

quite foreign to our true instincts results, of which one symptom is this aggressive Nationalism which Mr. Angell so deprecates. What but liberation can be the cure? What but extension of opportunity?

Along with "If Britain is to Live" Mr. F. E. Giant's "The Problem of War and its Solution"\* should be very carefully read. A view is there presented which we shall ignore at our peril. The problem of war cannot be divorced from the social problem.

In giving to the world his latest work Mr. Angell adds to the many services he has rendered to the cause of goodwill among nations. But though we are again indebted to him for a wonderfully able statement of truths which no student of affairs can afford to overlook, we still venture to hope that, in his capacity of realist, he will come to see that, till this basic fact is dealt with, we shall not go far to solve the problems dealt with in this, his latest, work.

W. R. L.

### "THE PRINCE OF THE DEVILS"

English friends tell me that Germany is only being served with her own sauce: and that given the chance the little finger of Hindenburg and Ludendorff would have been thicker than General Degoutte's loins. I do not doubt it for a moment. French friends tell me that they seek no territory, they seek no gold-fields—I seem to have heard that before somewhere—that all they want is justice and the reasonable recompense for their intolerable wrongs that the shifty policy of Germany continually denies them. And I think there is a great deal of truth in that too. Only, what is its relevance? It is no answer to the song. Beelzebub, invoked to cast out Satan, is Beelzebub still, even if he does it. It makes no difference whether he wears for the occasion Prussian grey or Italian black or French blue or English black and tan. The remedy in all cases is worse than any possible disease.

It is of no avail to talk of legal rights and documentary obligations when once the song has been raised. They have no more meaning when that happens than the shapes in the mist which the wind drives before it on Helvellyn. It is not exclusively a German song. It is heard in the long run wherever freedom is threatened by brute force—in Switzerland and in Boston Harbour, in Dublin and in Brussels, in Naples and in Paris. It may be heard some day (though God forbid) in London. It will always be heard wherever brave men are trampled underfoot, under whatever pretext, by tyranny. The poor lay figures do not matter—the von Bissings and the Degouttes, the Trotskys, and the Mussolinis and the Talbots. It is the figure behind them that matters: and what man of any country that is a man at all, looking up into the mean, cruel, lowering eyes of the disgusting ruffian Force, does not hear in his ears the song which has risen sooner or later in all ages and all countries where men have been oppressed, since Miriam sang it over Pharaoh and all his host by the waters of the Red Sea?—*Stuart Hodgson in the DAILY NEWS (London), 12th May.*

Very many of our readers will regret to learn of the death of Mrs. James Dundas White, who passed peacefully at their home in London after a long and often a painful illness. She first came into the movement along with her husband when he became candidate for Dumbartonshire some twenty years ago. She was devoted to his public work, and at his electoral campaigns made hosts of friends for the cause he had in hand. She was universally loved and admired for her own sweet sake. Gentle and unobtrusive in manner, Mrs. Dundas White was always a welcome guest at our meetings. We join with hosts of friends in extending to her husband our sincerest sympathy in his great loss.

### THE COMING OF "PROGRESS AND POVERTY" TO ENGLAND

When, as a very young man in the later seventies of last century, I began to take a small part in the political life of London, the Working Men's Radical Clubs were a strong political force. I soon found myself speaking on their platforms, and, among many friends whom I thus made, was Francis William Soutter, of the Southwark Radical Club. Now, at the age of 79, Soutter has just published a first volume of *RECOLLECTIONS OF A LABOUR PIONEER* (T. Fisher Unwin, 10s. 6d. net), with a very appreciative introduction by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P.

A Londoner born, though of Scottish descent, Soutter has been all his life a bonny fighter for Radicalism, a clever organizer, and an open-air speaker of exceptional ability. Of recent years, he has devoted himself mainly to the defence of Free Trade. But he has an interesting, and at times exciting story to tell of many other struggles. He inspired and organized the very first Labour candidature, that of George Odger in 1869-70. He was mainly responsible for the attempt of my old friend and colleague, Miss Helen Taylor, step-daughter of John Stuart Mill, to enter the House of Commons in 1885. (The returning officer refused to accept her nomination.) He fought and won the battle of "Church Rates" in Southwark; opposed coercion in Ireland in the stormy days of "Buckshot" Forster; took an active part in the movement against Royal grants, and against the legislative usurpations of the House of Lords.

This poor London worker in a saw-mill, who married on £1 a week, and thought himself well-off at £2 10s., incurred, in the service of the public, debts which he almost starved himself to pay, and frequently found himself in conflict with the law in defence of public right. Indeed, only his natural forensic ability saved him from heavy penalties, and he had a narrow escape from penal servitude for taking part in an alleged "riot." All this, and much more, can be read at length in his interesting book; the more interesting to me because many of the Reformers I have known and worked with—such as Helen Taylor, George Jacob Holyoake, Michael Davitt, "Willie" Webster, Herbert Burrows, Dr. Pankhurst and, above all, Henry George—pass across his pages.

Henry George wrote to Miss Taylor from Brooklyn in September, 1885:—

The approaching Parliamentary election is exciting far more than usual interest on this side of the water, and among those who realize its importance that interest is very deep. I am rejoiced at your candidacy, but your election will seem to me a greater triumph and more potent for good than that of any other single individual could be. It will mean not merely a vote, but a voice for all the great reforms that are now coming to the front; and in the fact that you are a woman it will mean a great step in a world-wide advance. It is only of late years, and largely since I first met you, that I have come to realize the importance of women taking their part in politics. On this side of the Atlantic, where you are mainly known through your relation to that great Englishman who was our friend in the dark days of our bitter struggle, and whose name is potent as few names are, your election to Parliament will be regarded as a great triumph of that principle of sexual equality for which he contended.

Another story, now fully told for the first time, will interest the readers of *LAND AND LIBERTY*. In 1881-2 I used to look forward eagerly to the weekly issue of a paper called the *RADICAL*—the sworn foe of coercion in Ireland. But it was much more than this. For William Webster contributed to it a long series of articles on what was then a new book to English readers—*PROGRESS AND POVERTY*. It was Soutter, more than anyone else, who started the paper, and, at great personal sacrifice, kept it going. He writes:—

Very early one fine Monday morning, Webster arrived at our office in a state of great excitement. For several minutes I had to listen to a series of joyful-like ejaculations before he placed in my hands a letter and a newspaper from the United States containing the announcement of the publication of Henry George's long expected work, *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*. . . . He was

\* Geo. Allen & Unwin, London. Price 12s. 6d. net.

bent upon getting some copies across "the herring pond" as quickly as possible. . . . I was just as anxious as Webster himself to get *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* circulated in this country. . . . The puzzle was where the money was to be found for their purchase. . . . Quite how it was to be done I did not know. . . . The advent of the parcel was awaited by Webster with almost childish impatience, and within one hour of its arrival the dozen were all placed, leaving orders for a second dozen unfilled. After the fourth consignment direct from the States we placed an order with a London house, and in this way was commenced the distribution of the book throughout the British book-selling trade. Quite early in our journalistic career Bennet and I had adopted as our motto, "Spread the Light," and in consonance therewith we decided that our advertisements of the book should include this announcement: "The ordinary price is seven shillings and sixpence; the price we offer it at is *five shillings*." . . . How *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* quickly became one of the most attractive works ever published is now a matter of history.

Another letter from Henry George appears in these attractive pages (14th August, 1881):—

I was delighted when in Montreal Mr. Cheeseman showed me copies of the *RADICAL*. It was the first English publication I had seen that seemed to one to have the true ring, and I am more than delighted that my books have reached you and been noticed by you. I have long regarded England as the real centre of the great fight, not only because of the conditions which bring or ought to bring the evils of the land monopoly into peculiar clearness, but because it is still to a large extent the intellectual centre of the English-speaking peoples. But I have been much disappointed at what seemed to me the timidity and sluggishness of English thought as shown by such papers and periodicals as we get in this country, and the delight with which I recognized the freshness and force of the *RADICAL* was that of the man who at last finds what he has long been looking for.

As he looks back upon a long life of adventurous struggle, Frank Soutter must feel thankful for the results that have followed his early attempts to "spread the light," as the readers of *LAND & LIBERTY* will feel thankful to him for his self-sacrificing work for popular rights. Age has not staled nor custom withered his keen interest in Radicalism, and we hope he will live many years to give us another volume as interesting and stimulating as that which is here briefly noticed.

FREDK. VERINDER.

### LONDON AS KLONDYKE

£80 for "Standing room" next to the Bank—  
New Bond Street worth £50 a square  
foot—A site which rose from 2s. 8d. to  
£81,000

(Reprinted from the *London EVENING NEWS*, 23rd February, 1923.)

London streets are really paved with gold! You won't see it glittering in the muddy City, but walk into an agent's and try to buy a strip of London. The very dust beneath the kerb is precious to the man who owns it.

Actually such streets as carry the traffic of this Empire's hub are beyond price.

A strip of land fronting Piccadilly and St. James's Street, bought for street-widening purposes, cost the L.C.C. over £34 a square foot. Millions could not buy that famous crossing at the Bank—nor Piccadilly Circus, nor Oxford Circus, nor the Elephant and Castle's throbbing centre.

But in streets about the Bank and the Stock Exchange the earth on which the dark stone buildings stand—weighty with wealth and figures of wealth—changes hands occasionally at an average price of £60 a square foot.

#### A CITY COMPARISON

Land actually adjoining the Bank has realized £70 and £80 a square foot—just enough room to stand upon comfortably! The gold in eighty sovereigns could be made to "pave" a square foot.

To get a clear idea of such values, imagine the vacant General Post Office site in St. Martin's-le-Grand transplanted into Lombard Street. The City Corporation

paid £126,000 for a very small strip of it for street-widening purposes. The site itself has just been bought and the price was certainly not far short of £1,125,000; at £60 a foot the price would be £4,500,000—for the land itself.

Comparisons with early values are interesting. A house in Lombard Street in 1668 was rented for £25 a year; in 1877 the site let for £2,600 a year ground rent, and the lessee, having expended £10,000 on the building, was drawing a rent of £7,000 a year!

#### WHERE THE COUNTY HALL STANDS

About the year 1600 an acre and 19 poles of land, now the site of the new County Hall, was bequeathed by its owner, a pedlar, to the Parish of Lambeth. The ground was then worth 2s. 8d. The London County Council paid £81,000 for it.

At some remote period in its dim history the church of St. Mary Woolnoth, which is at the angle where Lombard Street and King William Street diverge, had a churchyard. You could have a plot of land there, say seven feet by three feet, for next to nothing—provided you were dead. The same land costs £50 a square foot to-day, and if you sank on your knees and wept before them the landlords wouldn't hear of selling you a plot of twenty square feet in which to be buried.

There was one bit of City land that did not seem at all attractive in 1870, or thereabouts, when the Albion Presbyterian Chapel in London Wall was demolished. Digging down for the foundations of the present Tower Chambers, they found the earth here to be perfectly black and in some places smelling far from sweet. It had been a plague pit—a place where the dead were dumped.

#### GOLDEN COCKSPUR STREET

Cockspur Street recently made a bid to beat the reputation of the "gold-paved" City streets for value. A certain corner site was actually offered, though not sold, at £100 a square foot; that figure represented its value to its owner. Who would have thought the south side, or any other side, of Trafalgar Square worth so much!

New Bond Street is the nearest approach to the Bank area in value; a site in this most exclusive trading thoroughfare, were such available, would cost little less than £50 a square foot—the land alone. Yet the site of the Piccadilly Hotel, which is 34,000 square feet, cost only £8,500 in 1905, i.e., £4 a square foot.

One would expect to find the Strand a "gold mine" so far as building sites are concerned, yet the Tivoli site sold in 1919 for £14 a square foot—an advance of £4 a square foot on its purchase price in 1900.

#### THE PORTMAN ESTATE

There used to be a pretty local tradition in Marylebone about the Portman Estate, which now brings its owner many thousands a year in rents. One William Henry Portman kept a famous herd of cows, and found on coming to live in town (200 years ago) that London milk was very inferior. So he bought a couple of fields and had some of his fine cows browse in them, that he might have their rich milk in his London home.

These two fields, tradition says, are now the site of Portman Square. The story does not tell what was paid for the fields, but the fine houses in Portman Square were from the start among the most valuable in the town, and substantially increased Portman's fortune, and that of those who followed him. Whatever was the first reason for the purchase, W. H. Portman, of Orchard-Portman, in Somersetshire, who died in 1796, was the first proprietor of the estate; and Portman Square was begun about 1764.

The Portman Estate, as first recorded, included "Great Gibbet Field, Little Gibbet Field, Hawkfield, Brock Stand, Tassel Croft, and Boy's Croft"—country names! The gibbet alluded to was, of course, the famous Tyburn gibbet.

A. W. S.