

name yet not of the same kin with himself. But such a coincidence seems to be altogether probable. The practical work of realizing the Prophet of San Francisco's ideal of freeing labor from exploitation by freeing land from monopolization, today in the hands of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, seems likely to link the name of David Lloyd George with that of Henry George in the relation of statesman and prophet, of builder and pioneer.

+ +

### Henry George and Lloyd George.

Henry George's seventieth birthday approaches in the midst of a tremendous struggle in British politics toward the realization of what he lived for and dying prayed for. And the Parliamentary leader, a man unknown to him when he lived and only recently known at all beyond the circle of personal friends, bears his own name.

+

It might be supposed that Lloyd George is not doing Henry George's work, since he asks for so little of what Henry George demanded. But he is in fact struggling along the very lines of political approach that Henry George formulated and advocated. The ideal that Henry George proclaimed, the ultimate demand he made, was indeed that land monopoly be abolished. Having seen in it a denial of natural right, and a subversion of natural laws, condemning the masses of men to hard and degrading slavery as social development goes on, he did not stop short of total abolition. But he was no irrational dreamer. He knew that an evil so firmly rooted in the very constitution of society, and so necessary to the power of the privileged few, could not be uprooted with wish-bone mummery.

+

The question of method confronted him. "How shall we do it?" he asked. And he turned for answer to the "axiom of statesmanship which the successful founders of tyranny have understood and acted upon—that great changes can best be brought about under old forms." Conforming to that axiom, he proposed not to disturb private titles to land; but, instead, to take for common purposes the premiums which social growth gives to different locations in varying degree, and which we know colloquially as ground rents or ground value. But here he was confronted with still another question of method: How should those premiums be appraised and collected. His answer was this: "We already take some rent in taxation;

we have only to make some changes in our modes of taxation to take it all."

+

He proposed to take for common use all the premiums on location. But this was his ideal, to be attained at once if possible, but progressively if necessary. That he did not expect so great a change to be accomplished at once, he makes perfectly clear in proposing, not that the taking of all these premiums or rent or land values be the first step, but that the first step be the abolition of "all taxation save that upon land values," and that the loss of other taxes be made up from this source. After this he regarded further progress as a mere matter of going on. It was not his plan, however, to stickle for the total abolition of other taxes as the first step, any more than it was to stickle for the application of his entire proposal instantly and logically. What he stood for as the first step was any step in that direction, however slight, however inadequate, however imperfect.

+

And what but this is Lloyd George doing today? He is not proposing to abolish private property in land, nor to take all land values for common use, nor to abolish all taxes except upon land values, nor to be perfectly logical in applying the principle. But he is proposing to tax some land values in some degree. This of itself might indeed be of little moment, of little significance. It is done in the United States without a Georgian significance. Land value taxes here are larger than Lloyd George is imposing, but they are not based upon the theory that land values are communal in character; the theory here is that all property, land included, ought to be taxed. Not so with Lloyd George, and this is what makes his land reform movement significant. His struggle for the taxation of land values is based upon the solid Georgian ground that land values are communal in character and therefore essentially a common fund; and to make their recognition as such complete he establishes an Imperial system of land valuation and revaluation.

+

Under those circumstances, it makes little difference how slight the exaction. Any exaction at all, with frequent revaluations and upon the basis of communal right, is a blow at the vitals of the whole pernicious system, not only in England but everywhere else. David of old slew Goliath with a pebble from the brook in Elah, which he sunk with a sling into the forehead of that giant of Gath.

This modern David, this Welsh David, this David Lloyd George has gone forth to slay Land Monopoly with a pebble, only a pebble, from the brook of Henry George's philosophy. But his pebble too is aimed straight at the center of the giant's forehead. And that the giant knows it, is evident from his bellowing.

+

We make a mistake if we imagine that the virtue of the land value clauses of the British financial bill is in the amount of tax proposed. We make a mistake if we imagine it would be a better bill with a somewhat heavier tax, or even a more consistent schedule of taxes. We make a mistake if we think Lloyd George would have done better to make no compromise, no concessions. The vitally important thing about his bill is its recognition of the Georgian principle and its provision for the imperial valuation and revaluation of land. In these clauses he has made no compromises. The land is to be valued and valued again and again so that the people shall see how their own social growth is coined into more and more money for a privileged caste and privileged capitalistic interests. Let that be done, and the people of England will soon do the rest. The privileged interests foresee this, and oppose the bill bitterly. They care nothing for the trifling tax; they care much for the process of valuations which will expose their graft. The Chancellor of the Exchequer also sees it and forces the measure through unchanged in those respects. Evidently he cares less for the amount of the tax than for the principle, less for the tax itself than for the valuation. The valuation is the pebble which David Lloyd George has aimed at the center of the forehead of Landlordism. If it sinks in, Landlordism will fall. Let the land values of any country be displayed before the public eye in black and white, as they increase with the country's growth, and the land value tax will strengthen fast enough. If we had had such a valuation in the census statistics of this country for the past twenty-five years, our own system of land monopoly would be dying now.

+ +

#### Political Commotion in Mexico.

The little news dispatches from Mexico that go floating through the American press now and then, should be watched with more than ordinary attention. Between the lines may be read the possibilities of a revolution against the despotic rule Diaz (p. 541) maintains in behalf of American investors of high degree. In September 1910, the time for the Presidential election comes around.

Diaz has carried the elections, term after term, by abrogating the Constitution, and he will probably try it again—if not for himself, for a chosen successor. Mexico's Constitution is in many respects more democratic than our own. It aims at popular government, and guarantees freedom of speech, of the press and of elections. But all the safeguards of popular sovereignty have been cynically thrown down by Diaz. There is no freedom of speech or of the press, the country is ruled by a standing army of "rurales" in evidence in every rural community, and the elections are a farce. There is but one political party, not because political sentiment is harmonious but because an opposition party is not tolerated. It is death or worse than death to be actively identified with political opposition to the dynasty. No people will long tolerate such usurpation, and as the Presidential election draws near, during the next twelve months Mexico may become a news center of the first magnitude. Meanwhile let it be observed in reading news dispatches from that unhappy country, that it is one of the easiest tricks of tyranny, to discredit patriotic upheavals by describing revolutionary movements as bandit raids.

+ +

#### Flower's New Magazine.

Although the old *Arena* (p. 741) magazine be abandoned in consequence of its bankruptcy, its spirit will enter into a new one under the editorship of B. O. Flower, who founded the *Arena*. For many years the *Arena* was a power in the land. Throughout the West it could be found in the nineties in the home of almost any family of thoughtful people, and this although the price was double that of the other magazines and its readers were of the class to whom a quarter more or less makes a difference. But an attempt to make the *Arena* conservative, which involved the displacement of Mr. Flower as editor, ruined the magazine both in circulation and influence, and despite the strenuous efforts of Mr. Flower, upon his return to its editorship, and of Mr. Brandt, who has sacrificed a profitable business as its last publisher, it never quite recovered its old place. One reason, probably, is the fact that there are lighter magazines now which supply in a measure the demand that only the *Arena* attempted to supply a decade or two ago. But these magazines, useful as they are, do not fill the actual need. They aim to please all men in all things rather than to instruct any one in anything. In this way they get large circulations and can sell for low prices; but by the same token they are