

the coach to York—so long ago that we can almost hope it was not true.

And yet our fathers have told us of it. They and their fathers lived through it at its worst. Only six years have passed since Mrs. Cobden Unwin collected the evidence of aged laborers up and down the country, and issued their piteous memories in the book called "The Hungry Forties." Ill-spelt, full of mistakes, the letters are stronger documents than the historian's eloquence. In almost every detail of misery, one agrees with the other. In one after another we read of the quartern loaf ranging from 7d. to 11½d., and heavy, sticky, stringy bread at that; or we read of the bean porridge or grated potato that was their chief food; or, if they were rather better off, they told of oatmeal and a dash of red herring—one red herring among three people was thought a luxury. And then there was the tea—sixpence an ounce, and one ounce to last a family for a week, eked out with the scrapings of burnt crusts to give the water a color. One man told how his parents went to eat raw snails in the fields. Another said the look of a butcher's shop was all the meat they ever got. "A ungrly belly makes a man desprit," wrote one, but for poaching a pheasant the hungry man was imprisoned fourteen years. Seven shillings to nine shillings a week was the farm laborer's wage, and it took twenty-six shillings then to buy the food that seven would buy now. What a vivid and heart-rending picture of cottage life under the landlord's tax is given in one old man's memory of his childish hunger and his mother's pitiful self-denial! "We was not allowed free speech," he writes, "so I would just pull mother's face when at meals, and then she would say, 'Boy, I can't eat this crust,' and O! the joy it would bring my little heart."

We have forgotten it. Wretched as is the daily life of a large part of our working people—the only people who really count in a country's prosperity—we can no longer realize what it was when wages were so low and food so dear that the struggle with starvation never ceased.

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### RAKING UP OLD HISTORY.

From the London Chronicle of January 7, 1910.

The Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, which sat as long ago as 1885, made the following recommendations in favor of taxing vacant land, which are forty times more drastic than the proposals in the Budget. And these revolutionary proposals were recommended by the King (then prince of Wales), Earl Brownlow, Cardinal Manning, Bishop Walsham How, Mr. Jesse Collings, and other Commissioners, Liberal and Conservative.

The recommendations were as follows:

At present, land available for building in the

neighborhood of our populous centres, though its capital value is very great, is probably producing a small yearly return until it is let for building. The owners of this land are not rated in relation to real value but to actual annual income. They can thus afford to keep their land out of the market, and to part with only small quantities so as to raise the price beyond the natural monopoly price which the land would command by its advantages of position.

Meantime, the general expenditure of the town on improvements is increasing the value of their property. If this land were rated at, say, 4 per cent on its selling value, the owners would have a more direct incentive to part with it to those who are desirous of building, and a two-fold advantage would result to the community. First, all the valuable property would contribute to the rates, and thus the burden on the occupiers would be diminished by the increase in the ratable property.

Secondly, the owners of the building land would be forced to offer their land for sale, and thus their competition with one another would bring down the price of building land, and so diminish the tax in the shape of ground rent, or price paid for land which is now levied on urban enterprise by the adjacent land owners, a tax, be it remembered, which is no recompense for any industry or expenditure on their part, but is the natural result of the industry and activity of the townspeople themselves.

Your Majesty's Commissioners would recommend that these matters should be included in legislation when the law of rating comes to be dealt with by Parliament.

These recommendations have never been carried out when the law of rating was before Parliament. And now, when Mr. Lloyd George proposes a tax of one halfpenny in the pound on undeveloped land—instead of 4 per cent, or 10d., as recommended by the King, Cardinal Manning, Earl Brownlow and others, including such practical men connected with land as Lord Carrington, the late W. T. Torrens, who gave his name to Housing Acts, the late George Godwin, architect, and Sir George Harrison—the Conservative party raise the cry of "Revolution!"

What would they have said if the Chancellor had embodied in his Budget the recommendations which we have quoted?

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### THE MONEY TRUST.

John Moody in Moody's Magazine for January.

The steady and increasing concentration of wealth in all lines of activity is becoming more and more a matter of discussion in all walks of life. Figures are being produced showing that the control of great corporate and other activities is passing more and more into the hands of a powerful group of capitalists whose headquarters are in Wall street, and whose methods are being scrutinized more closely by the press and by legislative enactments from year to year. The recent developments in New York city in the direc-