

## WHAT CAN THE RICH MAN DO?

According to the *London News Chronicle* (6th April) a much perplexed man is Mr John Jay Morgan who wants ideas on how to spend the sum of £800,000 for "constructive human welfare purposes, as a lasting memorial." The money was left by his partner in a chemical business, William Henry Hall, to his daughter Martha Hall and when she died it was found that her will named Mr Morgan as sole executor, instructing him to spend the money as a memorial to her father. That was two years ago. Since then Mr Morgan has been beset by a stream of visitors. He has publicly asked anyone with genuine ideas to write him. What bothers him is not how to distribute the £800,000 for "constructive human welfare" but how to make sure it will provide a "permanent memorial." He has appointed four business men as co-directors of his trust.

This notice tempted the hope that a letter might find its way to the notice of Mr Morgan and the letter was written from the Henry George Foundation as follows:—

"With respect and recognizing the great aspirations you have as well as your immense responsibility, may I draw to your attention the eloquent passage in which your fellow-countryman Henry George has analysed with remarkable brevity and clarity the problem which confronts you?

"I enclose a copy of his work, *The Condition of Labour*, and would refer you to the discussion of the question, beginning on page 146: 'Take the case of the rich man to-day who is honestly desirous of devoting his wealth to the improvement of the condition of labour. What can he do?'

"The author of the book here considers all the typical proposals for spending money to advance constructive human welfare and shows why none of them can be a lasting memorial.

"I am not asking you to subscribe to anything or to do anything. I only ask you to read a few pages of this book in the belief that they will materially simplify your problem.

"Should you be moved to acknowledge this letter, I will be very grateful."

### What Can He Do?

(The passage which the letter refers to will be well known to many of our readers (it has been published and widely circulated in leaflet form) but they will be glad to see it again and to have it presented to others unacquainted with its message.)

Take the case of the rich man to-day who is honestly desirous of devoting his wealth to the improvement of the condition of labour. What can he do?

Bestow his wealth on those who need it? He may help some who deserve it, but will not improve general conditions. And against the good he may do will be the danger of doing harm.

Build Churches? Under the shadow of churches poverty festers and the vice that is born of it breeds!

Build schools and colleges? Save as it may lead men to see the iniquity of private property in land, increased education can effect nothing for mere labourers, for as education is diffused the wages of education sink!

Establish hospitals? Why, already it seems to labourers that there are too many seeking work, and to save and prolong life is to add to the pressure!

Build model tenements? Unless he cheapens house accommodation he but drives further the class he would benefit, and as he cheapens house accommodation he brings more to seek employment, and cheapens wages!

Institute laboratories, scientific schools, workshops for

physical experiments? He but stimulates invention and discovery, the very forces that, acting on a society based on private property in land, are crushing labour as between the upper and the nether millstone!

Promote emigration from places where wages are low to places where they are somewhat higher? If he does, even those whom he at first helps to emigrate will soon turn on him to demand that such emigration shall be stopped as reducing their wages!

Give away what land he may have, or refuse to take rent for it, or let it at lower rents than the market price? He will simply make new land-owners or partial land-owners; he may make some individuals the richer, but he will do nothing to improve the general condition of labour.

Or, bethinking himself of those public-spirited citizens of classic times who spent great sums in improving their native cities, shall he try to beautify the city of his birth or adoption? Let him widen and straighten narrow and crooked streets, let him build parks and erect fountains, let him open tramways and bring in railroads, or in any way make beautiful and attractive his chosen city, and what will be the result? Must it not be that those who appropriate God's bounty will take his also? Will it not be that the value of land will go up, and that the net result of his benefactions will be an increase of rents and a bounty to land-owners? Why even, the mere announcement that he is going to do such things will start speculation and send up the value of land by leaps and bounds.

What, then, can the rich man do to improve the condition of labour?

He can do nothing at all except to use his strength for the abolition of the great primary wrong that robs men of their birthright. The justice of God laughs at the attempts of men to substitute anything else for it.

At the annual Liberal Party Assembly to be held in Buxton, 27th to 29th May, the agenda includes a resolution urging the Taxation and Rating of Land Values, moved by the Tunbridge Wells Liberal Association.

At the East and West Conference of International Students from the Scottish Universities at Bonskeid Y.M.C.A. Holiday House, Pitlochry (*Glasgow Herald*, 5th April), the Rev J. Frazer said he would rather be answerable for all the gin which was sent to Africa than for robbing one native of the land which belonged to him and his ancestors, because the whole basis of his culture hinged on that.

The Rev J. Frazer was founder and first principal of Achimota College, Gold Coast, and is now Principal of Newbattle Abbey.

In a paper on the "Housing Subsidy" given at the Scottish National Housing and Town-Planning Committee in Dunfermline, 23rd April, Treasurer D. R. Kidd of Dundee said that despite the various Government programmes the position, so far as overcrowding was concerned, was twice as bad as it was in 1917.

On 9th April William McKeown died at his home in Streatham where he had been living a retired life for a number of years, but ever interested in the Henry George movement with which he had been closely connected in Glasgow from the early days when Henry George paid his visits to Scotland. He was in his 83rd year. He is survived by three sons and three daughters to whom we convey our sympathies in their bereavement.