MISCELLANY

WHY I AM A LIBERAL.

Contributed by Robert Browning to a volume edited by Andrew Reid, in which a number of leaders of English thought answered the question: "Why am I a Liberal?"

"Why?" Because all I haply can and do,
All that I am now, all that I hope to be—
Whence comes it save from fortune setting free
Body and soul the purpose to pursue,
God traced for both? If fetters, not a few,
Of prejudice, convention, fall from me,
These shall I bid men—each in his degree
Also God-guided—bear, and gaily, too?

But little can or do the best of us:
That little is achieved through Liberty.
Who, then, dares hold, emancipated thus,
His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,
Who live, love, labor freely nor discuss
A brother's right to freedom. That is "Why."

THE SINGLE TAX IN PARTIAL OPERATION.

Guam, America's new possession in the Pacific, is not the only place in the world where the theories of Henry George are being applied. On the east coast of Vancouver Island, in British Columbia, the flourishing town of Nanaimo, with its 6,000 inhabitants, has no tax for municipal purposes save one on land values, levied alike on occupied and unoccupied land, according to the orthodox interpretation of the single tax theory. The town is a miners' town, where the doctrine of "three acres and a cow" is almost universally realized as well as that of "every man his own house owner." For this happy result the easy terms of the London syndicate which owns the coal and land in the neighborhood are largely responsible.—The London Chronicle.

THE PERSONAL VALUE OF POISE AND REPOSE.

For manner, and sympathy, and serviceableness it would be well if we all deserved the praise in which a girl unconsciously betrayed the secret of one Friend's great and widespread helpfulness: "You see she's always the same, and we always know where to find her, and that when we've got her, we have got her. Her mind is never away in other things. She's always really glad to see us, always gives us the healthiest views of things, is always hopeful; it's the best of all tonics to go and be with her."

We know the reverse of this, and how often we hear such remarks, as: "X—— was not up to his usual mark to-day." "How could you expect it when he was traveling all night to keep his appointment, and is nearly knocked up with overwork?" I once heard a wise little girl ask as she heard it—"But God is so very kind, did he really want Mr. X—— to get as tired as all that?"—Friends' Intelligencer.

THE INEXCUSABLE TRAGIC.

An unrevised interview with a youngster of eight, reported in The Conservator, of Philadelphia, by the editor, Horace Traubel.

G.—Have you read the Ouida dog stories, papa?

T.—No. Have you?

G.—They are awful sad.

T.—But they are pretty?

G.—Yes, pretty. But the best person dies.

T.—Then you don't like the book?

G.—Yes, I do. But the stories are so sad, you know.

T.—Don't you like sad stories?

G.—No. Do you?

T.—Why not?

G.—If two people die in any story, I don't like the story. In the first story the little boy dies and the dog dies. In the third story, why, the man, the owner of the dog, and master of the dog—they die, too. They are killed. The dog was shot, the man was killed, and the lady lost her mind. I liked it to the sad part. But after I read that I do not feel like reading any more. I think that after this when I get to the sad part of stories I will always stop.

T.—But if you only read happy books, you will miss a good many books it might do you good to read.

G.—They needn't be all happy. But they must be mostly happy. I like people to live. Don't you like people to live? They have the right to live. Why, then, don't we let them live?

T.—But they don't live forever, here, in this body.

G.—I know they don't. But these books don't let them die. They kill them.

"MYSELF AM HELL."

A Soliloquy by Capt. Howze in Purgatory! For The Public.

"Never can I forget the frightful place called Laoag. It was there I caused the men to be stripped and beaten who had not reported to me a murder of which they knew. I thought my 'duty' required this, that the 'honor of the army' demanded it, and a strange sentiment men call patriotism was in my heart. Not once did it come to me (though I see it now) that these men were my brothers; and so, without mercy and without a qualm, I ordered my men to lay on with rods. Right heartily did they obey. Sorely did the victims writhe, and some fainted, and, after a few days, they died.

"One I remember well; I see him now, as the blood ran and the flesh dropped to the ground, and there was scarce any life left in him. And then he shrieked to me to shoot him, but that I dared not do, lest my countrymen should look into my deed, and ask me why I murdered the man. And yet he died! But he stirred not from the bench where I had beaten him, stirred not, but moaned and moaned, and once he screamed again, and said that we had murdered him and stolen his country's freedom, and I think he murmured somewhat about God, and justice, and said there must be retribution; and then he cursed me and my soldiers, and the land that sent us thither, and sometimes I think his curse had power. And I could see his face no more, nor ever hear that voice, methinks I could have peace. But never is it masked from my sight. Even now it stares so at me that my blood is cold. The sight tortures me more than did the cruel blows I struck. I wonder much what cruel thing it is in man that makes him wish to hurt his brother, that he can bear to see him torn and bleeding, and no pity rise, nor justice wake and sternly thrust away the impious wretch from the throat of his helpless victim!"

"Which way I look is hell. Myself am hell!"

E. T. HISCOX.

THE MAKING OF A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY.

ACT V.

Scene: Push's office. J. Head Push and Frank Push discovered conversing.

Frank—Classical education, indeed! I sometimes think its chief function is to make a bad modern feel virtuous by perusal of the biographies of ancient scoundrels. I can almost feel the pangs of virtue which shoot through the circulatory pumps which certain commercial kings call their hearts when they read of Nero, Caligula and the Borgias.

Mr. Push—Have you no reverence? Does antiquity mean nothing to you?

Frank—Father, at what age does an old lie attain its majority and become a new truth? I would rather get a fact from Spencer than a mistake from Aristotle, great as he was. Bagehot says the "greatest pain to the human mind is the pain of a new idea." I have learned not only to bear but to relish that misery.

Mr. Push—And into what vagaries does it not lead you? You take no one for authority. It is nothing to you that every gold standard politician tells you that all nations that used fiat money went to the bad. You still—

Frank—One moment! The badge of a weak intellect is to mistake relations of concomitance for relations of cause and effect. England's trade is freer than ours—some of England's workmen are less well paid than ours, ergo, free trade reduces wages. No need of considering landlordism—the exclusion of labor from the earth, the solution is self-evident. Let me give you a fair sample of your party's non sequiturs. All nations sooner or later go to pieces; they have their youth, manhood and old age, and the universal concomitant of their decay, when from within, is the development of classes and masses, of luxury and beggary, but it suits my purpose to ignore all this, so I boldly affirm that intelligence—culture if you please—is the disorganizer of home and country, and that what we want is to fix it so that all but a few priests will be densely ignorant. Would you accept that conclusion? Why, dad, when Bayle compared a person who thought comets were the cause of evils following after them, to "a woman looking out of a window into a Paris street and believing that the carriages pass because she looks out," he was criticising your Republican lack of method; and when Mr. Forster, an English physician, declared that the comet of 1663 "made all the cats in Westphalia sick," he was making a good old protectionist argument. Protectionistic logic is easy to learn. It's like this: Rule 1—Where two things occur together, one is the cause of the other. Scholium—Either one may be cause, and either effect. Corollary—A modicum of ingenuity enables one to prove anything by this method, and leads him to paraphrase the Rev. Mr. Talmage's absurdity: "I would to God there were something more impossible than impossibility, that I might show my faith by believing it!"

Mr. Push—The highest test of art is its ability to move, and I think you will not deny we have moved the masses our way. Who dares talk of fiat money now? You had a free silver, and we a gold champion. Tell me, Boy, what became of your man?

Frank—He remained honest and true to his convictions. What is this mysterious monetary advantage which you think gold has over everything else?

Mr. Push—Its rarity and its consequent great value.

Frank—I move, then, that you adopt radium. There are but a few ounces of it on the planet, and it's worth something like $900,000 the pound, I believe.

Mr. Push (aside)—By Jove! How easy that'd be to corner. I'll put that flea in Morgan's ear. We could depend on Theodore, and it would be for Mark's interest as much as ours. Cleveland, Hill, Gorman et al. are all our men, and we are sure of a MONEY victory next campaign, whether we call it Democratic or Republican—that is, unless—unless those reform cranks stampede the convention. Bah! We want a safe man. One whose ear is so close to the ground he cannot see over the sage brush. If we get a vertebrate we'll have a job of tying him down, or soaking his spine in vinegar, or I'm no prophet. (To Frank) The world has never known but one safe money—gold.

Frank—Pater, when you accompany a childish remark with a Voltairean smile I never know just what to think. I wonder, now, if you can be as uninformed on this matter as you seem. I've just been reading about some of the things which have been used as money. Let me mention a few. Perhaps you do not know that Russia used platinum from 1828 to 1845. The Burman Empire used lead, and the Lacedemonians iron; England under James II., tin, gun metal and pewter; South Sea Islanders, axes and hammers; Ancient Britons, cattle, slaves, brass and iron; the Carthaginians, leather; China in 1200, bark of mulberry tree; ancient Jews, jewels; Africa and Indian Islands, cowrie shells; Iceland and Newfoundland, codfish; ancient Russia, skins of wild animals; Massachusetts Indians, wampum and musket-balls; Virginia in 1700, tobacco; West Indies Islands in 1500, cocoanuts; British West India Islands, pins, snuff and whisky; Central South America, soap, chocolate and eggs; ancient Romans, cattle; Greece, nails of copper and iron; Rome, under Numa Pompilius, wood and leather, and under the Caesars, land. In other cases, copper wire, cakes of tea, pieces of silk, salt, coonskins and cotton shirts have been used, and in 1574 Holland used pieces of pasteboard. Now it may be that all these countries and peoples went to the bow-wows, but it was not because they did not use gold money exclusively, any more than the fact that America has just a tinge of culture in some quarters is due to the idiots who have diamonds set in their toenails and teeth.

Mr. Push—What on earth is the use of having a money if it's something every ragtag and bobtail can get hold of? Where would be its power? Look at England! Some one told me a few years ago that less than a dozen men owned half of her. Now there's some distinction, some glory in such power as that.

Frank—Glory! Yes, there's the glory of commercialism. The glory of the African conquest. Glory, indeed! England imports tons of mummies yearly from Africa and grinds them up for fertilizer! Isn't that grand? What to her greed the loves, the hopes, the fears, the aspirations that made those living, clay temples sacred? What to her the belief that treasured the mummy as co-important with the soul? Father and son; mother and daughter; adult and babe, are all ground between the wheels of modern greed, a fitting symbol of the present fertilization of the stolen soil of the rich by the souls and bodies of the poor. Glory! — Shakespeare might have written: "To what base uses may we return, O England? Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of the Ptolemies till he find it a turnip stopping a mouth in some English barracks?"

Mr. Push—"'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so." Mere sentiment must not be allowed to stand in the way of business. The motto of business, my boy, is not to build high but build broad—that is, spread yourself over as much of the earth as possible, and hang on, making everyone pay tribute to your preemption. This is why I have urged you to join the Republican party—the party of EXPANSION—

Frank—of military murder, inquisitorial torture, industrial slavery, protection—of the rich,—census legerdemain, "anti-trust" bills written by the trusts themselves,—the party of subsidy and special privilege, the party of—

Mr. Push (severely) — Of Lincoln, young man! !

Frank—No, not that! The name is not the thing itself. Force not the sacred dead to turn in his coffin! The party of Lincoln! Are you not the party of slavery, to-day? Have you not at every opportunity contracted the currency? Did not your influence —I know those who call it by a yellow and metallic name—secure the repeal of the Sherman act?

Mr. Push—Privately I'm proud to say it did.

Frank—Did Abraham Lincoln ever make a remark to the effect that of

all political crimes the contraction of the currency was the worst?

Mr. Push—Really, I don't know, but I hope not. I wish you wouldn't rake up such old things, Frank.

Frank—Do you think it fair to misrepresent or assault the position of the defenseless dead, and then deny his followers the right of rebuttal? Such ideas of fair play would discredit the ethics of the jungle. Father, we shall never agree. I will not fight even in the ranks of Truth under a lying banner. To me the right of free expression is as sacred as the right of free trade. I have no patience with what you call your esoteric and exoteric truth. Neither do I believe that power—unless it be the power of love—is the greatest thing in life. What to you are your millions? You are but a single atom on this speck of stardust called the earth, immersed in an etheric sea whose telescopic horizon is not more than 12,000 light-years away. Consider it! 186,000 times 60x 60x24x365x12,000 miles! Does not the thought make you shrivel? Power! What is your power in such an arena as this? You are missing all the large verities of life—character, love; they are the great things.

Mr. Push—Vapors of youth! You'll outgrow all that.

Frank—Father, the saddest comment on modern life is that young men are better than old. Life to-day unbuilds, not upbuilds the soul. Oh, this fearful deadline of the soul! The flame of the ideal is all snuff before thirty.

Mr. Push—Life strikes you at too serious an angle.

Frank—It strikes me at the "critical angle." I lack Mr. Roosevelt's ability to temper all the alkalis of my utterance with just enough acid to make them show neutral to the litmus of criticism. Can you captains not see that your greed, which debases the masses, deozonizes the psychic atmosphere of the world, the soul-fluid you yourself must breathe? You are poisoning the spring from which you drink.

Mr. Push (aside)—Strange that I never thought of that when I see so clearly that the South's unjust treatment of the Negro debases him, and perpetually reinfects the white as surely in education and morals as it does in linguistic habit. Thought-fluid is as actual as electric-fluid. The boy has scored.

Frank (closing the book in front of his father)—Put up your ledger.

Mr. Push—The devil!

Frank—Sh! Speak gently! His Majesty has the hoof and mouth disease. Put up the book and come out into the country. I insist on one day. I will show you one June page in this volume of 365. If then you can leave that magnificent book illumined by the love-colored birds, censed by the flowers burning in the sun's glory, and full of the metric ripple of life's poetry—if after such horizons you will again bound your soul in a commercial nutshell—if you can "this fair mountain leave to feed and batten on this moor," our paths diverge. Not for me the toy grandeurs of commercialism. Come!

Mr. Push (aside)—I do not comprehend it all, yet a something back of his utterance tells me there's a value I've not yet cornered. Oh, this contagion of youth! I feel ten years' younger already, with a strange weakness like unto infancy. (To Frank)—Lead on. Indeed, "the child IS father to the man." Boy, I feel strangely weak and womanish. You'll not laugh at a tear or two?

Exeunt both, arm in arm.

THE END.

MELVIN L. SEVERY.

SPEECHES IN PARLIAMENT ON THE LAND TAX BILL.

These speeches in favor of the bill for allowing British municipalities to levy taxes on land values (vol. v., p. 821), are reproduced as printed in the London Times of March 28, 1903.

SPEECH BY THE MOVER OF THE BILL.

Dr. Macnamara (Camberwell, N.), in moving the second reading of the land values assessment and rating bill, said that in 1868 there was raised in the United Kingdom, by way of imperial taxation, the sum of £63,700,000. In 1899-1900 the amount raised was £109,630,000, or an increase of 72 per cent. The amount raised by way of local rates in 1868 in England and Wales was £16,500,000, and in 1899-1900 £40,750,000, or an increase of 150 per cent. In London the amount raised in 1868 was £3,702,000, and in 1899-1900 £11,154,000, which represented an increase of 200 per cent. in the burden of local rates. He insisted, therefore, that the plea for redress in the incidence of local rating was much more powerful and urgent than the plea for a redress on the basis of imperial taxation, legitimate as that plea was. And the burden of local rating was tending rapidly to become more acute. Though he did not profess to be a scientific economist, he had watched this question with close interest for a considerable number of years; and he had arrived at the very definite conclusion that in great towns, and especially in London, there was a direct relationship between rate expenditures and land values. (Hear, hear.) The landowner was the residuary legatee of the great bulk of rate expenditure. That, in a sentence, was his case. Last year, in the course of the debate on a similar bill to the one now before the house, the honorable and learned member for Stretford declared that there was no unearned increment. Would the honorable and learned member apply his acute intellect to this single case, though he could multiply it a hundredfold? In the year 1865, near the Temple station, on the foreshore of the Thames, there was a piece of land covered with coal sheds and coal wharfing. That land, in that year, changed hands at the sum of £8,250. In the years 1869-70 the London ratepayers built the Victoria embankment at enormous expense. Two years later the school board for London desired to secure a piece of land on which to build a central office. They secured, inch for inch, the piece of land which in 1865 changed hands at £8,250, but the jury awarded the owners of it no less a sum than £26,420. (Cheers.)

The ratepayers were hit, first, to build the embankment, and they were hit again, when they wanted these public offices, to the extent of £18,000, the result of public expenditure. He could multiply these cases to almost any extent. They were confronted with the fact that leases were falling in in the city and near it, and the owners of the land were immediately able to increase enormously the ground rent. And the important fact was that, as a result of the general desire to get away from the center of the crowded city to the suburbs, as the result of improved means of locomotion, there was a suburban zone round London the value of which was increasing fabulously at the present time. He illustrated this by mentioning a site in Wandsworth, the ground rent of which was £350, but on the buildings being cleared away the ground rent was of the total value of over £3,500. In his position at the school board he had to go into the question of sites for schools. In 1895 they bought a piece of land in a particular locality at 9d. a square foot. In 1901 for the same quantity of land, within gunshot of the other site and with local circumstances similar, they had to pay 1s. 6¼d. a square foot. (Hear, hear.) He had gone carefully into the matter, and he found that auctioneers and land agents frankly put in their announcements of land sales prospective public improvements as an