

## A DANIEL COME TO JUDGMENT

The Right Hon. Sir Thos. P. Whittaker, M.P., has provided a wealth of criticism of the land values taxation movement in his new book, *THE OWNERSHIP, TENURE AND TAXATION OF LAND*, recently published by Messrs. Macmillan at 12s. 6d. We have read nothing quite so informing for a long time. In his attempt to rebut the argument for the taxation of land values he quotes freely from the speeches, books, and pamphlets on the subject, and nothing which appears to contain mutual contradiction or economic fallacy has escaped him. It is an exercise in dialectics worth the close attention of the student who would investigate what every known writer in the movement has said respecting the incidence of taxation or would learn how grossly unjust are Henry George's proposals in the eyes of the dispassionate reasoner. We welcome the book as a useful contribution to the discussion of the land question, and still more because Sir Thomas, notwithstanding his having demolished our case to his own satisfaction, elaborates a scheme more drastic than any we have yet seen put forward by the "moderate" school of land reformers. It combines the proposals of the Associated Municipalities Bill with those of the Glasgow Bill, neither of which enjoyed the distinction of escaping attack on the ground of "confiscation." And so Sir Thomas proposes (1) a limited site value rate of 1d. in the £ (payable by those who now pay rates except in the case of new tenancies and new contracts entered into after the passing of the Act), with certain discriminations in favour of agricultural and other land; and (2) that the balance of expenditure required to be raised locally (after the grants from the National Fund and the proceeds of the land values rate had been received) should be levied on all land, buildings, and premises of all kinds on the basis of their annual value as now, *except where that annual value was less than, say, 3 or 3½ per cent. on the capital value, the rateable value should be taken to be such an amount as would represent 3 or 3½ per cent. on the Capital value.* This latter statement deserves to be emphasised, and we wonder if its significance was fully appreciated before Sir Thomas committed it to print. The proposal, combined with the penny rate, would mean a rate of anything from 3d. to 6d. on the capital value of vacant land, which is more than any single taxer, extreme and confiscatory though he may be, dares to hope for at this time from the most friendly of Governments. Truly Sir Thomas is a Daniel come to judgment!

A. W. M.

## "LAND VALUES"

At the farewell dinner given to Mr. Wedgwood at the Hotel Grenoble, New York, on the 16th March, by his American friends, the Hon. J. J. Murphy paid a compliment to *LAND VALUES*. The Chairman, Mr. John T. McRoy, echoed this praise, saying he often stayed up late at nights that he might read every line of it.

There is still room on our list of subscribers for additional names, and our publisher would like to hear of friends prepared to stay up late a night or two in the month to secure some. Price by post, 2s. per annum.

## CANADIAN FARMERS ARE PROGRESSIVE

The result of a referendum conducted by *THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE*, the organ of the farmers of Western Canada, was announced in that paper some time ago. The vote on questions 3, 4, 7 was as follows:—

	Yes.	No.
3.—Abolition of all tariff .....	6,068	511
4.—Single Tax on land values for all local, provincial and federal revenue ..	5,691	637
7.—Public ownership and operation of natural monopolies ..	6,299	327

## THE ORIGIN OF MODERN LANDLORDISM

We are indebted to a correspondent for the following interesting letter and informing story, which cannot be too often told, of how the landlords threw off their just burdens and imposed them on industry.

I venture to send you some quotations I have copied out from BLACKSTONE'S COMMENTARIES ON THE LAWS OF ENGLAND, relating to the Military Tenures by which nearly the whole of English land was held until the time of Charles II.; how said tenures were abolished, together with the comments of some historians thereon. It is quite likely that you are acquainted with all this without my troubling about it; well, if that is so, you will kindly pass it by, and I shall not be hurt by the trouble, but I do find prevailing a general ignorance, or it may be indifference, about how the mass of English land became the freehold of its present possessors, and the equally important question that if wrong has been done, and the nation is still suffering thereby, what steps can be taken to right it.

From the time of William I.—and indeed from long before—the whole cost and burthen of defending the country fell upon the Crown tenants; that was the inexorable condition by which they held their lands, besides which they had various payments to make in money, in kind, and in services, all which were the equivalents of what would now be called their rent. As Blackstone tells, these rents were regarded as grievous, and under James I. efforts were made to commute them. That king appears to have raised no objection, only stipulating for a fair equivalent to be firmly charged and fixed on the land, but this the landlords—not landowners then—would not agree to; but when Charles II. came back they saw and seized their chance. With the enormous Tory reaction that came with Charles they had only to manage that utterly selfish, sensual and unprincipled king to carry their point. One can picture the bargaining between the king and the land thieves. The king was not likely to forego any of his rights without an equivalent, and the landlords would have nothing charged on the land, so it was arranged between them that the king should get his equivalent by an Excise Tax on what the whole people had to eat and drink, and that we are paying to this day, and so was carried through a corrupt Parliament the greatest act of plunder ever consummated in this kingdom.

Blackstone's complaints about the grievances of the Crown tenants are ridiculous. None of these payments were arbitrary, but were fixed by law, and by centuries of usage, and could not be raised against the tenant. But Blackstone had to make out the best case he could for the landlords; yet, being, as I think, honest, he has to confess, between the lines, that it was not honest for the landlords to make a present to themselves of the freehold of the soil, and leave the nation, and the poorest of the nation, to make good to the Government the rent which the landlords refused any longer to pay.

Hume, another good Tory, tells how the screw was put on the king, who could hardly refuse the plunderers anything.

Macaulay, who posed as a Liberal, is the most unscrupulous in misrepresenting the case, but he winds up his tirade by saying that every landed gentleman wished the Military Tenures to be abolished and so they solemnly abolished them by statute!

Yes, but what if the present tenants of the landowners, in both town and country, were to claim the freehold of their houses or farms? What would Macaulay, or Hume, or Blackstone say to that?

Extract from BLACKSTONE'S COMMENTARIES ON THE LAWS OF ENGLAND, 3rd Edition, 1768. Book 2, Page 60.

"All tenures being thus derived, or supposed to be derived, from the King, those that held immediately under

him, in right of his crown and dignity, were called his tenants in capite, or chief; which was the most honourable species of tenure, but at the same time subjected the tenants to greater and more burthensome services than inferior tenures did.

"Among services to be rendered the uncertain depended upon unknown contingencies; as to do military service in person, or pay an assessment in lieu of it, when called upon.

"The tenure of Knight service also drew after it these seven fruits and consequences as inseparable to the tenure in chivalry; aids, reliefs, primer seisin, wardship, marriage, fines for alienation, and escheat.

"1st. Aids, chiefly of 3 kinds, 1st to ransom the King if taken prisoner, 2nd to make his eldest son a Knight, 3rd to give a suitable portion to his eldest daughter on her marriage.

"2nd. Relief, was paid to the King when the heir took possession. It was fixed at 100 shillings for every Knight's fee, and paid regularly till the Act of Charles 2nd.

"3rd. Primer seisin, incidents to Chief Tenants who had to pay on accession one whole year's profits of the lands.

"4th. These payments were only due if the heir was of full age, if not the King was entitled to Wardship.

"5th. Marriage. The heir, male or female, being under age, had to marry the person chosen by the King, or pay a heavy fine.

"6th. Alienation. This service was of fines due to the King for every alienation whenever the tenant had reason to make over his land to another.

"By 1st Edward 3. C 12. it was ordained that when licence to alien was had one-third of the yearly value should be paid, but if no licence had, then a full year's value.

"These were the principal qualities, fruits, and consequences to the tenure by Knight service; a tenure by which the greatest part of the lands of this kingdom were holden, and that principally of the King in capite, till the middle of the last century; and which was created, as Sir Edward Coke expressly testifies, for a military purpose; viz., for defence of the realm by the King's own principal subjects.

"In the meantime the families of all our nobility and gentry groaned under the intolerable burthens . . . which were introduced and laid upon them by the subtlety and finesse of the Norman lawyers. For they might be called upon for Aids to the King whenever his eldest son was to be Knighted, or his eldest daughter married. The heir, on the death of his ancestor, if of full age, was plundered of the first emoluments of his inheritance by way of Relief and Primer Seisin, and, if of under age, of the whole of his estate during infancy. And then, as Sir Thomas Smith very feelingly complains,

"when he came to his own, when he was out of wardship, his woods decayed, houses fallen down, stock wasted and gone, lands let forth and ploughed to be barren, to make amends he was yet to pay half a year's profits as a fine for sueing out his livery; and also the price or value of his marriage, if he refused such wife as his lord or guardian had bartered for, and imposed upon him, or twice that value if he married another woman. And when by these deductions his fortune was so shattered and ruined that perhaps he was obliged to sell his patrimony, he had not that poor privilege allowed him, without paying an exorbitant fine for a license of alienation"

"A slavery so complicated and so extensive as this called aloud for a remedy in a Nation that boasted of her freedom. . . . Till at length the humanity of King James 1st consented for a proper equivalent to abolish them all, though the plan then proceeded not to effect it. King James's plan for exchanging our Military tenures seems to have been nearly the same as that which has been since pursued; only with this difference, that by way of compensation for the loss which the Crown and other Lords would sustain, an annual fee farm rent should

be settled and inseparably annexed to the Crown and assured to the inferior Lords, payable out of every Knight's fee within their respective signiories. An expedient seemingly much better than the hereditary excise which was afterwards made the principal equivalent for these concessions. For at length the Military tenures with all their heavy appendages were destroyed at one blow by Statute 12 Car 2. 24 which enacts

"that the Court of Wards and Liveries, and all wardships, liveries, primer seisins, values, and forfeiture of marriages, by reason of any tenure of the King or others be totally taken away. And that all fines for alienations, tenures by homage, knight service and escuage, and aids for marrying the daughter or knight-ing the son, and all tenures of the King in Capite be likewise taken away. And that all sorts of tenures held of the King or others be turned into free and common soccage: save only tenures of frank almoign, copyhold, and the honorary services (without the slavish part) of grand serjeanty."

a statute which was a greater acquisition to the civil property of this Kingdom than even Magna Carta itself; since that only pruned the luxuriances that had grown out of the Military tenures and thereby preserved them in vigour; but the statute of King Charles extirpated the whole and demolished both root and branches."

Extract from Macaulay's HISTORY OF ENGLAND relating to the same.

"One fresh concession, a concession in which the Cavaliers were more deeply interested than the Roundheads, was easily obtained from the restored King. The Military tenures of land had been originally created as a means of national defence. But in the course of ages whatever was useful in the institution had disappeared; and nothing was left but ceremonies and grievances. A landed proprietor who held an estate under the crown by Knight service—and it was thus that most of the land of England was held—had to pay a large fine on coming to his property. He could not alienate one acre without purchasing a license. When he died, if his domains descended to an infant, the sovereign was Guardian, and was not only entitled to great part of the rents during the minority, but could require the ward, under heavy penalties, to marry any person of suitable rank. The chief bait which attracted a needy sycophant to the Court was the hope of obtaining, as the reward of servility and flattery, a royal letter to an heiress. These abuses had perished with the Monarchy. That they should not revive with it was the wish of every landed gentleman in the kingdom. They were therefore solemnly abolished by statute; and no relic of the ancient tenures in chivalry was suffered to remain, except those honorary services which are still, at a coronation, rendered to the person of the sovereign by some lords of manors."

Extract from J. R. Green's HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE, relating to the same. Vol. 3. Page 1324.

"A squire was naturally eager to buy the good will of a Sovereign who might soon be the guardian of his daughter, and the administrator of his estate. But the same motives which made the Crown cling to this prerogative made the Parliament anxious to do away with it, and the efforts to bring this about had been foiled by the King's stubborn resistance; but the long interception of these rights during the wars made their renewal almost impossible at the restoration. One of the first acts therefore of the Convention was to free the country gentry by abolishing the claims of the Crown to reliefs, wardship, purveyance and preemption, and by the conversion of lands held till then in chivalry into lands held in common soccage. In lieu of his rights Charles accepted a grant of £100,000 a year; a sum which it was originally proposed to raise by a tax on the lands thus exempted from feudal exactions; but which was provided for in the end, with less justice, by a general excise."



Extract from Hume's HISTORY OF ENGLAND on the same. Chapter 63.

"Attempts had been made during the reign of James to purchase these prerogatives and £200,000 a year had been offered in lieu of them, and even in the present Parliament a bill had been introduced offering him (the Crown) as compensation for these prerogatives. £100,000 a year was the sum agreed to; and half the excise was settled in perpetuity on the Crown as the fund whence this revenue should be levied. Though that impost yielded more profit, the bargain might be esteemed hard; and it was chiefly the necessity of the King's situation which induced him to submit to it. No request of the Parliament during the present joy could be refused them. Though they (the Parliament) voted in general that £1,200,000 a year should be settled on the King, they scarcely assigned any funds which could yield two-thirds of that sum. And they left the care of fulfilling their engagements to the future consideration of Parliament."

### THE DEAD RADICAL

They called him "fool" and "traitor" as through the land  
he went;  
They cried out "Agitator" and "Brand of Discontent."  
From altar and from steeple upon this man forlorn  
The priests and "goodly people" hurled wrath and bitter  
scorn.  
They called him "cheat" and "faker," and drove him  
from the door.  
They shouted "Mischief-maker, begone and come no more."  
From border unto border they hounded him lest he  
"Upset established order and bring on anarchy."  
At length they seized and tried him, that they might have  
their will,  
And so they crucified him upon a lonely hill,  
The outcast agitator, driven by scourge and rod.  
They called him "fool" and "traitor," and now we call him  
God.

BERTON BRALEY.

The poverty which in the midst of abundance pinches and embrates men, and all the manifold evils which flow from it, spring from a denial of justice. In permitting the monopolisation of the opportunities which nature freely offer to all, we have ignored the fundamental law of justice—for, so far as we can see, when we view things upon a large scale, justice seems to be the supreme law of the universe. But by sweeping away this injustice and asserting the rights of all men to natural opportunities, we shall conform ourselves to the law—we shall remove the great cause of unnatural inequality in the distribution of wealth and power; we shall abolish poverty; name the ruthless passions of greed; dry up the springs of vice and misery; light in dark places the lamp of knowledge; give new vigour to invention and a fresh impulse to discovery; substitute political strength for political weakness; and make tyranny and anarchy impossible.—HENRY GEORGE in PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

#### Just Published.

**WHY  
YOU  
ARE  
NOT  
BETTER  
OFF!**

The title looks important to the man of small means.

The contents points out the hole in his pocket.

Price ONE PENNY.

Copies may be had from:

Land Values Publication Dept., 376 & 377, Strand, London, W.C.

## GEORGE v. HYNDMAN

### SOCIALISM AND RENT APPROPRIATION

By the kind permission of the Editor of the NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER we are able to give the following dialogue between the famous author of PROGRESS AND POVERTY (the late Mr. Henry George) and the great Socialist, Mr. H. M. Hyndman, still happily with us. The dialogue appeared in the February number of the review, in 1885, and appended to it was the note:—"The authors desire to say that, from pressure of time they could only carry out their suggestion of a joint article in this form by dictating to a shorthand writer whom they called in a few hours before Mr. George's departure from London. They hope that any literary blemishes may be attributed to this circumstance."

Mr. Hyndman.—I see that you have been hard at work since you have been over here in the land agitation. I think, as you know, that you expect far too much from nationalisation of the land by itself.

Mr. George.—Why?

H.—Because I understand you to advocate merely the confiscation of competition rents, and that, to my mind, will not benefit the labourers.

G.—I advocate the recognition of equal rights to land. As for any particular plan of doing this, I care little; but it seems to me that the only practicable way is to take rent for common purposes. Rent is, of course, fixed by competition.

H.—That is rather vague to me. I am as much in favour of nationalisation and communisation of the land as you are; but taking rent would not bring this about; it would leave the labourers, whom we both wish to benefit, competing against one another for subsistence wages just as they were before.

G.—That I think a mistake. It would not only give the labourers their equal share in the benefits of an enormous fund which now goes to individuals, but, by making land valuable only to the user, would break up the monopoly which forces men who have nothing but their own powers to that fierce competition which drives wages down to the lowest possible rate. The fundamental mistake of Socialists of your school, it seems to me, is in your failure to see that this competition is not a natural thing, but solely the result of the monopolisation of land.

H.—I should dispute to begin with, if it were worth while, that all rent is necessarily competition rent. Customary rents are still far more common than competition rents. But let that pass. What we contend is that confiscation of rent leaves the competition untouched. This you admit yourself. And if you broke up the landlord monopoly to-morrow by taxing land up to what you would call its full value—an impossibility as I believe in practice—the control by the capitalist class of the means and instruments of production would remain untouched, and the labourers would still compete under the control of that class, who would derive all the advantage from the change. The historical growth of private property in land has ended in the domination of the capitalist class or bourgeoisie. In England, at any rate, the landlord is a mere hanger-on of this class—a sleeping partner in the product taken from the labourer by the capitalist.

G.—You are using, the term rent in one sense, and I in another. By rent I mean the value of the advantage which accrues from the use of a particular piece of land, not what may, as a matter of fact, be paid by the user to the owner. The amount paid by custom, or the amount paid under lease, may be lower or higher than the true rent. In the one case the owner gets more than is really rent, in the other case he gets less, and the tenant or intermediate tenants get the difference. Rent involves competition. Until two men both desire the same piece of ground, land, no matter what its capacities, can have no value. True