

assert that they will not disturb the right of possession, that the land itself is to remain technically the property of its holder, only its unearned increment is to be taken, or as Henry George puts it, we take the kernel and leave to the owner the shell: a sort of private property which is no private property and a sort of common property which is no common property.

"This condition is to be brought about by the Single Tax, which, the Single Taxer says, is no tax. Yet no one was ever more anxious to show that the Single Tax is nothing but a tax than Henry George. He tests it by all the canons of taxation, and is very eager to prove it to be not more than a tax for the purpose of showing its conservative character; merely a change in the form of taxation, that is all. It is so easy to reform the world."

The Single Taxer does indeed refuse to consider land as capital. It persistently declines to put in the same category capital and nature's storehouse from which all capital is drawn. And this is a gain to the purposes of clear reasoning. Why does not Mr. Rappaport show that if land values are taken in taxation the powers of landlord extortion no longer remain, though private possession continue? Certainly because he cannot.

It is true that Mr. George tried the Single Tax by the canons of taxation, because it is in form a tax, though not one in essence. It is true that ours is a reform which may be termed conservative, but it is not so in the sense in which Mr. Rappaport uses the word. It is—the etymological meaning of the word—radical in that it goes to the root. We do not find the conservatives of the country hailing it as the one desirable reform.

"It is so easy to reform the world." It is indeed, though it is not easy to make people see it. It is easy to return to natural laws, and to allow them to work out the salvation of the industrial world. This is more easy than the building of artificial systems and schemes for the distribution of wealth by means of state machinery. Maybe such machinery can be made to work, though the experience of history hardly promises as much. It is better to first get rid of the artificial hindrances to the free play of those forces which experience tells us do result in greater harmony and equality of distribution. And of these artificial hindrances land monopoly and all forms of taxation are the chief.

J. D. M.

THE LONDON ELECTIONS.

A concerted effort has been made to show that the recent elections in London, by which the so-called Progressives were defeated, was a defeat also for the principle of municipal ownership. Every newspaper organ of the corporations in this country,

from Maine to California, has sought to show that "municipal trading," by entailing upon the tax-payers of London unexampled burdens, has been finally repudiated by the voters of the great metropolitan center. Those who used to assert that British examples were valueless as illustrations of what might be done in this country, and ought not therefor to be cited as having any bearing upon American conditions, are now using this British example as conclusive. Demonstrations heretofore held to be worthless by reason of these different conditions, are now hailed as of immense value, and all that was said of the irrelevancy of illustration is forgotten.

The Progressives entering into power eighteen years ago, found London a mediæval city, and left it modernized. They began a policy to which there has been no interruption. Though London has "gone conservative" in general parliamentary elections several times since then, the Progressives have continued to hold their seats. The course of "municipal trading" has all this while progressed, and a number of tramway lines have passed into the city's hands. But with all of this London has not advanced in this direction nearly so far as many other British cities.

In view of this it would be strange indeed if this policy had been discredited. And it has not. The issue of "municipal trading" was not an issue, though every private corporation which hopes to profit by a change in administration, threw its strength against the party in power, seizing upon the circumstances that had arisen to discredit the party.

What these circumstances are will be clear upon examination. The increased tax rate was largely due to the making of new thoroughfares and the attempt to make the city more beautiful and healthful. The public improvements assumed by the city are not yet revenue producing, so the increased tax rate was resented. All this Charles Edward Russell, in an illuminating letter in the *New York American*, makes clear. To the facts given by Mr. Russell others may be added. The Conservative government some years ago threw upon the London County Council the cost of maintaining the church schools in London. Much, too, of the added values contributed by the enlightened London County Council to make London a better city to live in has been absorbed by the classes who absorb most of such gains—namely, the ground landlords. The members of the Council have not been blind to this, and they have never ceased to advocate the taxation of land values.

That the Progressives have made mistakes is perhaps to be granted. Few parties remain 18 years in power without committing errors and being led into some excesses, even though governed by the best

intentions. Therefore, the London *Spectator*, is probably right when it says, "They will be all the wiser for going for a time into opposition."
J. D. M.

CALLING THINGS BY THEIR NAMES.

"Let us speak plain; there is more force in names
Than most men dream of; and a lie may keep
Its throne a whole age longer if it skulk
Behind the shield of some fair seeming name
Let us call tyrants, tyrants * * *
For men in earnest have no time to waste
In patching fig-leaves for the naked truth."
—LOWELL.

Classes engaged in nefarious businesses dislike to have their occupations called by their right names. The slave holders of the South did not like the terms "master" and "slave." They much preferred the more euphonious term "Peculiar Institution," "Patriarchal Institution" and "Domestic Institution." This latter phrase, curiously as it may seem, has now become the exclusive term for the "servant girl problem." Even the burglar speaks of his "profession" among his fraternity. All such phrases are in deference to a sentiment that persists in perpetuating that which it instinctively feels to be wrong.

We are confronted with a problem as old as that of the riddle of the Sphinx, but which our *Œdipus* has not only solved but has pointed out the way in which we should go to put it into practical effect. The one first and fundamental reform which he has proposed, he tells us, is the one which will make all other reforms easier and without which no other reform will avail. And let me insist that this is not a mere fiscal reform; it is an eternal truth of God, and as surely as God works in the moral world through and by His human creation we have it in our power to accelerate or retard the movement and must so do according as we succeed or fall behind in our zeal. The first essential step to bring about this reform is to convince the people of the gigantic robbery of land monopoly. The public conscience needs to be aroused from its apathy, and one of the most effective means to this end is to "speak plain"; to show it up in all its hideousness and grossness; to use harsh language; for the truth is necessarily harsh to the apathetic evil doer, and doubly so if the evil doer is unconscious of his doing. When a friend of Garrison once remonstrated with him for the heat of his language he replied: "I have need to be on fire for I have mountains of ice about me to melt." We need Garrisons and Phillipses skilled in the use of word weapons, the only weapons, by the way, fit for settling the grievances of human society. I repeat, let us call this thing by its true name, robbery! And we may with truth go further and call it mur-

der! for it is the great juggernaut who as iron wheels go over the good, the true, and the beautiful that might spring from human lives. It has ever been the inspiration of every war waged in the name of a spurious patriotism.

I do not mean to imply that we should pick out this or that beneficiary of privilege and call him, in particular, names. Far from it, for many are victims rather than criminals, but those "sleepers on beds of down, the product of their fellows tossing upon pallets of straw" should be made to understand that they are participators in a system that morally is responsible for more of robbery and murder than the committal of all the mere legal crimes named in the statutes. None can wholly escape responsibility or lot in the matter, for being all of one blood and all a part of one body, "the greater man," it is impossible, to avoid being partakers in the sins of ones fellows even to the third and fourth generation. We are all implicated because of the commonality of the sin; and the softening of the sentence can only come by the acknowledgment of the sin and the determination to overcome it.

While some of the minor reforms which the more radical element in the Democratic party has been pressing to the fore, good enough in their way, it seems to me that something of the old time aggressiveness of the Single Taxers has been waning; that instead of going forth in the spirit of the Apostle Paul when he said, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified," they have stepped out of the main road to linger awhile in the side pasture of municipal ownership and other kindred fields, not without a laudable purpose, I fain would admit, for I see all the time their faces set steadfastly toward the celestial city. But in this connection, and by way of a gentle remonstrance, it may not be inappropriate to call attention to the message to the angel of the church of Ephesus, "I know thy works and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love."

The taking over of public utilities will have seemed easy when the real fight is on for the recovery of forest and mine, of dock and harbor privileges, railroad grants of land and city lots. Think of this great domain of ours plastered all over with every conceivable kind of bond and mortgage, and imagine, if possible, the holders of these powers over present and future production surrendering without a desperate struggle! Truly we have mountains of ice about us to melt, and it behooves us to make an early beginning by forcing the light into the black holes of the great iniquity. Let us begin the attack now from the standpoint of "calling things by their right names," for the