

Faulty Methods of Education

J. CLARENCE DAVIES, INC. and Joseph P. Day, Inc., at 67 Liberty street, this city, printed ads. for the sale of the Astor property on June 14. They say in large display:

"If the Astors had cut up into lots and sold at auction the Medcef Farm, which was on Broadway from 42nd to 46th streets running to the Hudson River where the Hotel Astor now stands, and the Putnam Building and many theaters, and your grandfather had bought some of the lots, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORK, WOULD YOU?"

This last is in large type. It was read by thousands of readers. And how many stopped to think what it meant?

Perhaps Single Taxers may say that they have overrated the intelligence of the people. They may say if the people were really intelligent, Messrs. Day and Davies would not dare to make such an appeal. They would not dare to point out so frankly how a few may live without work. Single Taxers have been preaching the evils of present conditions for over a generation. They have urged that the system that permits individuals to pocket values that the community creates is a "Bold, bare and enormous wrong." Yet here are two auctioneers who say just what we have been saying for forty years, and nobody turns a hair.

What's the matter with us? For there must be something the matter with us. The fault is not wholly in the people, muddy as many of their brains are.

Well, here is just where the trouble is. We have been content to preach about these evils and the remedy for them. We have preached, but we have not acted. Even when we preached it was not in the language of the people, but in academic terms. We did not dwell upon the appalling social wrong, the wrong that makes of the earth the private property of a few. Instead we talked taxation. Then, too, many of us spoke from democratic and republican platforms, talked free trade, initiative and referendum, currency, anything but the stopping of this gigantic social wrong. When it was proposed to get out and vote against it through candidates of our own selection, it was curious to observe the timidity of so many who had avowed their willingness to

die for the principle. Not a single valid argument could be advanced against the proposition that we should stand for what we believed in—stand politically, withdrawing ourselves for once and all from the parties of the House of Have (the parties of Get More by the same anti-social means) and declare ourselves for the House of Want (the disinherited). That Single Taxers should adopt the only method by which economic truth can be translated into terms of law, the method given us by the founders of this government, permission to express what we wanted at the polls, seemed so daring a proposition that some of us fairly gasped at it.

They told us that we should continue methods of education exclusively. Very well. We have educated the people so successfully that Messrs. Day and Davies do not fear to print what we have been telling them for forty years in little lecture rooms, before Chambers of Commerce, telling it not in terms of the great social revolution, but presenting it as a phenomenon of considerable interest to those who had the leisure to study it, for which the remedy is the gradual, very gradual, shifting of taxes from improvements to ground rents. And this was varied by a few anecdotes about fining men for building houses every year and fining men only once for robbing henroosts. And the hearers depart, greatly tickled with the natural facility of the speaker and his very humorous presentation.

No, the fault is not entirely with the people. It is in ourselves.