

## HANDS ACROSS THE SEA.

(See frontispiece.)

Believing that our readers will be interested in becoming better acquainted with our British comrades who have so worthily upheld the banner of our cause in the United Kingdom, we append the following biographies of those who for so many years have been foremost in the fight.

## LEWIS H. BERENS.

Mr. Lewis H. Berens, whose name will be familiar to most of our American co-workers, was born in Birmingham, England, in 1855, and so to-day is well over fifty years of age. He was educated at a private boarding school at Edmonton, near London, and subsequently in Germany and Brussels. Returning to England in 1872, he spent four years in his father's business, and in 1876 he went out to Sydney, New South Wales, to take part in the branch of the same business in that town. During his stay in Sydney he studied John Stuart Mill's well-known book, "Principles of Political Economy," and, as he is still fond of relating, not being able to follow its teachings, distrusting his own judgment when opposed to such an authority, he put the book aside under the belief that it required a mind differently constituted from his own to understand it. In 1878 he went into partnership with his brother, and started business on their own account in Adelaide, South Australia, and for some years devoted himself almost exclusively to his business. In 1883 a short trip to what in Australia is still termed the Old Country quickened his interest in social and economic questions; and on his return to the Colonies a copy of "Progress and Poverty" fell into his hands. It is still a matter of constant regret to Mr. Berens that he does not know what induced him to read this book. Read it he did however, and turning to his old and well-marked copy of Mill, he found all his doubts justified and explained. After reading the book, Mr. Berens became an ardent convert to its teachings, and as he is also prone to tell kindred spirits, he wandered evenings in the streets of Adelaide wondering whether in reality he or the rest of the world was mad; a doubt, he humorously adds, not yet entirely removed. However, a week or so later, attending a meeting of the South Australian Single Tax League, then some few weeks old, he soon found himself in touch with other kindred spirits, and for some years he, Mr. Ignatius Singer and Mr. Henry Taylor were the prime movers of this active association, which still flourishes under the able secretaryship of Miss Emily Williams. In 1889 Mr. Berens married, and some two years later, in 1891, he returned to reside in England. On leaving Adelaide his fellow-members presented him with a handsomely illuminated address, which is still one of his most cherished possessions, and in which his services to the cause are refer-

red to in the most glowing terms. Arrived in England Mr. Berens soon settled down in Yorkshire, in order to be near his old friend Mr. Singer, and together they started an investigation, the first results of which appeared some six years later, in 1897, in the shape of a book under the title "Some Unrecognized Laws of Nature," published in England by Messrs. John Murray and in the U. S. A. by Messrs. Appleton. Whilst engaged in this work, by way of recreation, they conjointly wrote and published the now well-known "Story of My Dictatorship," which just now the associated Leagues of Great Britain are running in cheap edition. In 1892 Mr. Berens became the founder and prime mover, "head-cook and bottle-washer," as he would express it, of The Bradford League for the Taxation of Land Values, which under his guidance organized the first Taxation of Land Values Conference ever held in Great Britain, and which is still referred to as a mile-stone in the recent stirring history of our movement in that country. In 1903 Mr. Berens published a book on Ethics and Economics, the outline sketch of which he had brought with him from Australia some twelve years before, under the title "Toward the Light;" a book to which *The Public* referred as—"The most able and effective work in support of the Taxation of Land Values that has appeared since the death of Henry George." About 1893 Mr. Berens took up some investigations of a most interesting Land Reform movement of the early days of the English Commonwealth, to which Carlyle refers in his "Life and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell," but which had been consistently ignored by more orthodox historians. The result of this work was given to the world in November last, under the title—"The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth, As revealed in the writings of Gerrard Winstanley, the Digger, Mystic and Rationalist, Communist and Social Reformer." Mr. Berens acclaims Winstanley, not only as the Henry George, Tolstoy and Ruski of his time, but as undoubtedly the spiritual founder of the Quakers, or Society of Friends; a claim supported in an able review of the book which appeared in the January number of *The Athenæum* the leading and most critical literary journal of Great Britain. The Public Publishing Company, of Chicago, is handling this book in this country. To-day Mr. Berens is Honorary Treasurer and closely associated with the work of The English League for the Taxation of Land Values, whose head office is at 376-377 Strand, London, W. C., where he and the other officials are always glad to welcome stalwart Single Taxers from any part of the world. His special weakness is a belief in the value of literature on the subject, and if he had his way no lecture would be given under the auspices of his League without a well stocked literature table being pro-

vided. "A lecture without literature is," he says, "like salt without a dinner, stimulating, perhaps, but not satisfying." At the beginning of last year Mr. Berens was somewhat seriously ill, but is now better, and almost as active as ever.

#### IGNATIUS SINGER, F. C. S.

Though his sympathy with the cause of social justice remains unabated, Mr. Singer, co-author with Mr. Berens of "The Story of My Dictatorship," has of late years led so retired a life that his yeoman's services to the cause in its earliest stages are comparatively unknown to the present generation of Single Taxers. That they are still well remembered and appreciated in Australia was made manifest in the warm welcome he received from our Australian co-workers when he revisited that country some few years ago after an absence of over seven years.

Mr. Singer was born in Hungary over fifty years ago. When quite a young man he emigrated to England, and for some time had a bitter struggle for existence in the heart of the richest city of the world; a struggle which greatly influenced the development of his powerful and original mind. As he once expressed it, in a remarkable letter to a South Australian paper, at the time of the great Dock strike in London—"Hunger tends to make a man either a criminal or a philosopher;" and we fear that this stern teacher did his part in helping to make Mr. Singer the philosopher all who to-day come into intimate contact with him soon recognize him to be. To occupy his leisure, when earning a miserable pittance in London, Mr. Singer wrote an Hungarian Grammar for Messrs. Trubner & Co., the first ever published in Great Britain, which was most favorably received by the critics, and which brought him some reputation, though but very little cash. Somewhat later a German gentleman enlisted his services to aid in writing a Political Economy. During their preliminary discussions, he continually interrupted Mr. Singer by saying—"Ach! that wont do. I see you are a Georgian." After this had happened several times, Mr. Singer asked his co-worker—"A Georgian? What is that?" Taking from his book-shelf one of the Sixpenny quarto editions of Progress and Poverty, he threw it on the table, saying, "Why, surely you have read this book." But Mr. Singer hadn't. However, he took it home with him, stayed up the whole night reading it, and returned it to its owner the following evening with the remark: "Yes, you are right, I am a Georgian"; and a Georgian Mr. Singer has ever since remained.

Finding that his colleague was solely intent on writing a Political Economy that would be favorably received by those in place and power, Mr. Singer soon relin-

quished the work, and shortly after emigrated to South Australia, settling in the beautiful city of Adelaide. "Times were bad," as the saying is; land monopoly in the new country, as in the old, was producing its poisonous fruits, and Mr. Singer soon found a favorable field for the exposition of the basic economic truths he had formulated for himself. Together with Mr. Henry Taylor, who we are glad to know is still foremost in the good work in the same State, Mr. Singer assisted to found and build up the South Australian Land Nationalization Society, or Single Tax League, as it was afterwards re-christened. The "Triumvirate," as Messrs. Singer, Taylor and Berens were called, kept the cause moving in Adelaide for some years, during which they published a little weekly paper, "Our Commonwealth," of which Mr. Singer was editor, and a bound copy of which is still amongst Mr. Singer's most cherished possessions.

In 1887 Mr. Singer returned to England, in connection with a patent Wool Scouring Machine of his own invention, which, however, did not prove the success that was anticipated. Some time later Mr. Berens joined him in England, and they worked together for some seven years—"The Story of My Dictatorship," "Government by the People," and "Some Unrecognized Laws of Nature" being the literary fruits of their joint labors. After helping to establish the Bradford Branch of the English Land Restoration League, or League for the Taxation of Land Values as it is now called—which is also still flourishing under the guidance of our enthusiastic and energetic co-worker, Mr. Fred Skirrow—Mr. Singer left for New Zealand, but soon returned to take up a position as Research Chemist to the Bradford Dyer's Association, and of whose well-equipped laboratory he is at the present time the head. As we have already said, Mr. Singer's sympathy for our cause remains as keen as ever; but he is kept too busy on the very different problems attendant on his official position, to be able now to devote much time to the cause he served so well when it was more unpopular and had far fewer devoted adherents than it has at the present day.

#### FRED SKIRROW.

Fred Skirrow is in the front rank of English Single Tax workers. Born at Bingley in the West Riding, of Yorkshire, in 1863, he commenced work in the factory as half-timer at eight years of age. In 1882 he went out to Michigan, but after a few years passed over to Canada and the same year joined the Knights of Labour, taking a very great interest in the work of the Order. After much wandering he finally settled in the City of Hamilton, and it was there that in the summer of 1882 or 1883 he first heard of Henry George, who was the