

ipal ownership problem when he added:

The whole direction of municipal ownership is toward equalization of opportunities, whereas private monopoly of any public service tends to the increase of inequality. If the cause of corruption so much complained of in America be removed, is it not probable that official corruption itself will disappear and the public will rejoice in the possession of cheap general utilities as in other lands?

Land values taxation in Great Britain.

From a "catechism of land values," which a landlords' union, The Property Protection Society, is circulating in England in opposition to the land values taxation idea to which the Liberal party is committed, we observe that the British landlords are defending their privileges with quotations from a speech made in 1887 by Dr. A. R. Wallace relative to land value taxation in the United States. Dr. Wallace must have been badly informed as to fiscal customs in this country. He is quoted as saying that although every particle of land under private ownership, whether built on or not, is taxed on its full selling value in America, land speculation is nevertheless everywhere excessive. The latter part of this statement is true; the first part never was true, and we question its authenticity as being a statement from Dr. Wallace.

If there is any place in the United States where land is appraised for taxation at its full selling value, the rate or percentage of tax there will be found to be extraordinarily low. In most places it is appraised for taxation at much less than its full selling value; and in all places the tax is so low, relatively to selling value, that a large margin for speculation is left. In Chicago, for instance, land is required by law to be appraised for taxation at one-fifth of the selling value, and the taxes are limited to 5 per cent., so that the tax is only 1 per cent. of selling value. The highest tax appraisals of land anywhere in the

United States seldom exceed 60 per cent. of selling value, and large holdings not built upon are often appraised at only 20 or 25 per cent. of selling value.

It is strange that so thoughtful a people as the English should be misled by such "statements of fact" regarding economic conditions in distant countries. The statements, in so far as they imply that a full tax on the full selling value would not abolish speculation in land, are transparently false. Any British child ought to be able to calculate that if the tax gatherer were to take all, nothing would be left for the speculator. If, however, taxes were levied on full selling value, but the taxes were so low as to leave a margin for speculators, then of course there would still be speculation. Its intensity would depend upon the margin, and the margin would depend upon the rate of tax. We do not understand that the Liberal party of Great Britain advocates taxes high enough to wipe out the speculative margin wholly. It proposes one that would narrow the margin. Consequently, what it now proposes would not abolish land speculation; but it would obstruct land speculation, and the rest would be only a matter of keeping on.

Woman suffrage in New York.

Under the auspices of the Harlem Equal Rights League of New York, a "straw" election is to be held on election day, at which the women of New York are invited to vote for their choice for city and county offices. All women living within the limits of greater New York are invited to attend the woman's polling place in the Harlem Casino, 124th street and Seventh avenue, from 1 to 6 p. m., on the 7th. At that time and place provision for balloting in the ordinary way will be made, including a supply of voting booths and forms of official ballots, and the vote is to be regularly announced and published. It is quite improbable that knowledge of this exper-

iment will become general in time to produce results of much magnitude at the present election; but it is easy to see that if the experiment were to grow into a general custom, it would figure as a formidable practical argument for welcoming women citizens to the official voting places. The experiment is in charge of Mrs. Martha Williams, Mrs. Belle de Rivera, Mrs. Florence Kelley and Miss Maud Malone as the board of election.

Bernard Shaw's play.

Whoever has read Bernard Shaw's "Plays, Pleasant and Unpleasant," on sale this long time at general book stores of good repute, will be rather more surprised than the average newspaper reader at the decorous din over the alleged indecency of one of the unpleasant ones—"Mrs. Warren's Profession." The decorous din is easily explained. It is not because one of the characters is a courtesan, as the newspapers have it; courtesan characters are common in fashionable dramatic productions and there is no din. It is not because her vile business is exploited in the play; that also is common and permissible in fashionable plays, and exploitation is absent from this play. It is not because of any pruriency in Shaw's play, for, common as pruriency is on the stage, it is not present here. The outcry against the Shaw play springs from no sensitiveness at making prostitution a subject for the dramatic stage. It is in truth a pharisaical protest against the awful indictment Shaw launches at the industrial causes and wealthy promoters of prostitution. Prostitution is a fact, a terrible fact, and Shaw recognizes it as such in his play. Had he done this artfully and stopped there, we should have heard no outcry. But he does not stop there. He points at the respectable groups who profit by prostitution, and at those who maintain industrial conditions under which great masses of girls in every generation must choose between Mrs. Warren's profession, and some such industrial servitude as had

been preferred by her sister, who died horribly in her youth of lead poisoning contracted in a factory where she was overworked and underpaid. This is Shaw's sin. We are not saying that his play is a proper one for stage production. It may or may not be, as an abstract question of the dramatic proprieties; but on that question there is no present necessity for expressing judgment. What we do say is that this play is as legitimate as any other sex-problem play, and infinitely cleaner than many that are welcomed and applauded by the very classes by whom this is condemned. The charge of lubricity is only an excuse, based upon prurient interpretations of Shaw's portrayal of vicious results; his real offense in the eyes of the pharisees, is his coincident portrayal of the industrial causes.

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THE CHURCH?

The bishops, the preachers, the laymen, all, are asking the question: What is the matter with the church? Why does it no longer attract men?

One Sunday, not long ago, in a rather large congregation, the writer was one of five men in attendance! Only five men in a large congregation!

This was an extreme case, no doubt. But who will deny that it is an example of a general symptom?

Men do not care for the Church. That is not to say that men are no longer religious. True, the failure of the Church to feed the religious hunger of the world is causing increasing numbers to lose faith in religion. But men who intelligently discriminate between merely human institutions and divine principles are just as religious as such men ever were.

And there are prophets in the pulpit to-day. But the Church does not know them, and I dare not name them. To name them would but expose them to the scoffing of the church.

The matter with the Church is that it is wanting in religion.

It may answer the need of the

family, but not of society; of the individual, but not of the mass.

Yesterday was the day of the circuit rider. The family was so loosely connected with the social body—men lived so far apart—that the preacher was forced to go far to find a small congregation. The sermon is the same to-day as then, except as to hell fire; but human society is different. Then the preacher warned his hearers against stealing purses—and it sufficed as to theft. Trade was a thing so simple, and the values were so obvious that each individual was competent to protect himself against inequity in matters of barter. Then the purely social relations were few in kind, but the preacher laid down the law concerning them all.

To-day the industrial life of the country is intensely social, and the individual is extremely dependent upon the integrity of the social mechanism for his equity in the final distribution. Will any man pretend that the distribution is equitable?

Look at the reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission; look at the revelations in regard to the great life insurance companies, the beef trust, the steel trust and many other private monopolies, all of which take toll from the masses who work for what they get. It is not merely that these monopolies cheat the public out of hundreds of millions annually; a more direful effect is that they deprive multitudes of the chance of gaining an honest livelihood. Monopoly creates a misbalance between supply and demand, making work scarce relatively to the number of would-be workers. Thus starvation forever lurks in the lower places of the social world.

But what is the organized church doing toward correcting this enormous evil?

A certain sinner of Boston has done more toward eradicating the commercial villainy of the times within the last year than ninety per cent of the clergy have done in all their lives.

"What is the matter with the Church?" This: The Church has abandoned society to the tender mercies of commercial pirates, whose gifts have purchased silence from the clergy in general,

and frantic support from some clergymen in particular.

Here and there a prophet cries aloud from the pulpit, unheard by the Church at large, or, if heard, condemned as an agitator or a sensationalist! The whole secular world, recognizing the prevailing political and commercial diabolism, is boldly calling spades spades, but the clergy calmly and circumspectly continues to call spades "alleged mechanical instruments, used in excavating—perhaps!"

The preacher will valorously denounce the Sunday peanut peddler—and board the Sunday trolley car at the close of his sermon. He will cry anathema upon the boys who play ball on Sunday, and on the same day himself patronize a transportation system that chains multitudes to the wheel of toil seven days a week, year in and year out.

The preacher declares that his duty is to inculcate the fundamental principles of morality, leaving the practical programme to his hearers. Jesus commanded: Thou shalt not steal. But he did not end with merely stating a central principle; he went into the Temple, overturned the tables of the money mongers, and branded them as thieves.

What good is a principle that cannot be applied? If the shepherd dare not interpret his principles in relation to the practical affairs of life, can he expect the sheep to do so? If the learned teacher dare not place his hand upon a thing and say: It is accursed, will the humble learner venture to do so? Will the rank and file go where the captain dare not even point the way with definiteness?

"What is the matter with the Church?"

This: It strains at the gnats of individual peccadilloes, and swallows the camels of social diabolisms.

Here and now the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Let not him who fails to strive for heavenly conditions here and now flatter his recreant soul with the hope of heaven hereafter.

The hypocrite will pretend to scorn wealth; will characterize desire for wealth as sordid;