

## FREDERICK VERINDER

WE regret to announce the death of Frederick Verinder, which occurred on the 19th November, at his home in Tottenham. He had risen as usual, and without warning the tired heart gave out. Thus, suddenly and peacefully, came the end to a long life dedicated and devoted unsparringly and with unexampled zeal and ability to the cause of human liberty. But a month before he had celebrated his 90th birthday, and it is only within the last two years that he found it necessary to remain at home rather than tax his strength with the long journey to and from the office. Up till then he was daily at his desk, a remarkable example of vigour sustained by an undaunted spirit. At his death his tenure of the post of General Secretary of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values had extended over a period of 64 years.

A life-sketch of Frederick Verinder could not be adequately written without telling a whole history of the events in the agitation for Land Value Taxation, with which he was so intimately and prominently connected. The campaigns which he organised, especially in the earlier days, his own platform work at the thousands of meetings, large and small, he was called on to address, his brilliant contributions as writer and author, made his name and fame a household word within and beyond the land values movement. With voice and pen he showed his faith by his works, but literary exposition was, above all, his forte; an example of his genius in that direction was in controversy, such as his devastating passage-at-arms with Herbert Spencer.

In two articles which appeared in *LAND & LIBERTY*, November, 1921, and January, 1922, Mr. Verinder provided some intensely interesting recollections of Henry George and the early days of the movement. In passing, he said: "I am one of the rapidly diminishing band who knew the Prophet of San Francisco personally, who met him face to face and worked with him side by side, who sat at meat with him in his charming family circle, who organised meetings for him and heard him speak at them, who, at close quarters, could learn to love the modesty and sweetness of his character as well as admire the greatness of his intellect." This recalls Fred's own entry into the movement and his background before that. He had been a master at Tottenham Grammar School and was studying for the classical degree at London University, but he abandoned the teaching profession to devote himself to social reform. By that time he had become acquainted with his life-long friend-to-be, the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, and together they founded, in 1877, the Guild of St. Matthew, a society of churchmen for the study of social questions. At a meeting of that Society in 1881 he heard of the new book, *Progress and Poverty*, and was soon familiar with its contents. That led to the formation, in 1883, of the "Land Reform Union," which in the following year was organised as the "English Land Restoration League" (changed in 1902 to the "English League for the Taxation of Land Values") of which Mr. Verinder was elected Secretary. And here, as Mr. Verinder himself relates, a historic incident happened. At one of its first meetings the League was passing for Press a Manifesto drafted by Henry George. "Its adoption caused Bernard Shaw's resignation; Sidney Webb went later, giving me his reason that, 'The League was working against all the things that he was working for'."

Personal acquaintance with Henry George soon followed. George had returned to this country for a

campaign in Scotland, but the first and last meetings were in London, one in St. James's Hall and the other on the open space opposite the Royal Exchange. Both were magnificent successes, but the latter is the more memorable for the use Henry George made of the inscription on the Royal Exchange which faced him, "The Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." These were the first of the meetings organised by Mr. Verinder, succeeded by so many more, the tale of which, as we have indicated, would require a whole chapter in itself, branching out also upon the formation of the United Committee in 1907 (of which Mr. Verinder was one of the foundation members) and upon the wider activities it undertook and has since undertaken.

Of Mr. Verinder's many booklets, besides his papers to our International Conferences, we name some of the most notable: *Land for the Landless*; *The Great Problem of our Great Towns*; *A Just Basis of Taxation*; *Land, Industry and Taxation*; *Methods of Land Nationalisation*; *German Efficiency versus British Liberty*; *Is there a Cure for Unemployment?*; *Form IV, What Next?*; *Land, Labour and Taxation after the War*; *Free Trade and Land Values*, the last-named written for the Antwerp Free Trade Congress in 1910 and associated with the intransigent attitude of the French anti-Georgeist Free Trader, M. Yves Guyot, who tried to prevent its discussion. Unfortunately, those publications are no longer available, used up as they have been in past campaigns. Mr. Verinder's classic book, *My Neighbours' Landmark*, a scholarly study of Bible land laws and their implication, has gone through three editions and is at present out of print. A worthy memorial to the author would be the republication of that, his most popular work. His latest contribution to our literature is his book, *Land and Freedom*, available, price 3s. 6d., from our Land and Liberty Library, and highly to be commended to every student of the land question and all that it involves.

A. W. M.

The interment took place at Tottenham Cemetery on November 25th, preceded by a Memorial Service in St. Bartholomew's Church. Among the flowers were those laid in the name of the English League and the United Committee, who were represented by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Fox and Messrs. A. W. Madsen, V. H. Blundell (Acting Hon. Secretary of the League), W. E. Bland and F. H. Batty. To Mr. Verinder's family, his sons and daughters and grandchildren, we extend our sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

The Executive of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values has called members and friends of the League to a Memorial Meeting, being held at 4 Great Smith Street, Westminster, on Friday, December 10th.

**3s. 6d.** *LAND AND FREEDOM.* A comprehensive treatise on Land Value Taxation. By Fredk. Verinder.

**4s. 0d.** *THE CONDITION OF LABOUR.* On the rights of property and justice in the distribution of wealth, with explanatory introduction and appendix containing the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, statement by the Rev. Dr. McGlynn and extract from Bishop Nulty's Essay "Back to the Land." By Henry George. (*New edition printed from new type.*)

**3s. 6d.** *A PERPLEXED PHILOSOPHER.* Ethics of the land question and examination of Herbert Spencer's recantation of his earlier declarations. By Henry George.