

land as the gift of Nature that cannot be bought or sold. Against all the aforementioned, the Commonwealth Land Party alone in British politics stands firmly for simple justice.

This, when it is understood, will greatly simplify the issue. In view of the hurried nature of the campaign the Commonwealth Land Party deemed it advisable not to put up candidates at the General Election, but to await the coming of the bye-elections, as these will afford better opportunities of getting publicity for our demand. At any moment now the first vacancy may arise, and the Executive will seek to take full advantage of such. It will be no half-hearted compromise with principle that the electorate will be invited to endorse, no timorous begging for a favor at the hands of Privilege, but a bold and unqualified demand for Justice through the immediate restoration of the land to its rightful owners the whole people, and that without compensation.

Whether we win seats at first is of minor importance. We shall proclaim the truth fearlessly, confident that

Never yet
Share of Truth was vainly set
In the world's wide fallow.

J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.

Overheard at the Moron Club

I AM glad that there are a few men who take a sensible view of this rent agitation stirred up by a lot of discontented tenants. That Columbia University professor had the right idea when he told the Housing Commission that just as it is necessary that there should always be a surplus of unemployed labor to keep wages down, so there ought always to be a surplus of tenants to keep rents up."

"Sure thing. Why, high rents are a sign of prosperity. If the people weren't prosperous they couldn't pay rent that would give a good return on buildings that are worth fifty per cent. more than they were a few years ago. If the legislature keeps on passing these fool laws to protect tenants nobody will put up new buildings, and rents will go higher than they are now. The only way to get lower rents is to let the landlords charge what they think the tenant can afford to pay."—W. G. in *Life*

WHY a land speculator? A manufacturer makes shoes for the money we give him. The merchant distributes them. The working man performs labor for what he receives. But what does the owner of idle land do for the riches he gets?—*Chicago Bulletin*

It takes an uncynical and pecunious person not to laugh acridly at the "City's Poor Have Happy Holiday" stories in the same issue of the paper with the "City's Housing Conditions Worst Ever" stories.—F. P. A. in *N. Y. World*.

Current Comment

HATS off to the *New York Times*! It has permitted one of its writers to say editorially in an article treating of Land Settlements in South Carolina:

This is but a beginning, as the report intimates, of a grappling with the questions which have their roots in land. Indeed, most if not all of the questions that perplex the public must eventually be traced for their answers to land economics, to the relation of man to the earth he lives on and lives from.

IN an article in the *N. Y. Tribune*, of Sunday, February 10, Mark Sullivan, its special correspondent, speaking of the Teapot Dome scandal, noting the change of public sentiment respecting our natural resources, says:

Up to somewhere between 1900 and 1910 this country had a national policy about public lands and the mineral, oil and other resources in the public lands. That policy was to get the public lands as rapidly as possible out of the hands of the government and into the hands of private owners who would develop them. It was a policy that arose when our public lands seemed illimitable and inexhaustible. It was a continuation of the spirit of the times when substantially all the settlements of the United States were east of the Allegheny Mountains and when any adventurous pioneer who cared to could go West and possess himself of a section of public land with the merest formality.

AS an illustration of the growth of public sentiment we may note an interview in the *New York World* of recent date with Carlos B. Zetina, who is called the Henry Ford of Mexico. We quote as follows:

"You admit that the peasants ought to be given land and that the land of the country has unjustly been in the hands of the few?"

"That is true. The agrarian problem will not be solved until there is a more equitable distribution of land. Reaction has had its day and the time of the feudal land baron is gone forever. What I say is that in the giving of this land to the people, there should be a definite policy, precise and unvacillating.

TO a reporter of the *American* Mr. Thomas A. Edison said in answer to an inquiry, "What is America's greatest need today," "Education of the general public in economics." To this a reverent Amen is the most appropriate comment. But who shall teach them? It does not appear that those in positions of learning and authority know any more than the public.

HEYWOOD BROWN is one of the ablest writers on the New York press. His column is an undiminished delight. But he permits himself to say of Bernard Shaw that "Long before he wrote *Saint Joan* he was a Single Taxer and a Socialist." While it is true that Mr. Shaw acknowledged his indebtedness to Henry George, he was never a Single Taxer. He could not have been that and

a Socialist as well. That would have made of him an intellectual monster such as the world has not yet seen.

THE discontinuance of the *Freeman* is announced. The last number will appear on March 5th. We regret its suspension. It will be missed for its admirable discussion of the Single Tax, its discriminating literary criticism, and its "English undefiled." But it deliberately courted the fate that has finally overtaken it. Ill-natured and censorious, it repelled those who would have been glad to welcome a journal of its independent and fearless character.

The National Commonwealth Land Party Convention

WHATEVER may be the final outcome of the action taken by the Commonwealth Land Party Convention in disassociating the movement for Land Restoration—the real Henry George Doctrine—from other movements for tax exemptions, tax reductions, tax reforms, et al, it is certain that it clarifies our aims and lifts the standard out of the hands of those who, intentionally or otherwise, through ignorance or fear, or honestly from motives of mistaken expediency, would minimize the message.

We have no quarrel with those who are at work reforming our tax system in the direction of the goal that Henry George aimed at. But it is not our fight. If this process is hurried sufficiently it may save our civilization. We may not indeed get what we are after all at once. But we will get it sooner and more completely by openly avowing what we are striving for.

The trouble has been hitherto that all offers of compromise have come from Single Taxers—never from the other side. And this is inevitable since our attitude has been one of compromise. We have approached the powers "in forma pauperis," and we have got what beggars always get—crumbs, and usually not even those.

That day is forever ended. The party has done a great service to the cause which future historians of the movement writing of this period will note. Those who for reasons of necessity or predeliction of one sort or another have not joined the party, will yet acknowledge the signal service it has rendered to the cause at this time.

And the advertising publicity is certain to be enormous. The metropolitan papers which have hardly mentioned the Single Tax in the last few years, featured the convention in notable headlines. The *New York Times* printed the salient parts of the platform; no paper here failed to give the two days convention adequate notice. News dispatches of the event appeared in every important paper of the country. A great news agency supplying material to over 600 western papers will feature the candidate's portrait with an account of his life and work. The local papers of Newark where Mr. Wallace lives gave long interviews with the candidate.

When the committee of notification visits Mr. Wallace his speech of acceptance will be radioed. Arrangements are under way to have this event reproduced on the screen in the moving picture theatres of the country.

And in addition to all this the executive committee of the party will print at once a half million copies of the platform to be placed in the hands of every newspaper editor, legislator, and file leader of opinion in the United States.

The opponents of the party must be prejudiced indeed not to realize that this wide and useful publicity can not be attained by any other method than independent political party action.

A Tornado in a Teapot

CAT-A-CORNER from Cooper Union in New York City stands a monument which has received more votes as the most inartistic statue in the United States than any other within our ken. Having visited Statuary Hall in the Capitol and seen many soldiers' and sailors' memorials, we are doubtful whether it really deserves this bad preeminence. Many lines of surface cars pass the monument and the story goes that all the new motor men stop instinctively on coming near the statue, because they mistake the eloquent gesture of the bronze effigy as indicating a desire to board the car.

But the hero who is thus commemorated was a man of mark forty years ago, a Democrat in the days when the Democratic party professed opinions which made it distinguishable to the naked eye from its titular opponent. In those days it was possible to tell from policies themselves whether they were launched by Republicans or Democrats, something no longer possible. Samuel Sullivan Cox was a Congressman, an Ambassador, a free trader and the champion of the letter carriers. To the latter fact he owes the monument. He was moreover something of a wit, which seriously impeded his political preferment. His sense of humor was too acute for him to take the political hierarchy seriously. No one is more uncomfortable than an orthodox politician in the presence of a humorist. Though Cox never reached those pinnacles of fame to which his substantial qualifications entitled him, he said some things apt enough to be permanent contributions to our political criticism. For instance he made one statement in an argument for tax reduction which might be inscribed on the walls of all legislatures. "It is as easy to run a powder mill in hell as to keep an honest government with a surplus in the Treasury."

This was a primitive utterance which bears on its face all the marks of a simpler age, but it contains the germ of an idea now capable of universal application. As long as we maintain a system by which, in a quiet legal way, federal officers can turn over to individuals or corporations franchises or titles to land, which will enrich the recipients to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, is