

democracy along economic lines. His vocation was that of an expert in tapestry, and in this employment he traveled widely and underwent some extraordinary experiences. By 1879 he had established himself in business at Melbourne, where he became acquainted with the doctrines of Henry George. Convinced of the soundness of their conclusions and the vital importance to mankind of their practical application, although he laid the emphasis on their phase of expediency, rather than on the religious ideal to which George chiefly appealed, Mr. Hirsch abandoned his business to work for his cause. For many years afterwards he lectured throughout Australia, edited the Melbourne "Beacon," wrote many pamphlets, founded many societies, participated actively in politics, and became the leading exponent in Australia of the principles of free trade and land value taxation.

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In the course of his political service, Mr. Hirsch was elected to the lower house of the Victorian legislature, and from a farming constituency notwithstanding his undisguised advocacy of land value taxation. Gaining here general recognition for his genuineness and abilities, he was soon upon the highway of a parliamentary career. But the Australian Commonwealth was formed about that time, and at the request of the national Free Trade leader, Mr. Hirsch resigned his seat in the Victorian parliament to go before a Protectionist constituency for a seat in the parliament of the Commonwealth. The constituency was overwhelmingly Protectionist; yet Mr. Hirsch, in an open Free Trade campaign (vol. iv, p. 130), came within 160 votes of winning the seat. To American readers it may be interesting to know that Thomas G. Shearman of New York and Tom L. Johnson of Cleveland were the principal contributors to a fund for that campaign, which was collected in this country by Mr. Hirsch's personal friend and economic pupil, Melvin J. Foyer, now of Toledo. Although defeated for the seat, Mr. Hirsch nevertheless served the Free Trade party well from the "newspaper box" on the floor of the Commonwealth parliament. His economic and political specialty was statistics, which he read with the readiness of a music master reading music, and throughout the session he served the Free Trade leader with data and explanations of data at every turn in the parliamentary fight. It was "largely through his endeavors," says "Land Values," that "the tariff that evolved was marked by a comparatively low range of duties."

By readers of The Public Mr. Hirsch will be gratefully remembered as the contributor of some of its best special articles (vol. x, p. 319; vol. xi, p. 103; vol. xii, p. 77). His was a useful life, a strenuous life, and—although he died poor in purse and therefore a failure from the plutocratic viewpoint—a life of extraordinary success. We could pay no better tribute to his memory than we do by quoting with cordial approval the eloquent words with which "Land Values" closes its report of his death: "Not in vain was the life of this great selfless man lived. The cause he fought and died for dominates all others in his adopted land. In every Australasian State it has been initiated, except two, where the will of the people has been thwarted by unrepresentative upper chambers. Not in vain, for the many he taught and inspired by word or deed, who looked to him as master with regard that was something akin to reverence, will carry on the work to glorious consummation, and so erect to his memory a monument more enduring than any that could be cast in metal or hewn from stone."

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The Single Tax Among Farmers.

A superstition has long prevailed that the single tax will never be accepted by farmers. It will be found, however, that this depends upon what kind of farmers are meant—the "farmers that farm farms, or those that farm farmers." Farmers have indeed been long misled by the idea that the single tax is a tax upon the work or business of farming; but the agricultural classes are not so unintelligent that plutocratic misrepresentation will make them always blind to the fact that the single tax exempts from taxation all legitimate work, all legitimate business, including the business of agriculture. They are certain to realize sooner or later that the single tax burdens only the monopoly of natural and industrial opportunities for agriculture and for other business. It taxes the farmer who farms farmers; but it exempts the farmer who farms farms.

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In Australasia they are already finding this out. For applications of the single tax are growing both extensively and intensively in Australasia, and quite as successfully in farming regions as in city communities. This is true also of Canada, where very considerable applications of the principle of the single tax are in successful operation in farming regions. And a favorable attitude is showing itself among our own farmers. Witness these resolutions, adopted last autumn by a well-

attended and representative meeting of farmers at Lasita, Kansas, and forwarded to the Country Life Commission of the Federal government:

We believe that the hardships and consequent tendency of people to quit farm life are to a large extent caused by wrong economic conditions. First, a vicious system of taxation. . . . Second, we have a financial system that oppresses the farmer as long as he is in debt. . . . Third, our railroad freights are too high. To remedy these evils we recommend that all Federal taxes be raised by direct taxation on property. . . . In order to check land speculation, and consequent inflation of land values we recommend a graduated land tax. We recommend that improvements on land be exempt from taxation. . . . With these changes in our laws in full operation we believe that the present tendency of decreasing farm population will be checked. Renters will have better opportunities to become owners of farms, our young men encouraged and enabled to buy and own homes, country schools improved, social life promoted, and the home, the real basis of a nation's greatness, reinstated again.

The Kansas farmers who adopted those resolutions are beginning to see through the film of misrepresentation which has so long held their class in subjection to plutocracy. Misled by the notion that the exemption of farm improvements, implements, products and objects of consumption, at the expense of taxation upon land in proportion to its value, would increase the taxes of farmers who farm farms, they have opposed the single tax. But they are beginning to see that the single tax means to them not heavier taxation but lighter taxation. And there are more such intelligent farmers a-coming, and a-coming fast.

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Vacant Lot Gardens in London.

London cable despatches of the 10th to the Chicago Record-Herald, report striking progress in the work of the Vacant Land Cultivation Society there. This kind of relief work, which was originated at Detroit by Mayor Pingree some fifteen years ago, is promoted in London by Joseph Fels, who computes, according to the dispatches, "that there are 10,000 acres of idle land in and about London," and who "is pointing out that if, as in America, this land can be made to produce \$225 to the acre, the society would have the means of making a very substantial unemployed relief fund in an unobjectionable way." Mr. Fels says, as the dispatches quote him, "that the land is eagerly sought after, that 90 per cent of the men stick to the work, that they learn it very satisfactorily, and that a great many acquire a real liking for it." He adds, as the dispatches state, that—
It is difficult to move the authorities in the direction of extensive relief schemes connected with the work

on the land, and in consequence much is left to public and private action. Even in the United States, where the same problems exist, it has been found necessary to proceed beyond the ordinary stereotyped relief work provided by the States or towns and find additional means of employment of a more permanent character. The vacant lots associations have accomplished some wonderfully good work in New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Buffalo and in other cities, and we mean to imitate them. In Philadelphia 300 acres are under cultivation for unemployed men, who have provided relief for 1,000 families, comprising 5,000 persons. A big meeting is to be held in London next week, when it is hoped to interest wealthy philanthropists in the scheme.

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THE "SINGLE TAX" AND "MUNICIPAL SOCIALISM."

I.

An extraordinary pamphlet on "Municipal Socialism" has come to our desk.* It is extraordinary alike for the authoritative character of its origin, the extent of its circulation, and the influence it appears to be exerting. The author, formerly at the head of the financial department of the City of New York as comptroller, is now president of a large real estate corporation—the New York Guarantee and Title Company. In addition to his business qualifications, he is evidently a student of economics; one, however, who thinks for himself. The pamphlet has such scientific sanction as is implied by original publication in one of our great periodicals of political science. Its author's dialectic method withal, is either extremely ingenuous or highly artistic, and therefore well adapted for commanding sympathetic attention to his plea and securing off-hand acquiescence in the argument.

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Beginning with a statement that revolutionary socialism has made and can make but little progress—the public mind in normal circumstances being averse to revolution,—and yet that there is an unmistakable and steady drift toward a practical socialism in municipal affairs which needs analysis and demands profound consideration, this pamphlet enters upon an inquiry into that subject.

It is essentially the inquiry of a business man. But of a business man who neither ignores economic scholarship nor holds the primary principles of social justice in contempt. The conclusion

*Municipal Socialism and Its Economic Limitations. By Edgar J. Levey. Reprinted from Political Science Quarterly, vol. xxiv, No. 1. Published by Ginn and Company, Boston. 1909.