small mills or workshops of the kind they were familiar with. And as these co-operative factories increased, those of the capitalists would run short of labor, and the hands they could get would demand and would certainly obtain higher wages and shorter hours. The competition would all be in favour of the men, who, working for themselves, would never be short of hands, and would not be troubled by strikes. The end would inevitably be that the capitalists would find their position untenable, and would everywhere offer to sell or rent their mills or factories for whatever they could get.

Of course this assumes a fair amount of intelligence, industry, and economy on the part of the workers. But surely this is not a very large or improbable assumption to make with regard to men who, by the time these changes shall have come about, will have been steadily advancing in both ordinary and technical education, and who will have been for some time in possession of that personal freedom, political independence and power, and material well-being, which must inevitably be the first and immediate results of Land Nationalisation. It seems to me to be almost certain that those who as young men see our principles brought fully into action, will in middle age see the workers in co-operative possession of the bulk of the real working capital of the country.

The powerful educational influences that will have been operating during these changes, will by that time render it possible, if public opinion then supports it, to extend this co-operation till it

becomes first local and then national, culminating in the true co-operative commonwealth, which is the ideal of most modern Socialists. A system of Socialism thus established by men who have been gradually trained to effective co-operation, and to the responsibilities of political power, would have every chance of success. Under the happier conditions of society then prevailing paupers, criminals, and vagrants, will as classes have ceased to exist. The crass ignorance now so common will have been abolished. The obstructive power of the landed aristocracy, and of the privileged classes generally, will have died out.

If, on the other hand, the attempt is made to establish such universal co-operation before the beneficial agency of Land Nationalisation has prepared the way, failure would almost certainly result, both from the strenuous opposition of all the forces of wealth and political power arrayed against it, as well as from the ignorance and unpreparedness of the millions who have been so long degraded by the cruel struggle for existence in our great cities. And the failure of the attempt would in all probability throw back true reform for at least a generation.

I think I have now shown that Land Nationalisation is an essential preliminary to any other great social reform, and that Socialists should work heart and soul with us, without enquiring whether we are in favour of Socialism or not. Let them continue to advocate their own views, and educate the public in favour of Socialism, but let them also work earnestly with us. We have a long and a hard struggle before us. The combined forces of the landlords, the capitalists, and the official world are arrayed against us. But the vast multitude of the workers, though hitherto ignorant of their power, ignorant of their rights, and almost wholly untrained and unable to co-operate for any common cause, are now coming to our support; much of the independent intellect of the country is becoming convinced of the soundness of our views; the noble army of philanthropists, to whom be all honour, are now beginning to see that to relieve misery, however necessary for the moment, does no permanent good, and that to effect any permanent amelioration, they must join us in striking at the very root of the evil. If, in addition to these converts, we can gain to our cause some considerable proportion of the various groups of Socialists, we may consider ourselves within measurable distance of success; and it may be that many of our younger members will live to see the soil of our country freely open to the use of all her citizens.

Then will no more be seen in our land, that most pitiable of sights, that crowning disgrace to our much-boasted wealth and civilisation—men whose children are in want of bread, asking for work, and asking for it in vain. (Loud cheers).

The report having been read by the Secretary, its adoption was moved by Mr. PAYNE, who suggested that it should be largely circulated, as he thought that it could not fail to greatly increase the membership of the Society. He thought there could be no doubt but that the principles advocated by the Society were making headway, and that there was a tendency to base future legislation upon them.

The adoption of the report was seconded by Mr. McILRAITH, and the motion was carried.

Mr. J. SEYMOUR KEAY, M.P., moved the following resolution.—“That the system by which individuals have been allowed to acquire and retain land as their private property, while freeing themselves from most of the public burdens and obligations which that possession entailed, is contrary to the rights and interests of the rest of the people, and must be replaced by a system of State tenancy controlled by popularly elected bodies, under which every man's right of access to the land of his native country shall be fully secured on conditions, just both to himself and to the community.” He said:—A consideration of landlordism necessarily involves a consideration of the great injustices which exist under it. I do not know whether there is any member of the Liberal party, however much he may have hung back from supporting the principles of Nationalisation, who will be able to prove that landlordism is either equitable or expedient. I am firmly convinced that there is neither equity nor expediency in the private ownership of the soil. I have never heard any argument advanced by any Liberal to prove that such was the case. On the contrary, we know that if many of their leaders could but shake themselves free from the trammels of the present laws and traditions they would come forward in a much more open manner than they do now, and join hands with the Nationalisers. The iniquity of the present system is indisputable, and I want to know if there be any expediency in it. I think Liberals will be, and are gradually being, compelled to admit that there is only political expediency in it. I doubt if there be any large section of the party who will venture to say, if pressed, that there is a single reason why the present system should be preserved, except it be only the few landlords themselves who benefit so greatly by the ownership of the soil. It seems to me that every one who has looked into the state of this country cannot fail to arrive at this conclusion:—That immense evils and great danger threaten the future political position of the empire, and that they are connected directly with landlordism. Do we find that the agriculture of the country has been advanced, or that our valleys and dales are well cultivated; that we have, as we should have, a teeming population retaining a hold upon their horses? No, I fear that the practical

fact is this, that now, more than ever, the system is chasing the people from the soil; and why? For no more respectable reason than that there have been placed upon the statute books, laws, made by landlords, solely for the benefit of the rich. What is the advantage to agricultural districts? We have laborers, but what is their position? We have it on the authority of Mr. Jesse Collings, and he is a great authority upon the condition of the laborers of England, that their average wage is 13/- per week. What have they to do for this? As a matter of fact it is by them that year by year there is created the enormous sum of £250,000,000 sterling as the proceeds of the cultivation of the soil of this country. When I was in the East the other day, I met a Persian peasant who bitterly complained to me that the country is over-run by the great nobles, and that the laborer only receives the wages of a slave. I asked why the laborers stood this. He replied:—"Because the laws were made by the nobles, who were backed by the police and the armies." Well, I must confess that at that moment a feeling of shame came over me as I thought that the picture drawn by that wild Persian peasant was dreadfully like one which could be portrayed in this free and independent kingdom. Well now, the question is: How is the land to be brought back into the hands of those who ought to possess it, viz.: the People? I must at once confess that I do not particularly believe in the legacy of the origin of the present titles to the land which the existing landlords possess. This at all events ought to enter into the political consideration of the matter. I do not suppose that there is one in this room who does not know whence they were derived. A lot of corrupt nobles made a corrupt bargain with a dissolute king that they should have the fee-simple of the land on condition that they supported him in levying taxes upon the labouring classes. Indirect taxation amounts to more than one-half of the annual Budget. Say a Budget amounts to £100,000,000, no less than £50,000,000 are raised upon—what? Practically speaking, upon tea, beer, spirits, and tobacco: which are consumed to as large an extent by the men who receive 13s. per week as by the man of £250,000 a year. What is the effect upon the labouring classes? For every shilling he spends on tea he pays threepence into the Treasury for the support of Government; for every shilling on spirits he pays ninepence, and for every shilling on tobacco he pays to the Treasury no less than tenpence. I think that after these figures you will agree with me that the burdens which have been placed upon the people affect us all to-day; but they cannot ask to be allowed to interpose between us and any general scheme which may be proposed. I dare say many of you remember, that on a particular occasion, less than two years ago



there was a suggestion from a very high authority that if any man alleges that the land should be nationalised with compensation to the landlords, it would be folly, and that if he suggested it ought to be without compensation, then it would be robbery. I allege that there is a way by which neither the one nor the other need be committed. As a matter of fact we have a way paved for us by the present Tory Government. They have a great wish to fill the pockets of the Irish landlords, and consequently, have unconsciously pointed out a way of which I hope Nationalisers will take full advantage to teach people that neither robbery nor folly need be committed. I, of course, allude to the Ashbourne Acts of 1885 and 1888, whereby millions from the British taxpayers were placed at the disposal of the Irish administration for the purpose of buying out the Irish landlords. But the new tenant purchasers are to be in the position of small landlords. To that extent we must all absolutely object, but I am going to show how, since a landlord Government has introduced it for their own benefit, we may turn the matter around for ours. An immense Bill is now almost through the House of Commons for expending another £30,000,000 for the same purpose, but the State will get nothing in return. Now, without exposing its vices, which are many, I will take the Bill now passing through the Commons as the most convenient means of expounding my views. It establishes the principle that the British Government should give its credit to enable purchasers to borrow money at  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. for 49 years, during which time they are to pay off the principal. It means that a great empire goes to a tenant who would have otherwise to borrow at 5 per cent., and says, I will lend you money at  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. for 49 years; you will have only to repay it by instalments which will be below the normal rent. Well now, I calculated the other day in the House of Commons, much to Mr. Balfour's astonishment, that if we take the £30,000,000 alone the boon to the Irish tenants is enormous upon that one transaction alone, as the difference between the interest at 5 per cent. and  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. is no less than £67,000,000 in the 49 years. I need scarcely state that British credit is built up entirely by the working classes. If we give this great boon, why should we not retain for ourselves the fee-simple of the land? (Cheers).

The resolution was seconded by MISS HELEN TAYLOR, who said:—It is indeed true that the time is very near when the question of Land Nationalisation will become the one question of practical politics. We are waiting only to get rid of the Irish question. That has been created in past time by the treason of the Liberal party to Liberal principles. Though I believe the restoration of the land to the people will do more for the improvement of the people than the mere granting of Home Rule, never-

theless, I hold it to be a sacred duty to give Ireland Home Rule first for this reason, that every honest nation will pay its debts before seeking its own advantage. If we look back through history, it will be found that a certain period was always required to get the people accustomed to new ideas. It is nearly 50 years ago since my step-father published an abstract from Coleridge's doctrines on the land question; and Mr. John Stuart Mill laid down in the thirties of this century, as the charter of the land question, two great principles upon which we desire to go:— First: that "the land which no man made, no man has a right to own." Second: that "the land which is essential to the existence of all, cannot justly be monopolised by any." One may go into abstract morals and justice, and prove all this. Go to the Bible; open the Book of Leviticus and the New Testament, and it will be found that our views are consonant with both the Jewish and Christian religions. I disagree only with one assertion made by Mr. Kay. I deny that ownership of the land is legal. By the law of this land, no man can own one inch of the soil. It is still the property of the nation, and it is held in trust by the Crown as representing the people, and I ask Liberals above all, to take care they do not allow their representatives to vote away that legal and constitutional right of the people to the land which God gave to them.

Let us look back, briefly, upon the history of these Islands, and see how our ancestors collectively owned the land they lived upon. Prior to the time of William the Conqueror, the soil belonged to the people. Sprinkled all over the land were communities until holding touched holding. They governed each their own land, and laid down the conditions upon which each family might use land, which, however, was common property. To-day the City still retains the name of the chief of the village community, Alderman, or Elderman, and side by side, the women sat with the men upon their Communal Councils, and voted the distribution of the land in fair and equal portions. One family may have lost a member during the year, then less land was wanted; another little mouth may have come into existence, then more land was required. I have often thought that the rich men of this country would never have been allowed to steal the land from the people if the men had not first deprived the women of their rights. During the progress of time, the people have lost the practical use of the land, but let us never forget that, up to the present, they have not lost the theoretical right to it. But how came it that the use of it has been lost? If I give an historical answer, I fear you will think I must be exaggerating; and you know while a man may exaggerate, a woman must not. I will therefore answer the question in the words of a great constitutional lawyer, who

was also a Conservative. I allude to the late Sir Henry Maine; I take it from his admirable little book upon Village Communities. After pointing out that the people once owned the land practically as well as theoretically, he asked: "How came it that the people who once owned the land by law, and still do so, have lost its use practically?" He answers that it came about through various causes, the principal one being the "mistakes of the lawyers." But I will add what he omits, viz.: that the mistakes of the lawyer are generally to the advantage of those who pay the lawyer. By degrees, we lost much by the system of which we read in Wordsworth:

"The good old rule, the simple plan,  
That they shall take who have the power,  
And they shall keep who can"

The rich men, by the supineness of other men, gradually appropriated the birthright of the nation. They drove the women from the Councils, the people from their homes, and men lost their political rights. All the big men went to Parliament to make laws for themselves. If I knew of any other word in the English language I would use it, but I know of no other to imply what I mean than theft. Prior to all this there were large tracts of land and green commons on which the people had the right to feed their cattle, geese, &c., and with that they could give their children more animal food in the year than the agricultural laborer now gets from year's end to year's end. To-day, and I challenge those who live in the country to deny it, a laborer is sometimes unable to get a drop of milk for a dying child. A relative of mine has told me that once she was knocked up in the night by a neighbour, who asked for milk for a dying child. None could be found except a little at the rectory, where a cow was kept. I want to remind you of this one fact. I remember hearing the late Mr. Fawcett say that "the agricultural people of England were worse off now, practically, than at the beginning of the century, because the land had been stolen from the people, and is still being stolen down to the present day, by the placing of fences round large tracts; but those who are sufficiently educated in law know that the people may go and knock those fences down. If those who do so are brought before a magistrate, even he, a magistrate, knows that he who raised the fence is breaking the law of the country, and those who knock it down are carrying it out." You are aware that when those private Acts of Parliament were passed to enable the rich man to make enclosures, Mr. Fawcett opposed them. He asked, What are you going to give the people instead of their commons? The landlords replied that they were giving them ample compensation in the shape of six acres of their own land. It is as if some one, putting his hand in my pocket and taking out a sovereign, should give me back sixpence as compensa-

tion. When we talk about getting back the land on equitable conditions I feel inclined to counsel the people never to descend to the level of the rulers of the country. God forbid that I should counsel the people to mete out measure for measure to the landlords. We are 35,000,000 of people in a country which belongs to a few thousands only. Tell me of anything for which we do not want land. Do you not want it to stand upon, or for a cotton factory? If you want a house to live in, must it not be put upon land? and yet for all purposes you have to pay toll to some landlord in the shape of an exorbitant rent, and thus manufactured articles are obliged to be sold at exorbitant prices. The ground-rent of this city amounts to about one-sixth of its income. Think of the little shopkeepers who murmur at the School Board rate and yet have to pay one-sixth of his profit to the landlord. Who are these landlords? The descendants of men who stole the land. Many a time a poor man is in want of 1d. to pay the weekly school fee for his child. He cannot get two rooms in London for less than 6s. per week, and yet 1s. out of that has to go, to whom? To the Duke of Westminster, or the Duke of Bedford. Down in the poor parts of this town two or three children may get a good dinner daily for 12d. per week. This question of the land is the great question, for if manufactures were liberated and landlordism still left, it would all go back in a few years to the few men who have, virtually, the right to say, "Pay me the rent I ask, or leave this country." The landlords have squeezed the Irish who have left their country. The iniquity they have done is coming back on their own heads. The subscriptions received by the National League from America, are not the subscriptions of Americans, but those of the Irish children who have been driven from their homes. I have known the rent to be paid out of the money worked for by girls in America. The Irish love their country and their homes more than the English do; and I have heard an Irishman say, "I would go and join my children in America. but my wife lies in the churchyard there, and I wish to lie there with her."

These iniquities cry to Heaven for redress, and if you do not give it before another generation you will have to pay the penalty. To women, as well as men, I would appeal, for it is a question of homes for your children, for health, decency and morality. Men who have hearts within them must stand up, not for themselves, but to protect their children who are to live after them; they must say, Our ancestors permitted the land to be stolen away from us, but we will signalise our generation by claiming back again that which morality, the Bible, and political economy say belongs to us, and will take care that it shall be an inheritance for our children. (Loud cheers).

The resolution was carried unanimously, and after the usual vote of thanks to the Chairman, the meeting terminated.

**LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY.**  
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE FROM JUNE 1ST, 1890, TO MAY 31ST, 1891.

	£	s	d	£	s	d
To Balance brought forward .. .. .				166	6	5
„ Contributions ... .. .						
„ General Fund ... .. .	363	6	6			
„ Special Fund, 1890 ... .. .	79	2	6			
„ Van Fund ... .. .	140	2	0			
„ Land and Labor Fund .. .. .	23	0	0			
				605	11	0
„ Sale of Literature .. .. .				34	19	5½
„ Sale of Pony and Trap ... .. .				17	0	0
				£823	16	10½
By Rent of Office .. .. .				30	0	0
„ Office Expenses ... .. .				8	7	1
„ Office Furniture and Fittings				4	19	8
„ Secretary ... .. .				75	0	0
„ Clerical Assistance ... .. .				1	11	6
„ Hire of Room and Reporting				1	10	6
„ Printing ... .. .				92	9	9
„ Paper ... .. .				15	6	0
„ Publication of Newspaper ...				2	0	0
„ Literature ... .. .				5	11	0
„ Postage and Telegrams ... ..				45	9	11
„ Lectures Halls, Printing, &c				21	3	1
„ Summer Meetings, 1890 ... ..	78	13	1			
„ Pony and Trap and Cycle for						8
same ... .. .	39	0	0			
„ Van, Mare, Harness and Outfit	118	4	8			
„ Ditto Working Expenses, in-				84	16	0
cluding Colportage ... .. .						
„ Stationery and Advertising ...					203	0
„ Incidental ... .. .					2	0
„ Balance in hand of Treasurer				194	6	5
„ Balance in hand of Secretary				2	10	4½
					196	16
					9½	
				£823	16	10½

Outstanding Liabilities for Rent, Printing, &c, amount  
to £50 10s. 0d

Examined and found correct, { (Signed) H G COOPER,  
11th June, 1891 JOHN McILRAITH, M A, LLB



## SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS—Continued.

			£	s	d.				£	s	d.
Downar, G. F.	...	...	0	10	0	Hayes, F. W.	...	...	0	2	6
Downer, Mr.	...	...	0	1	0	H R G.	...	...	1	0	0
Doyle, P.	...	...	0	1	0	Herron, J S	...	...	0	2	6
Earp, Oswald, M A.	...	...	5	0	0	Higgs, G	...	...	0	1	0
Edwards, R	...	...	*5	0	0	Hillier, J W	...	...	0	1	0
Elliott, T. H.	...	...	0	1	0	Hindley, J. F.	...	...	0	2	6
Ellis, Rev. J....	...	...	0	10	0	Holah, E	...	...	0	2	6
Erwood, S A.	...	...	†1	0	0	Holah, Mrs E	...	...	*0	2	6
Evans, E T	...	...	*4	0	0	Holden, Isaac, M P	...	...	*0	10	0
Eyre, J.	...	...	0	2	6	Hole, J.	...	...	0	10	0
Farrant, J. J.	...	...	*0	5	0	Holling, W	...	...	0	1	0
Fayard, A	...	...	0	3	0	Holyoake, G J.	...	...	0	1	0
Firmen, C	...	...	0	2	6	Hood, Rev. A	...	...	0	1	0
Flear, F. W.	...	...	0	1	0	Hopps, Rev. John Page	...	...	0	2	6
Fleming, P	...	...	0	1	0	Hull, J	...	...	0	10	0
Fletcher, R.	...	...	0	2	0	Hull, Miss H.	...	...	0	2	6
Flurscheim, Michael	...	...	0	10	0	Hyder, Joseph	...	...	0	2	6
Forteath, Mrs	...	...	0	5	0	Jameson, W	...	...	0	5	0
Fox, W. S., C C	...	...	*1	0	0	Jameson, Mrs W	...	...	0	2	6
Francis, A H.	...	...	0	2	6	Johnston, T C C	...	...	0	5	0
Frank, W H.	...	...	0	10	0	"J M J"	...	...	0	0	6
Freeman, F	...	...	0	7	6	Jones, J	...	...	0	1	0
Freeman, Mr	...	...	0	1	0	Jones, J M	...	...	0	2	6
"Friend"—Rhydymain	...	...	0	2	6	Jones, Rev Dr. Pan	...	...	0	10	0
Gaul, W M	...	...	0	1	0	Jones, R G.	...	...	0	2	6
Gibbon, R. W.	...	...	0	2	6	Jones, Thos., C C.	...	...	1	1	0
Gillender, R.	...	...	*0	1	0	Jones, T	...	...	0	1	0
Girdlestone, E. D., M A	...	...	1	3	6	Jones, W G	...	...	0	2	6
Glen, J.	...	...	0	1	0	Jordan, L.	...	...	0	2	6
Glendinning, A	...	...	0	5	0	Kay, W	...	...	0	2	0
Glynn, L A.	...	...	0	1	0	Kendall Rev W C	...	...	0	1	0
Gold, A	...	...	0	5	0	Kennard, Rev J F....	...	...	0	2	6
Gould, C W.	...	...	0	1	0	Kitchener, H W.	...	...	0	2	6
Gould, Edwin	...	...	0	2	6	Kitson, W.	...	...	0	5	0
Grainger, W. H.	...	...	0	2	6	Knight, G J	...	...	0	5	0
Grant, J H	...	...	0	7	0	Knott, G	...	...	0	1	6
Greenwood, J A.	...	...	0	1	0	Knowlton, J	...	...	0	2	0
Griffith, Mr	...	...	0	1	0	"K. B." (Anon.)	...	...	0	5	0
Grigsby, E	...	...	0	1	0	Kurtz, A G.	...	...	1	0	0
Guttery, Rev Thomas	...	...	2	2	0	Laughton, W. H.	...	...	0	2	6
Guyton, J Cyril	...	...	0	2	6	Leech, Mrs. E.	...	...	0	10	0
Gwydrosydd	...	...	0	2	6	Lewis, A	...	...	0	2	6
Hammer, C E	...	...	0	2	6	Lewis, W. B	...	...	0	1	0
Hannah, R	...	...	5	0	0	Linde, Dr.	...	...	0	2	0
Harbert, F. P.	...	...	0	10	0	Linde, Mrs	...	...	0	2	0
Harries, J.	...	...	0	10	0	Lockton, G U.	...	...	0	1	0
Harris, C	...	...	0	2	6	Lockwood, H.	...	...	0	2	6
Harris, J	...	...	0	2	6	Lovitt, F.	...	...	0	1	0
Hawke, J	...	...	0	2	6	Macrae, Rev. D.	...	...	0	5	0
Hawkins, H...	...	...	1	0	0	McArthur, J	...	...	0	2	6
						McDowell, S P.	...	...	0	1	0

## SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS—Continued.

			£	s	d				£	s	d
Marrlott, A. J	...	...	0	5	6	Powell, A.	...	...	0	2	6
Marshall, C. H	...	...	0	1	0	Pugh, J.	...	...	0	2	6
Martino, Mrs A. B.	...	...	1	0	0	Pyott, J	...	...	0	5	0
Mason, A	...	...	0	1	0	Ransom, A	...	...	0	6	0
Maxwell, W.	...	...	0	1	0	Ratcliffe, Rev W H, M A.	...	...	0	10	6
"M M"	...	...	0	2	6	Ratcliffe, F A	...	...	0	1	6
Middlemast, J H.	...	...	0	2	6	Rayner, J.	...	...	1	0	0
Miers, Mrs	...	...	0	5	0	Read, Chas	...	...	0	2	0
"M K R"	...	...	0	10	0	Reed, T.	...	...	0	2	6
Milbourne, Capt. T	...	...	0	10	0	Reeve, D'Arcy W.	...	...	1	20	0
Miles, W.	...	...	0	1	0	Reynolds, A. E.	...	...	100	0	0
Millar, J	...	...	0	2	6	Reynolds, A J	...	...	0	10	0
Muller, Robt. ..	...	...	1	0	0	Reynolds, A J	...	...	0	5	0
			5	0	0	Reynolds, C	...	...	0	10	0
			5	0	0	Reynolds, G	...	...	0	5	0
Mitchell, J.	...	...	0	5	0	Reynolds, G	...	...	1	0	0
Moberly, H G.	...	...	1	0	0	Reynolds, W.	...	...	1	0	0
Monteith, J A	...	...	0	2	6	Reynolds, W.	...	...	0	10	0
Moody, G.	...	...	0	1	0	Richards, W....	...	...	0	3	6
Morgan, E	...	...	0	2	6	Rigby, T A	...	...	0	5	0
Morgan, Morgan	...	...	0	3	0	Roberts, H.	...	...	0	1	0
Morris, J	...	...	0	0	6	Roberts, K	...	...	0	3	6
Mousley, G	...	...	0	2	6	Roberts, T	...	...	0	2	6
Muir, M M Pattison, M.A.	...	...	1	0	0	Robinson, Edgar	...	...	1	0	0
Nacroji, Dadabhai	...	...	0	5	0	Robinson, J J.	...	...	0	2	6
Newman, Prof	"Land & Labor"	...	10	0	0	Roff, J E	...	...	0	5	0
F W.		...	5	0	0	Rose, D	...	...	0	1	0
		...	13	0	0	Ross, J McG, J P.	...	...	1	0	0
Nicolson, A	...	...	0	10	0	Rossiter, R	...	...	0	2	6
Nightingale, W H	...	...	0	5	0	Round, W	...	...	0	1	0
Nixon, W.	...	...	0	1	6	Russell, W R	...	...	0	2	6
Norris, G.	...	...	0	5	0	Samuel, D E.	...	...	0	2	0
"N Q"	...	...	0	1	0	Samuel, T	...	...	0	1	0
O'Brien, J T	...	...	0	2	6	Saunders, G F.	...	...	0	1	0
Ogilvy, A J	...	...	55	0	0	Scott, Rev T. W.	...	...	0	5	0
Ogilvy, Mrs. A. J.	...	...	0	10	0	Skerritt, Miss	...	...	0	2	6
Orme, J	...	...	0	1	0	Simpson, F	...	...	0	2	0
O'Toole J	...	...	0	2	6	Smallman, C	...	...	0	3	6
Owen, D	...	...	0	1	0	Smith, V	...	...	0	1	0
Owen, R.	...	...	0	10	6	Social Science Society, Bir-	...	...	0	15	0
Paghardni, Tito	...	...	1	0	0	mingham	...	...	5	5	0
Parry, D	...	...	0	1	0	Soper, F. L.	...	...	0	2	6
Payne, A W	...	...	0	5	0	Soul, E M	...	...	0	1	0
Perkins, C H	...	...	0	5	0	Souther, W J	...	...	0	1	0
Petch, R	...	...	0	1	0	Spence, J	...	...	0	1	0
Phillips, S E, F.C.S	...	...	0	5	0	Spensley, Rev. W.	...	...	0	2	6
Pickering, T.	...	...	0	2	6	Stewart, A	...	...	0	4	0
Pollitt, J E.	...	...	0	2	6	Sturton, J A.	...	...	0	2	6
Pontis Mrs R	...	...	0	2	6	Stoffel, Jan	...	...	0	2	0
Portbury, W.	...	...	0	1	0						
Porteous, G.	...	...	0	2	6						



SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS — *Continued*

			**					
	£	s. d.				£	s. d.	
Summerhayes, Dr. W.	...	0 10 0	Wallace, Dr A R.	...	...	*2 0 0		
Swain, E. J.	...	0 1 0	Warder, W	...	...	0 1 0		
Swain, G T	...	0 1 0	Waterfall, W., J P.	...	...	1 0 0		
Swallow, T. C.	...	0 2 6	Waters, M.	...	...	0 1 6		
Swinburne, J.	...	2 0 0	Watson, C	...	...	0 2 6		
		*10 0 0	Watson, H	...	...	0 1 0		
Swinton, A C		4 4 0	Watts, J	...	...	1 0 0		
	Unearned Increment	5 16 0	Webster, W.	...	...	0 2 6		
Taylor, Miss Helen	...	33 0 0	Weston, F A.	...	...	0 2 6		
Taylor, Mr.	...	0 1 0	Whittingham, T. H	...	...	0 2 6		
Tebb, Mrs W.	...	2 2 0	Wicksteed, C.	...	...	0 5 0		
Tbaker, H	...	0 5 0	Wight, G O.	...	...	0 10 0		
Thomas, G H	...	0 1 0	Wilkins, J	...	...	0 1 0		
Thomas, J.	...	0 3 0	Wilkinson, Mr.	...	...	0 1 0		
Thomas, E.	...	0 1 0	Wilson, T	...	...	†0 2 6		
Thomas, W.	...	†.2 0 0 6	Wilms, E. J.	...	...	0 10 0		
Threlfall, T. R.	...	0 5 0	Wilms, L.	...	...	0 1 0		
Toms J R H.	...	1 1 0	Wilms, W.	...	...	0 2 0		
Trousen, J. W.	...	0 2 6	Winfrey, R. C C	...	...	0 2 6		
Turle, Dr.	...	0 10 0	Wood, A. J.	...	...	*0 2 6		
Turnbull, J P.	...	0 10 0				0 2 0		
Unwin, Wilham, M A.	...	1 0 0	Wood, B S	...	...	0 1 0		
Uttley, Stuart	...	0 5 0	Woodmansee, J.	...	...	0 2 6		
Voules, Rev. S C.	...	0 2 6	"C W"	...	...	1 1 0		
"V J."	...	0 2 0	Young, C.	...	...	0 2 6		
Waite, A.	...	0 1 0	Cambridge Radical Club	...	...	0 5 0		
Walkden, C	...	0 3 0	Highworth Liberal Assoc.	...	...	0 5 0		
Walker, T. F.	...	*10 0 0	Prudhoe Liberal Association	...	...	0 10 0		
		5 0 0	Ystalyfera Meeting	...	...	0 9 6		

# CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY.

I.—MEMBERSHIP—Any person approving the principle of Nationalising the Land by equitable and constitutional means, may become a member of the Society by subscribing annually to its funds. A Donation of five guineas confers Life Membership.

II.—MANAGEMENT—The management of the affairs of the Society shall be vested in a General Council, an Executive Committee and Officers.

III.—ELECTION—The General Council and the Officers (who must also be Members of the Council,) shall be elected by the Members at the Annual General Meeting. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers and not more than twelve Members, elected by the General Council from their own body. Vacancies, whether in the Officers, General Council or the Executive Committee, occurring between the Annual Meetings may be filled up by the General Council, who may also add to their own number.

IV.—ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING—A General Meeting of the Members shall be held annually, as soon after the end of April as practicable, when a report of the proceedings of the Society, and a Statement of Accounts for the past year, shall be presented by the Executive Committee for adoption. Twelve clear days before the Annual Meeting, the Secretary shall forward to each Member, with notice of the Meeting, a list of Members to be proposed as Officers and General Council. In the event of a doubtful or disputed election, a ballot shall forthwith be taken, by the direction of the Chairman, or at the request of ten Members present.

V.—SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING—A Special General Meeting may be called by the direction of the President, the General Council, the Executive Committee, or at the written request of not less than ten Members, addressed to the Secretary, who shall then give twelve clear days' notice of such Meeting, with particulars of the business to be brought before the Meeting, and no other business shall be transacted at such Special General Meeting than that for which it shall have been convened.

VI.—MEETINGS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE—The Executive Committee shall meet at such times and places as they may think expedient, three clear days' notice being given of each meeting. At such meetings all the affairs of the Society may be conducted, except those specially reserved for, or referred to the General Council, or General Meeting of Members by either of those bodies. Five Members shall form a quorum.

VII.—MEETINGS OF GENERAL COUNCIL—The General Council may be convened at not less than seven clear days' notice, by direction of the President or Executive Committee, or at the written request of five of its own Members, or at such times as the Council itself may fix. The business of the Meeting to be specified in the notice thereof. Seven Members shall form a quorum.

VIII.—BRANCH ASSOCIATIONS—Societies may be admitted as Branches of the Land Nationalisation Society. The Executive shall have power to make and vary, from time to time, regulations for the formation or admission of such Branch Societies.

IX.—POWER OF DISASSOCIATION.—The General Council, by a vote of not less than two-thirds of the voting Members present, at a Meeting specially convened for the purpose, may disassociate from the Society, any Branch or affiliated Society, or any Member, official or not official, whose connection therewith they may deem sufficiently prejudicial to its interests.

X.—ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION OR RULES—No alteration, or alterations of the Society's Constitution or Rules shall take place, unless by vote of two-thirds of the Members present at a General Meeting convened for the purpose, twelve clear days' notice being given.

**3. Will you press for the rating of ground rents and values for all local purposes?**

In a statement submitted to the Town Holdings Committee, the details are given of 59 cases in various parts of the Metropolis. It is claimed for these cases that they are fair samples of the whole, and they show that of the total value of property for rating purposes throughout the *Metropolitan* area

THE VALUE OF LAND IS £418,000,000,  
AND  
THE VALUE OF BUILDINGS £212,000,000.

The owners of the £418,000,000 for land pay no rates, and the only taxation to which they are subjected is the Income-tax and a nominal Land-tax, the total of both being less than half-a-million per annum.

Houses are charged with rates which average 5s. 3d. in the £, not only upon the annual value of the buildings but also upon the annual value of the land. In addition to the rates they pay House-duty and Income-tax. Thus:—

LAND WORTH £418,000,000 PAYS £500,000  
*In Rates and Taxes, and*  
BUILDINGS WORTH £212,000,000 PAY £7,000,000.

“Every permanent improvement of the soil, every railway and road, every bettering of the general condition of society, every facility given for production; every stimulus supplied to consumption raises rent. The landowner sleeps, but thrives.”—*Prof. Thorold Rogers.*

“A tax upon ground rents would not raise the rents of houses.”—*Adam Smith* (“Wealth of Nations,” v. ii.).

“A tax on rent falls wholly on the landlord. There are no means by which he can shift the burden upon anyone else.”—*John Stuart Mill* (“Political Economy,” v. iii., sect. 2).

**4. Will you press for such measures as will give prompt legislative effect to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes that vacant land should be assessed to local rates at 4 per cent. on its selling value?**

“At present, land available for building in the neighbourhood of our populous centres, though its capital value is very great, is

## LAND COMMON PROPERTY.

By J. SKETCHLEY.

THE demand for the nationalisation of the land is not a new demand. Long before the close of the last century the demand was heard. And that demand has grown stronger as the evils of private property in land have increased, and the nature of such property has been better understood. Originally private property in land was impossible. Without the air we breathe and the light of day we cannot live. Without the earth we can have neither food nor clothing. And the earth, like the air we breathe, and the light of day, was the free gift to the whole human race of that eternal power which directs the atom and controls the whole of universal nature. And the same right must belong equally to every subsequent generation. Every human being, whatever the age or whatever the clime, has an equal right to life. No one has a right to deprive another of the means of life. No one generation has a right to determine the conditions under which another generation shall live. The present can never be bound by the sayings and the doings of any past generation, or any number of generations. No one has or can have a right to monopolise the earth or any portion thereof more than the air we breathe, or the light of day. And here I may give a passage or two from Judge Blackstone bearing upon this point. He says:—"We think it enough that our titles derived by the grant of the former proprietor, by descent from our ancestors, or by the last will and testament of the dying owner; not caring to reflect that (accurately and strictly speaking) there is no foundation in nature, or in natural law, why a set of words on parchment should convey the dominion of land." And again he says:—"It is well if the mass of mankind will obey the laws when made, without scrutinising too nicely into the reasons of making them. But when law is considered not only as a practice, but also as a rational science, it cannot be improper or useless to examine more deeply the rudiments and grounds of these positive constitutions of society." Archdeacon Paley tells us that there can be no doubt that, originally, land was common property. "There are no traces," says he, "of property in land in Cæsar's account of Britain; little of it in the history of the Jewish Patriarchs; none of it among the nations of North America; the Scythians are expressly said to

have appropriated their houses and cattle, but to have left their land in common." Sir George Campbell shows that in all the different States in the East of Europe, as well as among the Hindoos, land was common property. W. Cobbett, in his "Legacy to Labourers," says:—"The earth, the water, the air, and all that in them was, were the common and general property of mankind; and as to any particular spot of earth, piece of water, or tree, or other vegetable or living creature, one man could have no more claim to any of them than any other man had." I might refer to many other well-known writers on this important subject were it necessary to do so. We know how land became what is termed private property in this country. If we turn to Ireland, and to Scotland, we find that the idea that the land is the property of the people cannot be got rid of. And it is well known that it was to root out that idea that the wholesale burnings and evictions took place in Scotland on the estates of the Sutherlands, &c., &c. But it is said that by occupation and cultivation labour is inseparably mixed with the soil, and that therefore the occupier has a right to the soil so cultivated. But a moment's reflection will show to any one that such occupation and cultivation can give no right to the soil itself. The spontaneous productions of nature belong to any one who gives the labour requisite in gathering them. You may take the fish of the sea, or the fowl of the air, and the labour so bestowed gives the right to their appropriation; and, in like manner, the cultivation of any portion of the earth's surface by one man or a body of men gives to him or them the right to appropriate the products which are the result of their labour. But in taking the fish from the sea or the fowl from the air you do not appropriate either the air or the water; and in appropriating the products of the soil you have cultivated, and which are the result of your labour, you have no right to appropriate the soil itself. The land is the property of the whole people, not excepting even the poorest. It belonged to all past generations; it belongs to the present; and will belong to all future generations as long as the race exists. Every human being has a life interest in the soil. Of that he can never be deprived. But we are asked, what would you do with the present owners of the land? Strictly speaking, *owners* there are none, and never can be. But the holders of land you may divide into two classes, those who can show a title based upon purchase, and those who cannot. And first with regard to those who can show a title based upon purchase. That which never had a right to begin can never have a right to continue, and that which never could legitimately be held as private property could never legitimately be bought or sold as private property. Nevertheless, where such title can be shown their right to some compensation may be recognised, but in no case should it exceed the purchase-money actually paid (from which should be deducted the net rent already received, and when the net rent received is less than the purchase-money, the difference to be paid as compensation, and the value of unexhausted improvements, if any. But those who can show no title based upon

purchase, and who have received the rents for generations, in very many cases for centuries, in all such cases no compensation is or can be due. Turn over the roll of our great proprietors, and how many of them can show a title based upon purchase? They are but a few indeed. Yet

	Acres
400 peers and peeresses hold .. .. .	5,728,979
1,288 great landowners have .. .. .	8,497,699
2,529 others hold .. .. .	4,319,271
10,888 hold .. .. .	51,885,185
2,184 hold .. .. .	28,875,522
955 hold .. .. .	29,663,849
421 hold .. .. .	22,880,755

If you turn to Scotland, 171 hold 11,029,229 acres; 330 hold two-thirds of the land; and 1,700 over nine-tenths of the whole country. Take the Bedfords, the Beresfords, and the Devonshires. Can any of them show a title based on purchase? No. It is true there may be exceptions, one of which I will here give. The Duke of Richmond is said to be an exception. This family has descended, as most people know, from an illegitimate child of Charles the Second, by the Duchess of Portsmouth. Well, of course the royal child must live, and in 1676 a tax of 1s. per chaldron was imposed on all coal exported from the Tyne and consumed in England. This tax was for the benefit of the child. This tax was levied till 1799, when an Act was passed to commute the tax into a yearly pension of £19,000. That pension was paid until 1825, when another Act was passed to commute the pension into a lump sum of £490,833 11s. 6d. But instead of paying the then noble Duke the above sum, Government gave him Government stock to the amount of £633,333 6s. 9d. The whole of that stock was sold, with the exception of a very small amount, and invested in land. Now, the tax was public money, the pension was public money, the commuted sum was public money, and the Government stock belonged to the public. And as the lands were bought with what the Government stock realised, the lands are as much public property as if they were simply given by royal grant from the public lands. But look at the result. The Duke has estates in five counties amounting to 277,398 acres, and a yearly rental of £79,675, instead of the pension of £19,000, being a difference of £60,672. What compensation can there be due to the noble Duke? But look at the position to which this system has reduced the country. In Ireland millions of acres turned into waste, and the population reduced from 8,000,000 to 5,000,000. In Scotland over two million acres turned into deer forest, and tens of thousands of families evicted to make room for red deer. In 1831 we had over 19,000,000 acres of arable land; in 1880, only 15,651,000. In 1869 we had 3,981,089 acres under wheat; in 1880, only 3,065,895 acres. In 1841 we grew food enough for 24,280,000 of our population, and required foreign supplies for only 1,200,000. In 1880 we grew enough for only 12,152,000, and depended on foreign supplies for more than 22,000,000.

And is this state of things to continue? Is a mere handful of men to continue to take their £150,000,000 a year as rent, drive away the cultivators of the soil, and make Englishmen dependent on the foreigner for the bread they eat? But we are sometimes told that England cannot maintain her population. At any rate, to-day she does not. But what said the late Alderman Mechi some few years ago [see Hoyle's Resources of British Empire, p. 18]? "What margin," said he, "is there for improvement in British agriculture? I have tested it by comparative results, and find that, if all the land of the kingdom, 50,000,000 acres, which is equal in quality to mine, produced as much as mine does per acre, our agricultural produce would be increased by the amount of £421,000,000 annually." Why, then, should England be dependent on the foreigner? Let us then restore the land to the people. Let the ground rents be paid into the National Exchequer. Let fixity of tenure by lease be secured to every cultivator. Let all indirect taxes cease. On this question let there be no compromise. Let principle, not expediency, be our guide. Let the happiness of the whole people, not a part, however large, be our aim. And we shall not have to wait many years before the cry of The land for the people, will resound from one end of the country to the other.

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JOIN THE ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE, FIELD VEGETABLES,  
Secretary, 8 Duke Street, Adlphi, London, W.C.

OBJECT.—The Abolition of Landlordism.

METHOD.—The Abolition of all Taxes upon Labour, and the Products of Labour and the Earnings of Labour; and the Increase of Taxation upon Land Values until the whole annual value of land is taken in taxation for public purposes.

Minimum Subscription.—One Shilling a year.

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# MUNICIPAL CANDIDATE'S CATECHISM.

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[The various bodies entrusted with the Local Government of this country—Town Councils, County Councils, Vestries, Local Boards of Health, School Boards, and the like—are elected not to make laws, but to carry out laws already made by Parliament. But it is important to secure effective administration as well as just legislation. The following questions are put forward as *suggestions* for the "hecking" of candidates for municipal bodies.]

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Will you resist all proposals for the SALE of land which is now, or may hereafter be, in the possession of the [Town Council, or other local authority, as the case may be], or to "enfranchise" any leases now held from that body?

Will you advocate the LETTING of all such lands on perpetual leases at rents periodically revisable, so as to secure to the community the "unearned increment"?

A timely protest to the Charity Commissioners from some representative local body may often be of use in preventing the sale of charity lands, or the alienation of tithes, or the enfranchisement of leaseholds under charity trusts, and so preventing rights now held on public or semi-public trust from passing into private hands. The address of the Charity Commission is Whitehall, London, S.W. Before the sale of any charity lands an advertisement is always inserted in some newspaper, inviting persons objecting to communicate with the Commissioners.

Will you support a resolution in favour of an inquiry into the situation, area, and value of the Crown Lands in your district with a view of stopping the sale thereof into private hands and of preventing their loss to the Nation?

Will you use your best endeavours to protect the public in the use and enjoyment of all existing rights in commons, footpaths, roadside wastes, rights of way, fishings, and the like; and resist all attempts, from whatever quarter, to encroach upon them?



By clause 11 of the Local Government Act, 1888, it is enacted that "the County Council shall have the same powers as a highway board for preventing and removing obstructions, and for asserting the right of the public to the use and enjoyment of the roadside wastes." The alienation of commons, the stoppage of footpaths, and other encroachments on public rights, might often have been prevented in the past if the local community had possessed the means of making its protest heard through its elected representatives \*

**Will you do everything in your power to satisfy the demand for allotments within a reasonable distance of the labourers' homes, at a fair rent, and with security of tenure?**

The present law for the provision of allotments is slow, costly, complicated, and inefficient. Allotments are seldom obtainable in sufficient number, and the rent charged is seldom less than three times the rent paid by farmers for land of the same quality. Something, however, may be done under the existing law, and much more might be accomplished if local authorities would press for its amendment. But no solution of the allotment question will be final and satisfactory which does not enable the labourer to hold his land direct from the County Council or other local authority, and to pay his rent to the community instead of paying it into the pockets of private landlords.

**Will you insist upon lands, houses, or mansions occupied by the wealthy, being rated in proportion to their value as in the case of houses occupied by the working classes?**

**Will you move the [Town Council, &c.] at an early opportunity to demand from Parliament the power to assess land values to the rates for all local purposes?**

**Will you vigorously enforce all existing laws against the owners of insanitary property?**

**Will you demand from Parliament such a measure as will give prompt legislative effect to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, that vacant land should be assessed to local rates at 4 per cent. on its selling value?**

\* The National Footpath Preservation Society (41 Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.), and the Commons Preservation Society (Great College Street, Westminster, London, S.W.) assist in the preservation of public rights. Any communication on these subjects sent to the office of the English Land Restoration League will always receive attention.

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**JOIN THE ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE, Fredk. Verinder, Secretary, 8 Duke Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.**

**Minimum Subscription.—One Shilling a year.  
Specimen Leaflets and all information free on application.**

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**PAGE & PRATT, LIMITED, Printers, 57 & 7 Ludgate Circus Buildings, London, E.C.**

## A STORY ABOUT WIND-LORDS.

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"It is related that a certain Eastern potentate fell into the impetuous condition common to many of his predecessors, and set his wits to work to devise a remedy. A farmer of imposts, who had often aided him in this dilemma, came to his rescue. He offered him sixty thousand tomans for all the winds that should ever blow over Cashmere. The monarch at first affected to be staggered at the proposition. He was unable to find anything in precedents to warrant it, but although a believer in the doctrine that whatever is right, he was forced to admit that a monarch may introduce useful innovations. Of course it was assumed that he was the supreme owner and disposer of all things in his dominions, not only for his own brief, erratic span of life, but for all time, and so he came to the conclusion that as everything in the world had been sold which could be sold, there was no good reason why the winds, unstable though they might be, should be exempted if a purchaser could be found. After a proper amount of preliminary haggling, a sale was made, and the transaction legalised by all that signatures, seals, and parchment could do for it.

"Before the public had fairly got over laughing at the absurdity of this novel bargain, the owner of the wind issued a proclamation forbidding all persons in Cashmere from using his wind to turn their windmills, winnow their corn, propel their vessels, or employ it in any other manner, until they had first entered into agreements with him, and obtained leases for the various localities, covenanting to pay certain amounts for the privilege. Then the laughing turned to lamentation. The monarch met the torrent of petitions and complaints by affecting to deplore the circumstance. He could not foresee, of course, all that had occurred, but his sacred word was involved. Rulers of that type are usually very particular about their sacred word. Driven to desperation, the inhabitants, contributed the amount that had been paid for the wind, and tendered it to the sovereign so that this unheard-of transaction could be cancelled.

"The matter was not to be so easily arranged. The owner of the winds of Cashmere would not think of such a thing. He had acquired a vested right in them. Since it had become purchasable

the wind had greatly risen—in price at least. Wind stocks were on the upward market. The owner insisted that his title was good. He did not claim it merely by his right of discovery of the commercial value of the wind, or that he had been the first to pre-empt this privilege, but he had fairly bought it from the representative of government, and declared that his title was begirt, and founded on all that was sacred in law on the theory of eminent domain and supreme authority. It would be altogether unfair to ask him to surrender this valuable privilege for anything less than what it might bring him in case he should be allowed to keep it. The proposition of the people was merely a bald scheme of robbery. It was subversive of all property rights; was socialistic, agrarian, and revolutionary; and to force him to accept of a price so inadequate would strike a fatal blow at the best interests of society and undermine the whole fabric on which the rights of property rested.

“This reasoning was, of course, entirely conclusive to the monarch, who was undoubtedly the confederate of the farmer of imposts, but, as human endurance can only be stretched to certain limits, it was agreed between them that a fair price for the winds, at that date, would be ten times what was originally paid for it. This amount was finally raised by a long-suffering people, who merely exacted a promise from the commercial monarch that he would never sell the wind again, but permit it in God's providence to blow over them free and unrestricted as of yore.”

How absurd this tale appears! But, when we have done laughing at these foolish people of Cashmere, let us remember that Land is at least as necessary to life and labour, and is quite as much the free gift of Nature, as are the Winds of Heaven. Yet we have foolishly allowed nearly all the land (and a good deal of the water) of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, to become the private “property” of individuals; and some of these are now demanding “Compensation” before they will allow the people to use their own.

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[For the little story quoted above we are indebted to Mr W A Phillips' “Labour, Land, and Law A Search for the Missing Wealth of the Working Poor” (New York Scribner). The idea of making a charge for the use of the wind is not so extravagantly absurd as may at first sight appear. Many people now living can recall the time when the very light of Heaven was taxed to pay for war. The people were deprived of ventilation as well as of light by the Window-Tax, for it was forbidden to knock a hole in the wall of a room in case light should enter as well as “wind”]

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All who are willing to aid in circulating leaflets on the Land Question are earnestly requested to communicate with FREDK. VERINDER, Secretary of the ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE, 8 Duke Street, Adelphi, London, W.C., from whom specimens and all information may be obtained

# THE LAND FOR THE PEOPLE.

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A new principle has entered into practical politics, *i.e.*, **THE LAND QUESTION**, which is also the **LABOUR QUESTION**.

How to solve the **LABOUR QUESTION** ?

The **SINGLE TAX** will do it!

What do we mean by the **SINGLE TAX** ?

A tax on land values.

What do "single-tax men" advocate ?

The abolition of all taxes upon industry and the products of industry, and the taking by taxation upon land values, irrespective of improvements, of the annual rental value of all those various forms of natural opportunities embraced under the general term, Land.

They hold that to tax labour or its products is to discourage industry.

They hold that to tax land values to their full amount will render it impossible for any man to exact from others a price for the privilege of using those bounties of nature in which all living men have an equal right of use; that it will compel every individual controlling natural opportunities to either utilise them by the employment of labour, or abandon them to others; that it will thus provide opportunities of work for all men and secure to each the full reward of his labour; and that as a result involuntary poverty will be abolished, and the greed, intemperance, and vice that spring from poverty and the dread of poverty will be swept away.

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Join the **ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE**, and help to secure this great Social Reform.—Secretary: Fredk. Verinder, 8 Duke St., Adelphi, London, W.C. Minimum Subscription—One Shilling a year.

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# "Punch's" Catechism for Londoners.

Reprinted (by special permission) from PUNCH, May 7, 1887.

Q. WHAT is a Premium?

A. A Premium is a Latin word meaning "prize" or "reward." In London this reward is given by Landlords to themselves out of the money of incoming Tenants.

Q. Is a Premium a prize for good conduct?

A. Exclusively so. The good conduct consists in allowing Tenants to live in London at all.

Q. Is the moment when a house is taken the only occasion on which a premium is exacted?

A. Not at all. When a lease expires, Landlords, especially Ducal ones (see Mr. PLATT'S evidence before the Parliamentary Committee), often refuse to renew without a heavy Premium.

Q. Is it a valid plea to say that this Premium is a repayment to the Landlord for improvements which he has kindly made in the house?

A. No; because the Landlord hardly ever makes any improvements.

Q. Then, at any rate, Tenants of London houses can always have the advantage of a lease, if they like to pay a Premium for it?

A. Such is not the case. Some Ducal Landlords now exact Premiums, and at the same time refuse to grant leases.

Q. Then the Tenant becomes a mere Tenant-at-will?

A. Unless he prefers to become a Tenant-at-Won't, and leaves the house in disgust.

Q. Why do not all Tenants adopt the latter system?

A. Because to leave his place of business may mean to a tradesman the sacrifice of his "connection," a fact of which Landlords take full advantage.

Q. If a Tenant asked his Landlord for compensation for improvements executed by himself, what would the latter do?

A. Improve him off the estate, probably.

Q. When a London Landlord destroys at one blow the value of a Tradesman's goodwill, by refusing him a lease, and drives him to emigrate by exacting a "starvation rent," what does he call the result to the Tenant?

A. A happy re-lease.

Q. What is the theoretical foundation on which Ducal Landlords build their claim to rack-rent all occupiers who "hold of" them?

A. That it is entirely owing to their own careful attention and unremitting exertions that the soil of London is now of any value whatever.

Q. And of what material is that foundation largely composed?

A. Portland Cement.

Q. What would the Ducal Monopoly of land and houses in the best situations in London be called in Chicago?

A. A "corner in rents."

Q. And what would be an appropriate name for the victim of this monopoly?

A. A *Ground-Tenant*.

Q. Although the Ducal system of "improving estates," by turning out old Tenants and raising the rent to the utmost possible limit, may press hardly on individuals, do not these territorial magnates display a splendid example of public-spirited generosity and self-denying civic virtue which compensates for private loss? A. Scarcely.

Copies of this leaflet for distribution and for enclosure in letters, etc., may be obtained at 6d. per 100, from the Secretary of the ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE, 8 Duke Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.

# English Land Restoration League.

## MANIFESTO.

**WHEREAS** the English people have been gradually deprived of their rights in the soil of their native land :

And whereas the appropriation of the land to the few of the land on which and from which the people of England must live is an efficient cause of dulness of trade, lowness of wages, the idleness of men who should be at work, the forcing of women and children to unnatural toil, the depopulation of agricultural districts, the crowding of city slums, the sapping of national strength by forced emigration, the physical and mental deterioration due to unwholesome employment and lodgings, and of the vice and crime that spring from poverty :

It is therefore the duty of all Englishmen to secure the restoration of England to its true owners, the people of England.

With this end in view we ask the co-operation of all who agree to the following statement of principle and purpose :—

Land being the dwelling place, storehouse, and workshop of men—the natural element necessary to labour and life—it cannot be treated as the private property of individuals, without enabling the idle to live upon the industrious, and giving to individuals undue control of the industry, happiness, and lives of their fellows.

The equal right of every citizen to life involves an equal right to the use and enjoyment of the land of his country. This right begins with birth, and terminates with death, attaching to each human being while he lives, and as long as he lives, so that no number of individuals can justly grant away the equal right of other individuals to land, and no generation can grant away the rights of future generations.

While the land of every country, by indefeasible title, thus belongs in common to the living people of that country, unfettered by any grants, bargains, or sales made by preceding generations, it is equally manifest that the produce of labour rightfully belongs, by similar indefeasible title, to those whose industry and skill produce it. To secure this right of property in the produce of labour—a right which is necessary to the improvement and use of land—the user or improver of land must be guaranteed its secure possession, subject to the acknowledgment of the proprietary right of the whole people to the land itself, and to payment to the community of a fair equivalent for those advantages which attach to its use by reason of the growth and progress of the community. Therefore, the value of land as distinguished from the value of the improvements made upon it by the user—a value created not by the particular user or improver, but by the growth of the whole community—belongs rightfully to the community, and should be taken for public uses, leaving the producer the full recompense of his industry.

To secure the equal rights of all to their native land, while at the same time securing the full right of private property, it is therefore necessary to reassert the ancient English principle that land is not, and cannot become the property of individuals, but belongs inalienably to the whole people, of

whom all holders of land are tenants. In accordance with this principle, all the use of land is due to the people, constituting a common fund, to the benefits of which all are equally entitled, and which may be used for the defrayal of common expenses, or for such purposes as the people, by such governments as they choose to create, may deem best.

As the easiest and best method of reasserting these ancient English principles, and restoring England to the ownership of the English people, we propose to reverse the process by which the land-owning and law-making class have gradually escaped from the payment to the State of the rents and dues originally annexed to grants of land, and have thrown upon industry the burden of taxation.

We propose to abolish all the taxation which now bears upon labour, improvement and thrift, which increases the cost of commodities and enjoyments, and fines men for adding to the common wealth.

We propose to increase taxation on land until the whole annual value is taken for the public benefit, and, finally, to make the English people themselves the landlords of England.

As a first step to this end, we shall demand of our representatives in Parliament the re-imposition of the tax of four shillings in the pound on the current value of land, irrespective of whether it is rented, used, or kept idle by the holder. And we shall also demand, at the same time, a measure giving all local governments the power to collect rates from an assessment on the value of land, exclusive of buildings or improvements, and irrespective of use.

We propose to achieve our end—the complete restoration of England to the English people—as rapidly as may be. Yet such is the strength of the opposition to be overcome, that our progress must be gradual, during which ample warning will be given, and all interests be afforded opportunity to adjust themselves to the new order of things. The question of compensation is therefore a purely theological one. But since it has been raised, we refer to meet it by declaring that we cannot tolerate the idea that the people of England shall be compelled to buy back the land which is theirs by natural right, or to compensate those who now appropriate their earnings or the loss of power to appropriate those earnings in the future. Whatever be the classes who have profited by, and are responsible for, the existing injustice may choose to adopt to equalise among themselves any losses they may suffer in the restoration of the soil of England to the English people, we insist that those who have suffered, and are now suffering, from this injustice shall not be called upon to bear part in it.

The English Land Restoration League asks the co-operation of all who accept the principles thus set forth.

*Terms of Membership:—Subscription of not less than One Shilling annually. Names and subscriptions or donations may be sent to the Secretary, at the Office of the League.*

Signed, by order of the Committee,

FREDK. VERINDER, *Secretary.*

OFFICES: 8 DUKE STREET, ADELPHI, LONDON, W.C.

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[Specimen leaflets and all information free on application].

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PAKER & PEARCE, Limited, Printers, 5, 6 & 7 Ludgate Circus Buildings, London, E.C.

# English Land Restoration League.

*OBJECT The Abolition of Landlordism*

*METHOD The Abolition of all taxes upon labour and the products of labour and the earnings of labour, and the increase of taxation upon land values until the whole annual value of land is taken in taxation for public purposes*

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FREDK. VERINDER,

Secretary, E L R L

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probably producing a small yearly return until it is let for building. The owners of this land are rated, not in relation to the real value, but to the actual annual income. They can thus afford to keep their land out of the market, and to part with only small quantities, so as to raise the price beyond the natural monopoly price which the land would command by its advantages of position. Meantime, the general expenditure of the town on improvements is increasing the value of their property. If this land were rated at, say, 4 per cent. on its selling value, the owners would have a more direct incentive to part with it to those who are desirous of building, and a two-fold advantage would result to the community. First, all the valuable property would contribute to the rates, and thus the burden on the occupiers would be diminished by the increase in the rateable property. Secondly, the owners of the building land would be forced to offer their land for sale, and their competition with one another would bring down the price of building land, and so diminish the tax in the shape of ground rent, or price paid for land which is now levied on urban enterprise by the adjacent landowners, a tax, be it remembered, which is no recompense for any industry or expenditure on their part, but is the natural result of the industry and activity of the townspeople themselves. Your Majesty's Commissioners would recommend that these matters should be included in legislation when the law of rating comes to be dealt with by Parliament."—*Report of Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, 1885.*

### 5. Will you press for the nationalisation of mining rents and mineral royalties?

For full information about this important subject, see "Mining Rents and Mineral Royalties," by C. M. Percy, price 2d. May be had at the office of the League.

### 6. Will you press for an enquiry into the alienation of common lands, whether under Enclosure Acts, or otherwise, and the restoration of such lands to the People?

Between 1702 and 1796, 1,776 Enclosure Acts were passed, dealing with 3,142,074 acres.—(*Committee of House of Commons, 1797.*)

Between 1800 and 1842, 1,996 Acts were passed. In 534 cases the acreage is not stated. The other 1,362 commons had an area of 1,892,552 acres.—(*House of Commons Return, 1843.*)

Between 1719 and 1800, 2,100 Acts were passed.—(*Report on Agricultural Distress, 1836.*)

It is estimated that 7,000,000 acres were enclosed between 1702 and 1876.—(*Clifford's History of Private Bill Legislation*, I. 25, and Appendix B. II.).

Lord Macaulay says that the area enclosed under the authority of 1,000 Enclosure Acts, "exceeds on a moderate calculation, 10,000 square miles" (i.e., 6,400,000 acres).—(*Hist.* c. 3.)

This system of robbery is still going on.

**7. Will you oppose any scheme, by whatsoever Government it may be brought forward, for buying out Irish or other landlords, at the expense or under the guarantee of the tax-payers, or for creating a new class of landlords under the name of "peasant proprietors"?**

"Don't buy the landlords out; don't kick them out; but TAX THEM OUT."—*Henry George.*

Leaflet No. 15 ("The Great-Great-Grandson of Captain Kidd") is especially useful for distribution in constituencies where the member or candidate is in favour of buying out landlords.

**8. Will you press in Parliament for the abolition of all taxation which now presses upon labour and the products of labour, and the earnings of labour; and the substitution of a single-tax upon the value of all land whether used or let or held idle by the holder?**

Leaflet No. 13 ("Taxing Land Values," by Henry George) deals with this question (one halfpenny; special terms for distribution).

Read Henry George's "Progress and Poverty," (Paper covers, 1s., cloth, 1s. 6d.), to be obtained at the League office.

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JOIN THE ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE, Fredk. Verinder, Secretary, 8 Duke Street, Adelphi, London, W C.

OBJECT.—The Abolition of Landlordism.  
MEANS.—The Abolition of all Taxes upon Labour and the Products of Labour and the Earnings of Labour; and the Increase of Taxation upon Land Values until the whole annual value of land is taken in taxation for public purposes.

Minimum Subscription.—One Shilling a year.  
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# THE PEOPLE'S JUBILEE.

## THE BIBLE AND THE LAND QUESTION

A few years ago we were all talking of the "Jubilee."

What is a "Jubilee"? The Hebrew books which we call the Old Testament will tell us. The Bible Jubilee was not a "Queen's Jubilee," for the Hebrews were warned by their great religious and political teachers against the evils of monarchy. (1 Sam. xiii. 10.) It was not celebrated by the erection of an "Imperial Institute," or of a "Church House," or by the passing of a "Jercion Act." But it was the "People's Jubilee," and it was kept by a great Act of Land Restoration.

The teaching of the Bible about the Land condemns Landlordism. There is only one land-lord—the GOD who created the land—and for any one of God's creatures to call himself a landlord is an act of blasphemy against God and of robbery against man. "In the beginning, GOD created the heaven and the earth. The earth is the LORD'S"—and not "the landlords'." "The earth hath He Given to the children of men"—not to a few individuals, or a few thousand privileged families, but to the whole human race. "The land shall not be sold for ever (i. e., 'in perpetuity' or 'in freehold') for the land is Mine," saith the LORD, "for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." (Levit. xxv. 23.)

Such were the principles upon which the Mosaic Land Laws were based. The land itself cannot be the absolute property of any individual; it belongs to GOD alone. The use of the land belongs in equal right to all GOD'S children—to the whole human race, and to every generation of it. "So that no number of individuals can justly grant away the equal rights of other individuals to land, and no generation can grant away the rights of future generations."

The Hebrews in Canaan carried out these principles in their own national life. As they all had equal rights to the land, they made an equal division of the common heritage. (Numb. xxi. 52.) In fact they nationalised the land: that is, they gave effect in their law to the principle that the land was the common possession of the whole body of the people. And as they were a nation of farmers and shepherds, all wanting to work directly on the land, the best way of nationalising the land was to divide it equally among the people. though this would be by no means the best way, or a good way at all, in a commercial and manufacturing country like ours. They classed the man who tried to rob another of his equal right to the land among the vilest criminals. (Deut. xxvii. 14-26.) "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen."

Thus, when the Hebrews began their national life in Canaan, they all "started fair." Every man had direct and free access to the soil upon which and from which all must live, and no landlord could compel him to pay rent

of the right to live and work. How different would life be in England, Wales, and all itself Christian, if every one of us had a "fair chance" of getting an honest living by his own industry.

But this same "fair chance" was equal to the right of each new generation. And every fifty years came the Year of Jubilee, to preserve and restore his just system of land nationalisation. If a man had lost his share in the national heritage—by carelessness, or drunkenness, or idleness, or misfortune—the law did not allow that his children should be condemned to live all their lives as debtors and paupers. At the next Year of Jubilee they were restored to their rights, "all contracts of sale to the contrary notwithstanding." (See

When a man lost his hold upon the land, he sank into the condition of a wage-slave; that is, he was obliged to go and work as a "hired servant" upon land belonging to someone else. (Levit. xxv. 39-41) But the Year of Jubilee set the wage-slave free, by restoring to him his equal right to the use of the land. So, too, if we wish to set free the wage-slaves of our great cities from their grinding toil, we must work for the Restoration of the Land to the people.

This is why the Year of Jubilee was called a year of liberty. "Ye shall follow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a Jubilee unto you." True liberty does not exist where the land is the monopoly of the few; the man who owns the land practically owns the men who live upon the land. The wage-slaves in our English towns are often worse fed, worse clothed, worse housed, and harder worked than were the chattel-slaves in the cotton fields of the Southern States. Landlordism is disguised slavery, and is the more dangerous because of its disguise. Perhaps this is why Moses, the Hebrew legislator, permitted slavery under certain severe restrictions, but would not permit landlordism under any conditions whatever.

Let those, therefore, who wish to bring about a real Jubilee—a Jubilee of the People—join the English Land Restoration League, which is working for the abolition of landlordism.

Let us say through our members in Parliament what the Hebrew statesman Nehemiah said to the landlords of his day:—

"RESTORE, I pray you, to them, EVEN THIS DAY, their lands, their vineyards, their olive-yards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them."

Will English landlords answer as honestly as did the Hebrew landlords before them?

"Then said they, we will RESTORE them, and WILL REQUIRE NOTHING OF THEM; so will we do as thou sayest."—(Neh. v. 11-12.)

F. V.

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Join the English Land Restoration League, Secretary, FREDK. VERINDER, 6, Duke Street, Adelphi, London, W.C. Minimum Subscription, One Shilling a year. Specimen leaflets free on application.