

own thoughts. "What a day they would have if I had the making of it!"

"Just so, Mairi," said Murdoch, gently. "And afterwards—"

"Afterwards!" echoed Mairi. "They'd be happy afterwards."

"Like the people in your fairy tales," said Murdoch, looking at the picture of Henry George again. "But life *isn't* a fairy tale. Your happy people would soon be miserable again—unless, of course—" he broke off, looking as if he saw no one. "There is a way, of course, but it is steep. This man," he added, pointing to the portrait, "has shown it—or at least the path to the first summit. He has a torch. He has lighted it, and now he holds it aloft. But the people that stumble, can they see it? Ah! What is this?" he exclaimed, as the sound of hurrying steps fell on his ears. "Here is news, surely!"

A terrible knocking drowned his voice. A moment later the door burst open, and a man rushed in waving something in his hand.

"It's all right!" he shouted. "They'll be freed tomorrow. The prisoners will be out. Hurrah!"

The house rang with joyous shouts, and Mairi cried "Hurrah!" louder than anyone.

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## CURRENT BELIEF IN PREDESTINATION.

For The Public.

The newspapers report that a baby was born to Mr. Waldorf Astor, son of William Waldorf Astor, on March 23. This baby is English, having been born in London. Its father was born in New York, but when the grandfather abjured his American citizenship and became a naturalized British subject, his family became British subjects with him. The baby's father, it is announced, will run for Parliament at the next election.

Although this baby is English, it was predestined before its birth to enjoy a princely income derived from a forced levy on the workers of New York City, who contribute several millions yearly for the support of its father and grandfather. In one sense this is not a voluntary contribution, being forced by the laws of New York. In another sense it is a voluntary contribution because the workers of New York consent to such laws remaining in force.

For my own part, I do not consent. The annual income which, under existing conditions, this baby is predestined to receive from the State of New York is very much larger than the annual tax on tea which King George tried to levy on the American colonies before the Revolution. The people of those days refused to pay into the King's treasury an annual tax of a few thousand pounds; the New York people of these days have

not such high strung, patriotic notions. They consent to deprive their families of the luxuries, and even of the comforts and necessities, of life in order to send a few millions annually across the ocean to support the English Astors in magnificent luxury. It is one of the strangest and most unaccountable acts of free born American citizens.

Laws which compel the workers of New York to support a privileged number of people, either English or American, in unearned luxury and splendor, are contrary to natural justice. Therefore they cannot be beneficial to mankind. By the term "workers" I mean laborers, mechanics, employers, business men and all others who carry on the business of the country by their industry and enterprise.

For centuries millions of the human family labored under the fatalistic belief that people before they were born were predestined to an eternal existence in hell or heaven, as the case might be, without regard to their conduct here on earth. That foolish notion was finally banished from the minds of men, on the ground that it interfered with man's free agency.

But as a people we still cling to a belief in predestination concerning earthly affairs. We consent to the idea that the Astor child is justly predestined before its birth to a life of unearned luxury, and the poor man's child to a life of undeserved poverty, although this belief runs counter to the doctrine of free agency for human beings on earth. Predestination in matters spiritual was a horrible doctrine—an abomination in the sight of the Lord; so it is as to temporal affairs.

For one, I reject predestination both as to heaven and earth. I regard it in every case as contrary to God's will and God's justice. Man should be free from the thought or fear that before he was born he was condemned to an eternity in hell; otherwise he may lose his incentive to a good life and good deeds. He should also be free from a like belief or fear as to the affairs of earth. But unfortunately we force the belief on him by the presence of existing facts. Let all have equal opportunity in life, and the horrible belief in earthly predestination will vanish from the minds of men, as in the case of that predestination which referred to heaven or hell.

GEORGE WALLACE.

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## THE FARMER AND THE SINGLE TAX.

S. H. Howes, of Southboro, Mass., in The Rockland (Me.) Opinion of April 2.

At first thought it might appear that the tax on land values would bear heavily on the farmer, as it is quite natural to think of him as a landowner. Please note, however, that the proposi-

tion is for a tax on land values, and, when values are considered, the farmer is a very small land-owner. Less than 10 per cent of the land values of the State of Massachusetts are held for agricultural purposes; 49 per cent of the land values of the State are in the city of Boston; 83 per cent in 34 cities of the State, and a grand total of 93 per cent in all of the towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants.

The holdings of land per capita are also much greater in the cities. If the land values of Boston were divided among the male poll tax payers there would be \$3,530 worth for each. Divide the land values of my town (Southboro) among the polls, and there would be only \$828 worth for each.

It is impossible to erect in the large cities buildings of as great value as the land they stand on. The bare land of Manhattan island is valued twice as highly as the great buildings that stand on it—66 per cent of the real estate value being land. In Boston 61 per cent of the real estate valuation is land value. It is the same everywhere. What is true of Massachusetts is true of every State in the Union.

The value of land is due entirely to the presence and activity of population. The large populations are in the cities and there is where you find the large land values.

While the city of Boston owns 49 per cent of the land values of the State, yet, that city pays only 35 per cent of the taxes assessed in the State. So it is plain to be seen that the small town and agricultural communities bear the heaviest burden of the State's expenses under our present system of taxation.

The single tax on land values would not fall on production but on opportunities, and must be paid by the owners of land whether they are users or not, whether they cultivate it or build on it or hold it for speculation. The capitalist would get rent for buildings and improvements (products of labor) the same as he does now, but there would be no benefit going to the holders of bare land. All of the increased value to it by the community's growth would be diverted into the public treasury.

We are earnestly opposed to confiscation. At present when a man builds a new house the tax assessor confiscates a part of it in increased taxes for the municipal, State and national expenses. But this confiscation is not necessary. The single tax would leave to every man the full product of his labor, the full earnings of his capital, and only take for the use of government what John Stuart Mill calls the "unearned increment"—the value which is the result of the community's growth and not the result of any individual's labor.

We claim with nearly every political economist of note that all taxes on the products of labor are finally paid by the consumer. Anyone who can

prove that this is not the rule will demolish the single tax theory and win for himself deathless fame. If the consumer finally pays these taxes, then to tax any products of labor anywhere in the course of its development is a downright injustice to the producer. The land value tax would be used by every man who uses land or the products of land or who lives on land.

Under our present system the farmer's tax is from 15 to 20 per cent of his net income. What other business could stand that? Corporations go to the State legislatures and ask for relief from excessive taxation. Why not relieve the farmer's burden? He is the bone and sinew of the nation.

The farmer wants no special favors. He only asks for a square deal. He is tired of trying to reach personal property. He wants to try something else.

The adoption of the single tax would have the tendency of shifting the weight of taxation from the country to the city; but wherever it falls, it will never burden, because it does not touch production or exchange in any form of industry. It means the abolition of every form of taxation which falls on production or exchange, and the opening up of the natural opportunities to labor and capital.

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### A TYPICAL INSTANCE.

**Vast Public Revenues Confiscated to Private Use. A British Illustration of a Universal Condition. Portions of an Article in the London Daily Chronicle of March 8, 1909.**

Every year 50,000,000 tons of coal roll down the Welsh valleys to the sea, and are shipped away to all parts of the world. For Welsh coal is unique. There is nothing like it anywhere else; and the navies of the world cannot do without it.

Cardiff is the center of this vast trade, which has grown up within the memory of men who are now hardly more than middle-aged. In thirty or forty years, the little town on the Taff has become a great city with 200,000 inhabitants. Its huge docks welcome the shipping of the world. Long trains of coal trucks pour into the docks and are emptied almost as quickly as you can count the trucks.

Here, as we walk up St. Mary's street, we are surrounded by fine shops, magnificent hotels, and handsome public buildings. But what is that square keep which blocks up the end of the street, frowning down on the movement of men and business which is going on around it? It is the old castle of the Marquis of Bute, who owns practically all the land on which Cardiff stands—a mediæval castle, with its donjon, keep, and moat, standing grim and gray in the twentieth century.

The old castle is typical of much. In days gone by the Lord of Cardiff dwelt in his castle, with his tenants, and villeins, and serfs around him.