

## GLASGOW LIBERAL COUNCIL AND THE BILL.

At the Annual Meeting of the Glasgow Liberal Council, held 4/4/06—Mr. Robert Montgomerie presiding,

Councillor John M'Farlane moved—"That this meeting of the Glasgow Liberal Council hereby expresses its unabated confidence in His Majesty's Government and its approval of the policy indicated in the various measures they had brought before Parliament for this session's work."

Mr. Thomas Wright, seconded.

Ex-Bailie Burt said they in Glasgow had been very particularly interested in the Taxation of Land Values (Scotland) Bill. Unfortunately, owing to the method of procedure in the House of Commons, the Bill, which was passed by an overwhelming majority, had not been remitted to a Grand Committee. He would not suggest that the Taxation of Land Values Bill should be thrust upon the Government; but he thought it just possible some members of the Government were not just so anxious to see it brought forward. He knew that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was personally strongly in favour of it. He (Mr. Burt) regretted that the Government had not given the necessary facilities for its discussion, and he thought they were entitled to express their opinion on the question—(applause)—to show that they were in earnest about it. The first part of the Bill declaring for a separate valuation of land and improvements should at least have had the support of the Government. They wanted to know what the value of land was, as a preliminary stage from which to discuss the question properly. He moved the following addition to the motion:—"But regret that they have not seen their way to afford facilities for the further progress this session of the Taxation of Land Values (Scotland) Bill, introduced by Mr. Sutherland on the 23rd of last month." He did not suggest the addition to the motion in any way as a reflection upon the Government. They wanted merely to indicate the anxiety they felt on the question.

Councillor Nicol seconded.

Mr. M'Owatt said that, while he sympathised with the point raised by Mr. Burt, he thought the phraseology of the addendum might be altered. Instead of expressing regret, the Council should express the hope that facilities would be given for the further progress of the Bill this session.

Councillor M'Farlane—I will accept that.

The Chairman suggested the word "trusts." It was, perhaps, a little stronger than "hope." This was accepted, and the motion, with Mr. Burt's altered addition, was then unanimously adopted.

## BOOKS. BOOKS. BOOKS.

### NEW BOOKS.

#### "The New House of Commons,"

"Pall Mall" Extra, with Portraits and Biographical Notices. 7/6. Per Post, 1/3.

#### The Rating of Land Values:

Notes upon the Proposals to Levy Rates in respect of Site Values. By ARTHUR WILSON FOX.

3/6. Post free, 3/9.

## JOHN SMITH & SON,

19 RENFIELD STREET, and  
225 INGRAM STREET, . . .

ESTABLISHED, 1742.

GLASGOW.

## AS OTHERS SEE US.

BY GUSTAV BÜSCHER.

(Translated from the German by E. Cozens Cooke, B.Sc.)

According to recently published statistics, the area of the enclosed land in the Scottish Highlands has increased in the last twenty years by 1,210,000 acres. In other words, some 10,000 men have been obliged to leave their homes to make room for deer and other game.

There was a time when the land in England was practically owned by the people. Then England had no standing army and no army of the employed, no army of police and no army of marauders, no custom-houses and no prison houses.

### In the Days of "Merrie England."

The dreaded workhouses, which to-day are the last refuge of the English working-man after a life of stress and toil, were then unknown. At that time English labour did not have to support a swollen navy which to-day costs it 1,000 million francs a year; it had no National Debt, amounting to almost 20,000 million francs, for which to find the interest. All wars were conducted at the expense of the landlords; all public expenditure was defrayed out of ground-rents. The daily wage of the labourer, which at the present time in wealthy England amounts to 3-4 francs, was then equivalent in purchasing power to 14 francs of modern money—and the normal length of the working-day was eight hours. During this period the country was known as "Merrie England." This is no story from a book of fables, but solid fact confirmed by a thousand evidences which the investigations of an impartial scholar, Thorold Rogers by name, have brought to light.

The happy days of "Merrie England" are indeed long since passed away. According to the letter of the English Constitution, the land is still the property of the Crown, the repository of the people's rights. But this is only true on paper. In reality, more than nine-tenths of the English people have no more valid title to the soil of their fatherland than they have to that of the moon or the planet of Mars. The common lands, which 200 years ago comprised more than 10 million acres, have been gradually appropriated by the aristocratic swindlers, until scarcely any of them remain. And the taxes, which formerly the nobles had to pay out of their lands, have been exchanged for general duties on wine and beer, tea and tobacco, so that the English people may be saved from extravagant indulgence, and taught the desirable virtue of temperance! To-day more than half the land of England is in the possession of 2,250 families; the rest is shared amongst 250,000 families.

### The Case for London.

In the district where I write, some twelve miles south-west from London, one sees, as soon as one has left the town, miles upon miles of scarcely anything but meadows, gardens, parks, and unproductive woodland, often enclosed with wire railing, with wooden fences covered with barbed nails, or with walls stuck with splintered glass. The fruitful soil in the vicinity of the greatest city of the world lies practically uncultivated, whilst agricultural produce is brought in ships across the sea. And in this city of six million inhabitants, a duly-installed commission racks its clever brains to find the solution of the unemployed problem!

A few hundred years since, a silly, frivolous woman, whom stupid chance had made Queen of England, presented to one of her favourites a piece of land outside the gates of London. The metropolis in the meanwhile has grown somewhat, and on what was once a farm site has sprung up one the richest quarters of the great city. The ground rent of this piece of land—that is, the price of the permission to live and work upon it—now amounts to tens of million francs per annum. The land, or rather the right

to exploit the labour of their fellow-citizens upon this site, still belongs to the descendants of the courtier to whom it was originally granted in return for a kiss of allegiance.

The greater portion of the soil of London is in the possession of a few old titled families. But these people do not concern themselves with building houses. They leave this work to the proletarian crowd of inferior human beings. They only lease the building sites to a contractor for a term of years, with the obligation to erect suitable buildings thereon. The contractor pays a fixed annual rent for the site, and seeks to draw as much profit as possible from the buildings; for when the lease is run out both the site and the buildings which are erected on it revert, without compensation, to the ground landlord, and the householder must count himself fortunate if the rent is not screwed up so high that he is forced to quit. How things fare with the tenants under this system one can easily imagine. Also one can see that things often go badly with the middleman. But whatever may befall builder and tenant, the ground landlord in any event derives a gain. He has no risk, no responsibility, no labour—he has absolutely nothing to do save to write receipts for his ground rents. And if he finds this business too irksome, he deposes an agent to relieve him, who has to see that the tenants punctually pay their tribute. In order that the noble idler may draw his rents, little children must sell bunches of flowers and papers in the muddy streets, consumptive girls must glue pasteboard boxes for fourteen hours a day, widows and orphans must deny themselves bread, grey-haired men must go to the work-house, and the disabled beg.

This is no tearful exaggeration. It is bare fact corroborated in the streets of London at every turn.

#### Starvation.

Recently, as I was walking through the streets of this dreadful city one hot, dusty day in August, I saw standing on one of the busy bridges a sorrowful woman offering for sale wax matches in a small basket. She held a miserable looking child in her arms, perhaps because there was no one in whose charge to leave it, perhaps because she hoped thereby to elicit the sympathy of passers-by. But nobody grieved for her. I stepped forward and for a penny bought from her a box of wax matches. A grateful, happy smile stole over her face. I wanted to ask her how much she earned, but feared that I should scarcely understand her amid the uproar of the streets. My companion had in the meantime walked on, and I was obliged to follow him. Such figures one meets in London at every street corner.

It happens from time to time that a free-born Englishman, and still more frequently an Englishwoman—since woman is the weaker sex and, therefore, in our Christian society, can be exploited more regardlessly—literally hungers. The papers generally notice such an interesting event for the edification of their readers, but in most cases the affair passes without much heed.

Death from starvation? What frightful words! Is it really possible that in our Christian civilisation, in which the highest learning and elegance are united, in which clever men study with such painstaking care the elementary organs of insects, in which sympathetic persons found societies for the rescue of strayed dogs and cats, is it possible that in this age men die of hunger? Yes, it is not only possible—it actually happens.

It is a fact which every policeman can confirm for us, that in the streets of London, in the streets of the city which boasts itself to be the richest in the world, in the midst of abundance of bread and meat, of sweetmeats and dainties, of scarf-pins and picture cards, men's strength fails them because of hunger—and sometimes they even die of hunger.

Before me lies a little book entitled "Pictures of Poverty." It contains twenty-four short narratives selected from ten thousand similar cases; twenty-four stories, vouched for by reliable eye-witnesses, of children who search for crusts in

the gutters in order to appease their hunger; of women who in mid-winter have pawned their clothes and cover their nakedness with strips of old carpet; of a father who in the flower of his age has sought death by drowning, because he could find no work—no work in the country whose fruitful fields are converted into private parks and game preserves; in the country where the lack of dwellings is so great that hundreds of thousands of families are herded in hovels where body and soul must both corrupt.

### ECONOMICS AS SHE IS TAUGHT AT CAMBRIDGE.

It has been said that the greatest humorists are the unconscious ones, and I believe this is true. When you can't get a copy near hand of "Huckleberry Fin," or when you have read and read "Pickwick Papers" until they begin to lose their pristine freshness, you might try for a change "Economics of Industry," by Professor Alfred Marshall. In the midst of that rubbish heap of German jargon and semi-mathematical argot which passes under the name of "The Science of Economics," there is a fund of comedy worthy of a Molière or a Rabelais. If anyone has any doubt, for instance, of the nature of "Wealth," it is something—indeed about all you can find in this so-called science—to be assured that, "The affection of friends, for instance, is a very important element of well-being, but is not ever reckoned as wealth except by poetic license." I don't suppose that anyone ever expected to dine on such affections or to exchange them for theatre tickets, twist tobacco, or some such luxury; but still it gives considerable satisfaction when you know that a fact like this is declared by a great university don, published from halls of learning. We children of Lazarus must take this and smack our lips as a scrap from the great university feast from the table of Dives himself.

Again, we are told, "a man's personal goods fall into two classes—under the first come the benefits he derives from other persons, such as labour dues and personal services of all kinds, property in slaves, the organisation of his business, and his business connection generally. The second class consists of his own qualities and faculties for action and for enjoyment."

You might perhaps ask what a man is apart from his own qualities and his faculties for action and enjoyment; but such vulgar questions betray a plebian, not to speak of a Public Board School origin. It suggests that you may have made the acquaintance of a low playwright fellow like Shakespeare (if he wrote them plays), or a rhyming common ploughman like him who went by the name of Burns (question—were not Burns' poems written by Lord Dare or Lord Nozoo or Lord Onlynose?) the question might even have been suggested by that tinkler fellow who wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress" if he happened to come across "The Economics of Industry." The first thing one has got to do when studying "economics" is to get rid of such tawdry common sense and remember that a greater than Shakespeare (George Bernard Shaw, to wit) has said "Common sense is common ignorance." Now the brilliant idea that property in slaves was or is an item in the list of a man's personal goods, is one that would only suggest itself to a college professor and a professor of economics at that.

To an ordinary nineteenth century or twentieth century man who works, but has not plunged into fathomless economic depths, Emerson's simple words might answer—

"Pay ransom to the owner, and fill  
The bag to the brim;  
Who is the owner? The slave is  
And ever was. Pay him!"

But this might do for American University teaching of a century ago, which was essentially superficial, otherwise had not lost its grip of commonsense and reality. To-day