

THE PASSING OF SAM DUGDALE

In the death of Mr. Sam Dugdale the United Committee and the Yorkshire League have lost a colleague and an office-bearer whom they held in high esteem. He passed to his rest on Sunday, July 16th, at his home at Carr Field, Luddenden, Yorks., after a short and painful illness. It was at the Free Trade Congress, held at Antwerp in August, 1910, six years ago, that Mr. Dugdale first met a group of Single Taxers other than the few he had previously known and heard speak in Yorkshire. He attended the Congress as a Free Trader of the orthodox liberal school. He returned home with his mind bent, decidedly, in the direction of the need for freedom to produce wealth as well as to exchange it when produced.

The Single Taxers attending the Congress held a special meeting to consider and adopt a resolution on real Free Trade. This venture led to many lively and informing conversations. It was here that our friend first had his interest aroused in the more advanced and radical side of the question. There were others besides himself at this Antwerp gathering who confessed that the Single Tax Free Trade resolution and the arguments in support of it were unanswerable.

Mr. Dugdale was not so sure. Some of the Single Taxers were sure of him and not so sure of the others. He was in earnest and convinced all who listened to his objections that they were coming from the lips of a man who would go as far as truth would take him. The Single Taxers realised that once he had taken hold of their case he was bound to come to the fullest knowledge of the subject, and that when he did come he would lag behind none in his loyalty and support. Time speedily justified this opinion.

Our new recruit hastened slowly but surely. With a mind free from the bias of all he had hitherto taken to be Free Trade, he read the available literature, putting his questions and revealing his mind as a man must, or should, if he is to be of any use to our cause, or to any other. He quickly answered his own questions and argued himself into the new faith. At this stage of his progress it was encouraging to meet him. He refused to let go the footing he held on the old well-worn track until he felt his feet firmly on the new ground: but when once there, his enthusiastic support was at the service of the movement. He could now see and speak of the moral and spiritual side of Free Trade. This keenly contested policy was to him no longer a mere matter of expediency, but a great uplifting idea and one which would be embodied in legislation whenever the people willed it so.

Like many others, alas, still on the border line of the never-ending inquiry that separates truth from error on social problems, Mr. Dugdale knew his land question. He knew it as an unsettled question, not recognising in the monopoly the strongly entrenched economic obstacle

to all progress, the fruitful cause of human misery and despair, the permanent barrier to the hopes inspired by all and every kind of well-planned or well-intentioned scheme to bring relief to the working people, or enduring peace to society. His patient inquiry and consideration led him to see clearly that land monopoly was the main if not the only cause of the existing mal-distribution of wealth: that it shut out labour from employment, lowered wages, and raised rent: and that nothing short of a change that would open up land, lower rent, and raise wages would suffice to make the dream of an ideal state no longer a dream but a realisation.

In the light of this examination he accepted with enthusiasm the taxation of land values and the untaxing of industry as the radical alternative to Protection. He accepted it as an emancipating measure which had for its mainspring social justice. To him it was a reform that

made for individual character with the minimum of State direction. It was the development of character which he prized most.

He was convinced that the taxation of land values would interfere with no other sound reform and would tend to reduce the solution of social problems to manageable proportions. It made for Free Trade without Custom-houses at home or frontiers abroad. It made for a genuine and lasting brotherhood among all men, because it would break the fetters of monopoly and give trade and commerce, education, efficiency, co-operation, and every uplifting human movement, whether economic or political, a chance to grow and serve the race.

In this new and all-embracing scheme of social justice and individual freedom, Mr. Dugdale found his ideal republic and he rejoiced that he could work

for its coming in his own day and generation. The new light was new life to him.

Such in brief is the story of Mr. Dugdale's connection with the land values movement. He was an anxious student of social problems, a well informed advocate, and a wise counsellor, a man who brought with him sincerity, conviction and strength. He was loved and admired for these and many other manly qualities. In his passing we have to mourn the loss of a warm personal friend whom it was good to know and have with us. We shall miss him beyond words to say, but we can be grateful for what he was given to accomplish even in those six short years for the cause he loved. On our own behalf and in the name of very many co-workers we offer Mrs. Dugdale and her family our deepest sympathy in their great bereavement.

On his return home from the Antwerp Conference he identified himself at once with the work of the Yorkshire League. He became one of its office bearers, and one of a small number of hard working enthusiasts who made it possible for the League to open new offices at Leeds. He was elected a member of the United Committee and soon became one of its strongest adherents.

J. P.

