

THE PATH TO LIBERTY.

Humanity's Two Roads.

The road to destruction is broad and pleasant, while the way of Life is narrow and difficult. There are two roads, and two roads only, along which humanity can march in the working out of its eternal destiny. The first is the path of repression which leads to Tyranny; the other is the way of freedom which ends in Liberty. There is no middle course; no compromise is possible. Whichever way we turn, in whatever direction we attempt to advance, we are bound to come to this parting of the ways.

And when we arrive at the point where freedom and restriction diverge, we *must* make a definite choice. For there are no by-paths nor short-cuts between the one road and the other. He who discovers that he is on the wrong road can only retrace his steps and start again in the right direction. The road to ruin is seductive. Many are tempted by its shady trees and laughing flowers. Only now and again comes one who carefully takes out his map and ascertains where each road leads. Such a one will be seen toiling along the lonely path. For him the roughness of the track and the steepness of the hill are immaterial, provided he is sure of reaching the right destination. Such a man is called a dreamer and a visionary while he is alive; a saint and a hero when he is dead.

The Touchstone of Reform.

The history of the English people is the record of a slow and toilsome march along the road of freedom. There have been magnificent victories on the way; there have also been momentary checks and protracted halts. The barons forcing King John to sign Magna Charta; Wat Tyler striking the tax-gatherer with his hammer; John Hampden refusing to pay ship-money; Latimer and Ridley perishing at the stake; Cobden and Bright denouncing the Corn Laws—what are all these but episodes in the eternal struggle for individual liberty?

In all countries and at all times the idea of Liberty has been the vitalising force behind those great movements of reform which have captured the imagination of the people. The French Revolution, so shamefully perverted, was the outcome of the doctrine of the "Rights of Man"—the doctrine that all men have equal rights to life, to liberty and to the pursuit of happiness. The spirit of the American No-Slavery Movement was summed up in the words of Lowell, "They are slaves who dare not be, in the right with two or three."

The touchstone of reform is individual liberty. That which expands and liberates is essentially good; that which restricts is essentially bad.

There is a statue to Sir Robert Peel on which is the following quotation: "It may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of goodwill among those whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, a name remembered with expressions of goodwill when they shall recreate their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened with a sense of injustice." That was the spirit of the Free Trade movement—the last great movement which has swept England from end to end. But the great leaders of the Anti-Corn Law campaign, noble and disinterested though they were, saw only one-half of the problem. They grappled with the riddle of exchange, but left untouched the more fundamental question of production.

We who are land reformers understand that you *must* have freedom of production as well as freedom of exchange.

Two Fundamental Factors.

Man is a land animal and without land no man can live. Man springs from the soil, he lives on the soil and after

death his mortal body is committed again to the soil. Land, just as much as air, is a fundamental necessity of human existence. All wealth is created by the application of labour to land. Property of every kind, from a gigantic steamship to a delicate scientific instrument, is derived from land. Wealth, indeed, is the product of labour applied to land. The great storehouse of man is the planet on which he lives. It contains all his raw material and he can only reach it through the surface or superficial area of the earth—what we are accustomed to call "dry land."

There are, then, two great fundamental economic factors in production—the land which contains the raw material and the labour which works it up into wealth. If either of these two factors is lacking, production comes to a standstill. Where there is land but no labour to work upon it, there can be no production; where there is labour but no land for it to work upon, there can be no production. Our system of private property in land has divorced the labourer from the soil; for the land is held by a few only and the great majority are trespassers in their own country.

Free Competition.

Freedom of production and exchange necessarily implies unrestricted competition. Free competition is an excellent institution. It stimulates invention and production. It obviates the necessity for officials and bureaus. It secures to each man the reward of his own labour. Socialist thinkers would have us believe that competition is the root of all evil. They point to the utter failure of present-day society as evidence of the blight of competition. The fact is that there is no free competition in England to-day. The landless man *must* use the land of the landowner. In any bargain between these two, therefore, the landowner has an immense advantage over the landless man. Competition has degenerated into a struggle between land users for access to land.

What is wanted is a reform which will introduce competition between landowners for people to use their land.

The Toll of Rent.

A tax on land values would compel those who had been holding land out of use to bring it into cultivation; those who had been putting land to a poor use, to use it more productively. A great amount of land would thus be forced into the market and there would be competition among landowners to find users for their land. The result of this competition would of course be a fall in rents.

At present the landowner takes a toll of industry at every point in production. Let me take a concrete case. Here is my watch. The metals used in its manufacture came originally from various mines in different parts of the world. The mining companies had to pay rent or royalties to the mine owners. When the rough ores were brought to the surface they were dispatched to the refining mills and smelting furnaces. These stand on land for which ground-rent has to be paid to the landlord. From the mills and furnaces they were sent to the metal workshops, and again rent has to be paid. Next they went to the watch factories where they were made up into the hands, rivets, screws, wheels, springs and so on of the finished watch. The factory also stands on land and involves the payment of a high ground-rent. The watch was forwarded to the wholesale warehouse, yet again rent is paid, and thence to the retail jeweller's shop, where a final tribute is levied. At every point in the long chain of production, the landlord exacts his toll. Each producer has to take count of this in reckoning up his profits, and he has to put up the price accordingly. High ground-rents mean high cost of production and high cost of living.

Abolish Unjust Taxes on Industry.

A tax on land values would lower rents and relieve industry. Any other tax is bound to fall either directly or indirectly on the worker. The Income Tax is a tax on

industry. The harder a man works, the more thrifty he is, the more sober and prudent—the more he has to pay in Income Tax. The cocoa, sugar, tea, and fruit taxes are taxes on industry. They artificially raise the price of these commodities; they hamper legitimate trade and hinder production. The tax on motors is a toll on the motor industry. The Stamp Duties are a restriction on business. The property tax is a hindrance to the building trade.

We wish to abolish all these unjust taxes which deny a man the results of his labour, and substitute a simple tax on land values—values which are created by the community as a whole and which are greatest where revenue is most needed.

The Most Hopeful Movement of the Twentieth Century.

They who have never come into contact with the Land Values philosophy, who neither understand the nature of its proposals nor appreciate the full significance of its meaning, have not seen the real grandeur of Liberalism. For them Liberalism is a confused attitude of thought; for us it is a definite and self-sufficient practical philosophy. Nay, more than that, it is a religion, as all know who have read *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*. When a man is converted to the Land Values doctrine, his outlook on life becomes entirely changed. He sees the meaning of the slums and waste places, the appalling prevalence of vice and misery in the midst of so much pomp and splendour. For him the world is a battlefield—a training ground for souls. The struggle for land and liberty becomes a holy war, a war against the poverty which embrutes the passions and stultifies the mind. It becomes a painful evolution towards a magnificent ideal.

"The truth which I have tried to make clear," said Henry George, "will not find easy acceptance. If that could be, it would have been accepted long ago. If that could be it would never have been obscured. But it will find friends—those who will toil for it; suffer for it; if need be, die for it. This is the power of Truth."

We are fighting for a just and noble cause. We may not live to see the final triumph of our ideal, but we shall prepare the way for others. Every victory will lighten the burden; every step is a step in the right direction. The little groups of Land Value enthusiasts scattered throughout the length and breadth of the community are the salt of the body politic. They are the leaven which leaveneth the whole. By speech and conversation, by writing and argument, by debate and discussion, they will lead Liberalism from the realm of Socialistic palliatives to the time-honoured track of freedom. They will not offer men charity, they will show them how to regain their rights.

So let us take heart and return to the attack. Let us determine to do our share to forward the most hopeful movement of the twentieth century.

DOUGLAS P. BOATMAN.

THOROLD ROGERS ON FOOD TAXES.—There are persons who have the effrontery to invite workmen to accept and acquiesce in a tax on their food, in order that landlords may keep up their rents at the expense of the general public. Such shameless mendicancy is in keeping with the traditions of aristocratic government, which has, in the history of English finance and legislation, put the burdens of State on the many, and freed the property of the few; but when it is fully understood, it will not serve the men who advocate it, or the party which has the meanness to encourage it.

Modern governments still wrong labour by pretending to protect it against foreign competition. What they really do is to swell the profits of the capitalist, to cripple the energies of the workman by narrowing his market, and to shorten the means of the consumer by making that dear which he wishes to purchase.—THOROLD ROGERS.

PENN AND FRANKLIN ON THE LAND QUESTION.

BY SAMUEL MILLIKIN OF PHILADELPHIA.

From Proud's *HISTORY OF PENNSYLVANIA*, Appendix Part I. Free Library of Philadelphia, 13th and Locust Streets, A. 9,748, P. 94, page 374.

"Certain conditions or concessions agreed upon by William Penn . . . and . . . adventurers and purchasers. 11th July, 1681."

SECTION X.

"That every man shall be bound to plant, or man, so much of his share of land as shall be set out and surveyed, within *three* years after it is so set out and surveyed, or else it shall be lawful for new comers to be settled thereupon, paying to them their survey money, and they go higher for their shares."

Extracts from Minutes of Provincial Council, Vol. I., page 70, ye 30th, 1st month, 1683.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Va. 12), Vol. I., page 70 :—

"Putt to the vote as many as are of opinion that a Publick Tax upon the land ought to be raised to defray the Publick Charge, say yea carried in the affirmative—none dissenting—"

Same, page 93, 17th November, 1683 :—

"Proposed by the Govr. whether or no ye people in England should not pay towards the Public Charges or not, as well as those in the Province; passed in ye Affirmative."

"All that are of Opinion that a Levy should be Laid on ye Lott in the City of those present and those absent, say Yea; Past in ye Affirmative."

The following shows Penn's dislike of speculators and desire for improvements.

From Penn's Instructions to his Commissioners, September 30th, 1681. Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Va. 62), page 219.

"10thly. . . . Allow no old patents, they have forfeited them by not planting according to the law of the place and it cost mee too dear to allow such old storyes, rather than fail offer them the patent charge, and where surveyed the survey money, but this is understood only of unplanted places only."

From *EARLY NARRATIVES* (Historical Society of Pa. Va. 435).

"A Further Account of Philadelphia," by William Penn page 262, Section XIV. (showing growth of land value and the indebtedness of owners to the community thereby). Dated October 12th, 1665 :—

"XIV.—The improvement of the place (Philadelphia) is best measured by the advance of value upon every man's lot. I will venture to say that the worst lot in the town, without any improvement upon it, is worth four times more than it was when it was layed out, and the best forty. And though it seems unequal that the absent should be thus benefited by the improvements of those that are upon the place, especially when they have served no office, run no hazard, nor as yet defrayed any public charge, yet the advantage does certainly redound to them, and whoever they are they are great debtors to the Country. . . ."

The report of the Law Committee of Philadelphia Councils, February, 1871, on the subject of taxation, says (*inter alia*) : *JOURNAL OF SELECT COUNCIL*, 1871, page 259 :—

"We find the Provincial Council (1683) first determining that 'a publick tax on land ought to be raised to defray the publick charge.' And the enactment of 1700 fixing county rates and levies (which law was not enrolled), is believed to have been not larger in the subjects of county rates than in the Act of 1724, which were real estate horses, cattle, sheep, negroes and a poll tax. It will be noticed that the personal estate here enumerated was visible property, not susceptible of concealment, and that debts, accounts, merchandise and ships are nowhere mentioned."