

ADDRESS OF CORNELIUS DONOVAN.

---

(Following are portions of the address of Cornelius Donovan at the Peoples Budget meeting at Cooper Union, this city, called together by the Lower Rents Society. Hon. Frederick C. Howe, Commissioner of Immigration, presided, and among the speakers were Dr. Herbert L. Wheeler, Philip Klein, Grace Isabel Colbron, Frederick C. Leubuscher, Cornelius Donovan and Mrs. V. G. Sinkhovitch.)

---

I am in hearty sympathy with the remarks made by Mr. Phillip Klein of the New York Prison Association. As a juror in the Criminal Courts I witnessed the trials and heard the sentences of some of the 5000 unfortunates now in his care whom he so pathetically describes.

The great majority of the criminals are young men, just merging from parental control into free manhood. All of them are well educated, as if they had been particularly prepared for the battle of life.

After graduation from the schools and colleges they go forth with hearts beating with high hopes. But alas, the employers are too few. The owners of the primal means of life have not wants enough to hire everybody that needs work, that has an inalienable right to earn his living upon the earth.

The government of our State has marked off its ample areas and given title to them to a few, not all of them citizens. These pampered parasites have great pride of possession. Though professing religions (Christian and Jewish) whose basic doctrine is equal love of neighbors with themselves, they cunningly forestall the very sources of life from their fellow men and compel them to labor on their terms or not at all.

The young men at the very threshold of their self-reliance who vainly seek employment find themselves in a very serious situation. They are proud, too, and more than willing; they are anxious to make good. But who is to employ all of them? The private owners of our city do not need them. Let them accompany the immigrants from Europe to the rural districts, and very few will find employment there. Many a young man as good or better than we were at his age, who is too proud to beg, too honest to steal, will find what it is to be wanting a meal. If he succeeds he fills the place that could be occupied by some one as worthy. If he fails he is compelled to choose between crime and suicide. Mr. Klein's five thousand choose crime. We are opposed to any municipal economy that would lessen the care due these victims of our government. If there is to be any saving in our Criminal Department or Correction Department, let us take it from the salaries of the high priced judges who send these men to the care of Mr. Klein.

It is now a century and a quarter since Sir Wm. Jones asked the question; "What constitutes a State?" and answered it by saying, "Men, high minded men! Men who their duties know, but know their rights, and knowing dare maintain."

Therefore the State of New York is made up of men, and Sir William

meant the word to include the women too, who know their rights. Well they need not know *all* their rights. But they will know and appreciate enough of them to constitute the government of the State of New York. Thus reasoning, the government belongs to the people, all the people, and not to the few who have, by hook or crook, obtained paper titles to the soil of the State.

These titles, while very important as between individuals, do not constitute ownership as against the State. Let any withholder or forestaller who may think he owns land as against the State, stop paying his rent or taxes to the State, and then see who owns it.

The people of the State of New York, by the grace of God free and independent, possess the original and ultimate property in all lands within the jurisdiction of the State. All the right of ownership that our real estate men have is what the legislatures give them. They are the first tenants under the State. But this is quite enough to enable them to turn all the urban districts into tribute traps with which to catch a great proportion of the earnings of their less privileged neighbors.

If the titles to land are not derived from our legislature, there are no titles to land. If they are obtained from law makers at Albany, then to the legislature must we look for relief from oppression.

The legislature can impose the increase in taxation that will set the land free to the use of all the residents of the State, or it may increase the exemptions from taxation that will further prohibit its use except at the terms of the few who have in fee the power backed by the government to withhold it.

In nine years the value of exempt real estate has increased 71%, whereas the toll paying land has only increased 55%. And seven of these years were lean years. Imagine what is likely to happen in the fat years that are over-due.

The *Times* threatens us this morning; that if the railroads are obliged to reduce the dividends to the stockholders they will sell out their stocks. It prophesies that if the war should last a year, a loan of fifteen billions will be desired. It declares that its constituents will play no favorites and will lend their money to the warring governments if better interest is offered.

If the war should last as long as that, which God forbid, what would they have to give for money or produce or anything else?—Ashes. We might as wisely contract a treaty of reciprocity with the desert of Sahara.

One of the candidates for Governor showed me that he saw the tip of the tail, when he declared most emphatically that the water rights of the State must be protected. He is on the way. It need not surprise us at all if within a few months, he should see a great light that will illumine the primal right of self preservation that no statute can repeal—that no court can annul.

The same candidate in the same speech declared himself to be the ally and friend of the upbuilding of Brooklyn. Of course he bears the same cor-

dial relation to every other county in the State. We shall test the sincerity of this voluntary profession of friendship. There is nothing in the way of the upbuilding of any part of the State save Land Speculators. The tributes that they may now exact from any young family would build the home.

There are thousands of families in this city tonight who are ready to build their homes if only they could shoo the speculator off the home sites. As soon as your speculator sees the family coming up goes the price. He paid his taxes, he says. Why did he pay them? And when did he pay them? Hasn't he had use of the property. Whose fault was it if he did not use it when so many of his innocent neighbors were suffering for want of it. As well might the ticket speculator complain to the management that he did not use the reserved seats at the theatre.

---

### AS ONE MAN SEES IT.

---

The great principle before us—that in the establishment of righteousness in social conditions is the bringing of God upon the earth, and that in this is the true worship of God—may be easily recognized in the great reform movements of the day. With him who perceives, for instance, the injustice and immorality implied by the State's bestowing the values which it has itself created, and thus which belong naturally to public revenue, upon certain individuals—in this way establishing a pernicious economic inequality; and then seizing upon values which individuals have created, thus which naturally belong to them, for its own use — by this act robbing its subjects; with him who sees these two things, Single Tax necessarily becomes a religion. He sees in it the Divine law for man's just and peaceful occupancy of the earth as at once the common heritage of all, and as the conservator of the economic freedom of each.—“God in Man” Address by Charles H. Mann, noted Swedenborgian.

---

### THERE NOW!

---

“We have seen that the Single Tax is defective fiscally, politically, morally, and economically. We have learned, first, that it would be inelastic, and that it would intensify the inequalities resulting from unjust assessments; secondly, that although itself proposed chiefly from social considerations, it would prevent the government from utilizing the taxing power for other social purposes, and that it would divorce the interests of the people from those of the government; thirdly, that it would offend against the canons of universality and equality of taxation, and that it would seriously exaggerate the difference between profits from land and profits from other sources; and, finally, that it would be entirely inadequate in poor communities, that it would generally have an injurious influence on the farmer, and that even in the large centres it would exempt large sections of the population without bringing any substantial relief to the poorer classes.”—Professor E. R. A. SELIGMAN, 1913.