Anna George de Mille.

SCOTLAND AND SCOTSMEN:

BY

HENRY GEORGE.

ONE PENNY.

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On Monday, February 18, 1884, Mr. Henry George, author of "Poverty and Progress," delivered the following address in the City Hall, Glasgow. Councillor Crawford presided.

Mr. George said—This is the second time I have had the privilege of standing in this hall. I visited Scotland before, but only Glasgow. I came in by night in a Pullman car, and I went back again by night in a Pullman car, and I saw nothing of the country. The audience that I then addressed was an Irish audience—it was on St. Patrick's night. This audience is a general audience; I presume a Scottish audience. Now, I have been pretty well abused. I read in the papers all sorts of things about myself, and if I did not know Henry George pretty well, I had thought he was a cross between a thief and a fool. These charges I have never noticed; nevertheless, there is one charge that has been made against me since I came to Scotland which I would like to say a word about. I have been accused of flattering Scotchmen. The first place where I spoke in Scotland was in Dundee, and I was glad to get before a Scottish audience. It so happens that in my own country I know very many Scotsmen, and among the men who stand with me are very many Scotsmen. These Scotsmen have always been telling me—"Ah, a Scottish audience is the thing; wait till the Scottish people take hold of this question, and they will go to the logical end." I was glad to get before a Scottish audience, and I told them about my Scottish friends, and I told them about the letter I had received from a good "canny" Scotsman, who said to me, "Don't waste your time on these English people. They are a beery set. Beer confuses and dulls their understandings. (Laughter.) You can do far more good in Scotland, where they are a logical, clear-headed people; and if they drink anything at all, it is only whisky, which does not have such a confusing effect on the intellect." Well, I told them that in the frankness of my nature, and next morning the papers, in their usual denunciation, said I took an advantage by flattering a Scottish audience. Now, I may have been accused of many things, but I don't think those who know me would accuse me of such a thing as attempting to flatter Scotsmen about Scotland. I doubt if that is possible. (Applause.) When I came from New York to California, a Scottish banker sought me out and said, "I had a wager about you, and I want to ask you a personal question. You are an American by birth?" And I said, "I

am." "Have you not Scottish blood in your veins?" "Well," I said, "my mother's father was a Glasgow body." Says he, "I have won my bet; it's through your mother that you get your talent." (Laughter and applause.) That man had, and still has, a theory that every great man is a Scotsman, with two or three exceptions, and in these cases a mistake was made. Now, joking aside, I do not want to flatter anybody; and if Scotsmen don't like to be flattered, will you let me tell you to-night some home truths—some things that are not complimentary? (Cries of "Yes, yes," and applause.)

I draw my blood from these islands. But it so happens this is the only place to which I can trace my ancestry with any certainty. I do not know but that some of my own kindred perhaps to-day live in Glasgow, and it is from Glasgow men some of my blood, at least, is drawn. I am not proud of it. If I were a Glasgow man to-day I would not be proud of it. Here you have a great and rich city, and here you have poverty and destitution that would appal a heathen. Right on these streets of yours the very stranger can see sights that he could not see in any tribe of savages in anything like normal conditions. "Let Glasgow Flourish by the Preaching of the Word"—that is the motto of this great, proud city. What sort of a Word is it that here has been preached? Or, let your preaching have been what it may, what is your practice? Are these the fruits of the Word—this poverty, this destitution, this vice and degradation? To call this a Christian community is a slander on Christianity. Low wages, want, vice, degradation—these are not the fruits of Christianity. They come from the ignoring and denial of the vital principles of Christianity. Yet you people in Glasgow not merely erect church after church, you have the cheek to subscribe money to send missionaries to the heathen. I wish the heathen were a little richer, that they might subscribe money and send missionaries to such so-called Christian communities as this—to point to the luxury, the very ostentation of wealth, on the one hand, and to the bare-footed, ill-clad women on the other; to your men and women with bodies stunted and minds distorted; to your little children growing up in such conditions that only a miracle can keep them pure!

Excuse me for calling your attention to these unpleasant truths; they are something that every man with a heart in his breast ought to think of. John Bright, in his installation speech to the Glasgow University in 1883, made a statement, taken from the census of Scotland, in which he declared that 41 families out of every 100 in Glasgow lived in houses having only one room. He further said that 37 per cent. beyond this 41 per cent. dwelt in houses with only two rooms; that 78 per cent., or nearly four-fifths, dwelt in houses of one or two rooms; and he went on to say further, that in Scotland nearly one-third of the people dwelt in houses of only one

room, and that more than two-thirds, or 70 per cent., dwelt in houses of not more than two rooms. Is not that an appalling statement; in the full blaze of the nineteenth century, in the year of grace 1884, here in this metropolis of Scotland—Christian Scotland! Now, consider what it implies—this crowding of men, women, and children together. People do not herd that way unless driven by dire want and necessity. These figures imply want and suffering and brutish degradation, of which every citizen of Glasgow, every Scotsman, should be ashamed. Here I take at random from one of your papers of this evening a story, a mere item of an inquest held at Peterborough. The deceased was a married woman, the house had no furniture, and the four children were half starved. There was no food in the house, and the only protection against the chills of night were three guano bags—a basket of litter for the whole family. The dead body of the mother was found to be a mass of sores, and the left arm was shrivelled up. The daughter stated that when they got food the father would bite first, and pass it round in turn. The dying woman craved a bun, but they could not give her even that. In their verdict of death from natural causes, paralysis, deep-seated sores, and exhaustion, the jury stated that the husband had been guilty of gross and unpardonable neglect to his wife and family. But this seems to be based upon the fact that he had not taken his wife to the almshouse, though, as he stated, he had tried to get her into the almshouse, but had been refused, unless he would go too. There is nothing to show that he was idle or drunken. He was but a labourer, and seems to have tried his best to get what work he could, and came home every night to lie beside that poor woman on the rotting straw. But take the bare facts. Among what tribe of savages in the whole world, in anything like a time of peace, would such a thing as that be possible? I have seen, I believe, the lowest races on the face of the earth—the Terra del Fuegans, who are spoken of as the very lowest of mankind; the black fellows of Australia; the Digger Indians of California. I would rather take my chances, were I on the threshold of life to-night, among those people, than come into the world in this highly-civilised Christian community in the condition in which thousands are compelled to live. The fault of the husband, the verdict says! I know of this case only what the papers say; but this I do know, from the testimony of men of position and veracity, from officials and ministers of the Gospel, that such things as that are happening every day in this country, not to drunken men, but to the families of men honest, sober, and industrious. Why, in this great, rich city of yours, as a gentleman was telling me, there are to-day numbers and numbers of men who cannot get employment. Here the wages of your engineers were reduced a little while ago, and they had to submit. The engineers of

Belfast had also to submit to a reduction of wages, because there were so many unemployed shipwrights and engineers in Glasgow that they feared they could not maintain a strike. Am I not right in saying that such a state of things is but typical of that which exists everywhere throughout the civilised world? And I am bound to say that it is a state of things you ought to be ashamed of. I speak, not because they do not exist in my own country, for in their degree there is just the same state of things in America. But is not the spirit that, ignoring this, gives thanks and praise to the Almighty Father, cant of the worst kind? Can we separate duty towards God from duty towards our neighbours? Yet here are men who preach and pray, yet look on such things as matters of course, laying the blame upon natural laws, upon human nature, and upon the ordinances of the Creator. Is it not cant and blasphemy of the worst kind? How can a man love a God whom he believes responsible for these things? Is God the Creator a "botch," that He should have made a world in which only a few of His creatures could live comfortably—that He should have made a world in which the great masses have to strain and strive all their lives away to keep above starvation point? It is not the fault of God! It is due merely to the selfishness and ignorance of men. And when you come to ask the reason of this state of things, if you seek it out, you will come at last, I believe, to the great fact, that the land on which and from which it was ordained that all mankind must live has been made the private property of a few of their number. This is the only adequate explanation. Man is a land animal. All his substance must be drawn from the land. He cannot even take the birds of the air or fish in the sea without the use of the land or the materials drawn from the land. His very body is drawn from the land. Take from a man all that belongs to land, and you would have but a disembodied spirit. And as land is absolutely necessary to the life of man, and as land is the source from which all wealth is drawn, the man who commands the land, on which and from which other men live, commands those men. (Applause.)

Take the opposite course; trace up the facts. Why is it that men are crowded together so in Glasgow? Because you let dogs-in-the-manger hold the land on which these people ought to live. Here is one fact that I happened to see in a communication in one of your papers recently. There is a field in Glasgow called Burnbank, comprising fourteen acres, worth £90,000—it is surrounded by houses—and ought to be used for buildings. But the owner is holding it till he can get a higher price from the necessities of the community. You let him hold it. You don't charge any taxes for it. The taxation you put upon the houses. The same article says if that field were feued and covered with houses, these houses would

pay not less than £7000 a year in taxation. You charge and fine a man who puts up a house that would give accommodation to the people, and the man who holds land without making any use of it you do not charge a penny for the privilege. How can there be any doubt as to the reason why you are so crowded together? Or, take the fact that wages are so low; that men are competing with one another so eagerly for employment that wages are brought down to starvation rates. What is the reason? Simply that men are denied natural opportunities of employment. This city of Glasgow has been crowded with people driven from Ireland and your Highlands, where they were living. When I was over in Ireland two years ago I saw the process. I followed some of those red-coated evicting armies, and saw how, at the behest of men who had never set foot in Ireland, the military forces of the empire were being used to turn out poor people from the cabins and the land on which their fathers had lived from time immemorial. (Applause.) Where were they forced to go? Into cities to obtain work at any price there. That great man who has stood on this platform, Michael Davitt—(applause)—is one of that class. His mother, forced from her home, carried him around begging, rather than go to the almshouse, and coming over here, he had, at an early age, when he ought to have been at play and at school, and not at work, to enter one of your factories, and that empty sleeve on his right side is a memento of that tyranny. (Applause.) Thus is your labour market crowded with people who must get work or starve, who can't employ themselves, who are forced into competition for anything they can get. So with your own people—the people of Scotland. They have been crowded here in the same way. There is the explanation. This is the explanation of the fact that, although during this century, by reason of invention and improvement, the productive power of labour has increased so wonderfully, wages have not increased at all save where trades' unions have been formed and have been able to force them up a little. (Applause.) I have now seen something of Scotland, and let me tell you frankly that what I have seen does not raise my estimate of the Scottish character. (Applause.)

Let me tell you frankly—seeing I have been accused of flattering you, and you say you can stand unpleasant truths—let me tell you frankly, I have a good deal more respect for the Irish. The Irish have done some kicking against this infernal system, and you men in Scotland have got it yet to do. The Scots are a logical people, as my friend says. I won't gainsay that; but their major premise must be a very curious one. I have really been wondering, since I have been in Scotland, whether you have not got things mixed a little. There is a story I heard in Ireland about a little cross-roads innkeeper. A woman kept an inn there, and a lord

came along and stopped there one night. Oh, she was all in a flutter at attending upon a lord, and so she carefully instructed the boots—a rude boy—as to how in the morning he must go and knock at Lord So-and-so's door, and when his lordship asked who was there, he was to reply, "The boy, my lord." Well, the poor fellow was awfully flustered, and he gave a thundering rap at the door, when Lord So-and-so cried out, "Who's there?" and the boy shouted out, "The Lord, my boy!" (Applause and laughter.) He had got things mixed.

Now, since I have been in Scotland, I have been wondering whether you in Scotland haven't got things mixed a little. The Scots are a Bible-reading people. I have sometimes wondered whether, instead of reading that "In the beginning the Lord created the heavens and the earth," they haven't got it that "In the beginning the lairds created the heavens and the earth." Certainly the lairds have it all their own way through Scotland. Their's is the land and all upon it; their's is all that is beneath the land; their's are the fishes in the rivers and in the lochs; their's are the birds of the air; their's are the salmon in the sea, even the seaweed that is thrown ashore, even the whales over a certain length, even the driftwood! Their's are even the water and the air. Why, in Dundee, do you know, the people there, in order to get water, had to pay £25,000 to the Earl of Airlie for the privilege of drawing water for their use out of a certain loch. The water alone; he retains the right to the fish. The very rain as it descends from heaven is the property of the Laird of Airlie! Why, just think of it! You know how that the chosen people were passing through the wilderness and they thirsted, and Moses struck the rock and the water gushed forth. What good would it have done if that rock had been private property, and some Earl of Airlie had been there who would say, You cannot take a cupful until you pay me £25,000? And this Earl of Airlie does not live in Scotland at all—at any rate, he does not live in Dundee! He never drinks a cupful of that water; why—just think of it; and here, when you have dry weather, the preachers pray for rain, and then when the good Lord listens to their prayer, and sends it down, it belongs to the Earl of Airlie! (Laughter and applause.)

But the people of Scotland have the air—that is, what they can get in the streets and the roads! There is at Dundee a hill they call Balgay. It was never cultivated, and the only thing about it is that there is good air to be obtained there, and fine views had. That hill belongs to a non-resident. I think the man's name is Scott, and he lives in Edinburgh. The people of Dundee want to take their walks on that hill. How do they get that privilege? By paying him a rent of £14 per acre. Talk about the taboo. Do you remember these superstitious South Sea Islanders to whom we

sent missionaries, and now they are all dying out from rum and disease? Do you know these people had a custom that they called the taboo? Their high chiefs, whom they venerated as gods on earth almost, could say of a certain thing, that is tabooed, and one of the common sort dare not touch it or use it; he would have to go around for miles rather than set his foot on a tabooed path, go thirsty rather than drink at a tabooed spring, and go hungry though fruit on a tabooed tree was rotting before his eyes. You have just precisely the same thing here. There are miles and miles of this Scotland of yours—that is, the Scotland that you common Scotsmen call your country—that is, the Scotland for which you are told you ought to lay down your lives if necessary—there are miles and miles of it in a state of nature which one of you common Scotsmen dare not set his foot on. (Hear, hear.)

There is one of my countrymen—an American named Winans—who made a great deal of money in Russia; he comes over here and has a play-ground stretching from sea to sea, in a state of nature, tenanted by wild beasts, and from which every one of you Scotsmen are rigorously excluded. And that is only an example of the country all over. If you were heathens, if you were savages, many of you would be far better off. People would not have to live on oatmeal and potatoes while the streams were flashing with fish and the moors were alive with game. All the fish are preserved. I got hold of a book the other day, "The Streams and Lochs of Scotland," and I had the curiosity to look over it. Why, every bit of water in which you can paddle a tub is preserved; it belongs to Lord This, or Lady That, or Mr. Somebody Else. And the quail! Why, to go back to what I was talking about. You remember how, to feed the hungry Israelites, quail were sent from heaven. If they had been sent into Scotland, you common Scotsmen would not have dared to touch them. Here the quail are preserved. Why, through the country that I have been, the common, ordinary working Scotsmen live on potatoes, and are well off when they get salted herrings or a little oatmeal. If the potato rot were to come, you would have just such famines as occurred in Ireland in 1848. In point of fact, this year there is on the Island of Skye a crop of potatoes only by the charity of the people who subscribed to the destitution fund, and so furnished those people with seed. Full-fed, comfortable people, who eat hearty dinners every day, professors of universities with good salaries, gentlemen with nice steady incomes and pensions, say—"Oh, everything is going right; the working classes are getting better off;" and they deny most bitterly the assertion that poverty is keeping pace with progress, and they give you long tables of statistics to prove it Everywhere that I have been I have asked the working people themselves what they thought, and I found everywhere that the very reverse was their opinion.

Certainly, after going through this country, there can be no question that all this progress and civilisation has only ground this people lower down, that they were better off hundreds of years ago when they were half heathen savages. They have now been driven from the good land they used to cultivate, and have been forced upon poor land. Their little holdings have been curtailed, so that they cannot keep enough stock to pay their rent. The rent has been increased and increased, and their only way of paying it is to trench upon their revenue and sell off their stock. There are places where they used to fish, where they have become so impoverished that they have now no fishing boats. There are places where they used to have horses, where now they have none, and where women—Scottish women—have to do the work of beasts of burden! You can see them to-day carrying manure and everything else on their backs. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Go to the Highlands and you will see a state of society—of industrial society—that belongs to past centuries. You will find people cultivating the ground with the old-fashioned "crookit spade," reaping with a hook, and beating out their little harvest of corn with a flail. Civilisation has done nothing for them save to make life harder. Those men, large numbers of them, have to pay rents which they cannot possibly get out of the ground. They are forced to go fishing, or to come down to the Lowlands to seek for work in order to get money to pay for their rents. It is not merely for the ground they are charged, not merely for the virtues of the soil; they are charged for a mere breathing space, a mere living place. Yet those people who live in that way are called lazy! Lazy! I would like to have some of those well-fed people who talk about their laziness go up and take a week of that sort of work. Let these men go up and dig a little with the "crookit spade," and then go out and face the rough sea in one of those fishing-boats, and let those fine ladies go to the Highlands and carry turf on their back as the women do there. As far as I learned when there, it takes, on the average, about one person's labour to keep up those miserable peat fires in the centre of the hut. As for flowers; since I have been in Scotland I have never seen a single flower around one of those miserable cabins, where most of the people live. I asked one crofter in Glendale if they had ever any fruit. "Well," he said, "they used to have some kail." (Laughter and applause.)

I went, as Americans would say, to the jumping-off place—to John o' Groat's—and saw two very bright fellows bringing up stones from the sea-shore. One of them stooped down upon his knees to help me to hunt for groatie buckies, and we had a talk. He said he was going to build a house. The gentleman who was with me asked if he had any surety in building it except the word of

his landlord? He said he was a good landlord. I asked "How much have you to pay?" I think he said £5. His father lived there, and there were other two sons. I asked, "What do you make out of it?" One of them said, "We generally get the meal." I said, "Do you get enough to pay your rent?" "No, we have got to make it up. I go off to the fishing, and my brother goes off to work. Sometimes we get enough to pay the rent, but generally we don't." I said, "The goodness of this good, kind landlord of yours amounts to this, that he lets you live there, and takes from you all that you make, save just enough to live." He said, "That is just about so." But then he said, "He is really better than many other landlords." Well, so he is; some of those landlords are there skinning the people alive. It is not the crofters who have the worst lot—it is the cottars, who come under the tacksmen. The crofter can only be put out once a year; the cottar can be put out at forty-eight hours' notice. The cottars are the absolute slaves of the tacksmen. There is just as much slavery as there existed in any land where human flesh was bought and sold. Why, there was the testimony before the Royal Commission. By-the-by, that Royal Commission, to a man who does not know anything about it, looks like a committee of wolves to investigate the condition of the sheep. I would like to see labouring people represented on some of these commissions. Anyhow, a very intelligent Gaelic witness said all the land he had was a cabin and grass for a cow. Lord Napier asked how much rent he paid. He replied £5. The Commission did not believe it, it seemed so incredible. They said, "How do you pay it?" He replied, "I work a 100 days in the year at 1s. a day." Is it any wonder that wages are low in your city when that is the state of labour in the outskirts? Poverty and destitution! There is enough to make you sick at heart if you listen to it. Why, a banker in the Highlands told me that only last week a young fellow had come to him, whom he knew was an honest, sober, industrious, hard-working man, and a cottar. He asked him for the loan of a couple of pounds. "Well," the banker said, "I can't lend you that as a matter of business. What is the matter?" The man replied, "I don't know where to get anything to eat; myself, my wife, and four children have had nothing but potatoes since last November, and not enough of them; and now there is not a particle of food in the house. All I have in the world is a cow and a stirk. If I sell them now, I can get nothing for them. If you lend me this money, I will sell the stirk at the term time and give it back to you." My friendly informant said, "I will give you so much meal, enough to keep you"—I forget how much, so many stones you call it—"to last you up to the time, and bring me the money when you sell the stirk;" and he said the man dropped down and burst into a flood

of tears; and my informant said—"I never felt so humiliated in my life as to see a human creature, a fellow-man driven to such a pinch." And then he said—"The man told me, 'You don't know what anguish I have suffered. Morning after morning I have seen my little children going to school fearing they would fall down from sheer weakness on the road.'" (Hear, hear, and applause.)

And the treatment of the poor—the poor broken creatures who have nothing of their own—is something outrageous—this endeavour to keep down the poor rates! Do you know that in some of these parishes there are poor decrepit creatures who get an allowance of 2s. a-month, and in other places 14 lbs. of meal for two weeks? Well, I asked, over and over again, "How do they live? They can't live on that." What they live on is the charity of the poor people. The landlords, the rich farmers, shove this burden of providing for the poor that their rapacity creates upon the hard-working people, who themselves can hardly keep from starvation.

One of the London papers said, jeering at me, that I proposed to take all the property from the landowners, and they supposed, however, I was very kind—I would send them to the almshouse. Well, now, I wish—I have no ill-will towards them—but I heartily wish that a lot of your ruling classes could be sent to the almshouse. I think if some dukes and duchesses and earls and countesses were treated as these poor people are treated, that the wickedness of it, the sheer cold-blooded barbarity of it, would become apparent to your so-called Christian people. Utter slavery! Why, as one man said to me, "We have feared the landlords more than we have feared Almighty God, and we have feared the factor as much as the landlord—perhaps even more—and the ground-officer as much as the factor." Why, they are right in their power. There is a case, I am told of, where the factor was a fish merchant, and compelled the people to sell him the fish, and fined them £1 if they sold the fish to anybody else. Why, a gentleman was telling me—a professional man—how he had ridden, just a week or two ago, round with the factor on the estate of one of your Liberal members of Parliament—(applause)—one of your great Liberals. (Cries of "Name.") Sir Kenneth Mackenzie. They came up to a man, and the factor said to him, "Look here, why was not your children at school yesterday?" Well, the man sheepishly replied, and the factor said, "Look here, don't you allow that to happen again. See that they are at school." "Yes, your honour," the man replied. "Heavens and earth, how can you talk to a man like that?" said the professional man, and the factor said, "I can make him toe the mark; I have plenty of power." Why, take the Island of Skye, the factor there is everything except the parish minister. (Laughter and applause.)

I spoke at Portree the other evening. I went up to Portree, and some of the inhabitants came to me, like Nicodemus, at night, and said, "You must not leave Portree without speaking here." I said that I did not want to thrust myself upon them, but if they secured a hall I would speak. They went away, and by-and-by they came back and said, "There is not one of us who has the courage to ask for a hall." They were afraid, and I said, "I will take the whole responsibility, and offer myself, if need be, a vote of thanks." I wrote a letter to the factor. I suppose you have heard of that factor—Mr. Macdonald, I think his name is. He is Justice of the Peace and everything else, and he has charge of the only hall there. I wrote him a polite note, stating that some of the people wanted me to speak on the land question. He wrote back to me to say that he could not let the hall for a lecture, and could not take the responsibility without consulting all the proprietors. Anyway, we got a schoolhouse. A clergyman at the head of the School Board was good enough to grant the use of a schoolhouse, although there were threats of interdicts and other terrible things made against him. (Applause.)

I remember reading in an English book, written some years ago, about an aristocratic Polander in the old times, who took an English traveller over some of his ground, and pointed at some miserable-looking objects. He told the traveller he could kick any of them he wanted to. It was much like that in Scotland to-day. (Applause.) Your aristocracy take a pride in all that sort of thing. They like to keep up those Highland romantic notions, the feather bonnet and the kilt, and all that sort of thing. Well, now, really when you come to think of it, those Scottish Highlanders have been an ideal people with the aristocracy. They fight like lions abroad, and they have been taken abroad at the dictate of the very power which has oppressed them, to rob and plunder, and kill other people; but they are as tame as sheep at home. (Applause and laughter.) Don't you think that alongside of the Scottish lion you ought to put a Scottish sheep? (Laughter.)

There is one other thing that has disgusted me. The most disgusting thing I saw in Ireland was that police force—the Royal Irish Constabulary. Well, now, you are keeping up here in Scotland an institution very much the same. When I was in Skye I saw policemen loafing around just as the Irish Constabulary loaf about. In a little bit of a village named Dunvegan, where I don't think there are more than six or seven houses, there are two policemen, all in uniform. (Laughter.) The police of the county of Inverness have been increased by fifty, at a cost of £3000 to the ratepayers, and £3000 more to the whole country, on account of the fears of the landlords. (Applause.)

I have been pointing out the evil. How can it be cured?

Well, it cannot be cured by any half-way measures; it cannot be cured by any measures that will be agreeable to your aristocracy. You know that at the beginning of big sheep-farming in the Highlands, and the eviction of their brethren by chiefs who had become landowners under this infamous English law, there was a good deal of misery, and one of the earliest measures to relieve that misery was to get up those Highland regiments. They were got up about the time of the American war, and a lot of them were sent over there to cut the throats of our people. You can't relieve poverty by any such measures as that. (Applause.)

In the beginning of the century, when the Duke of Sutherland and other men of that kind were evicting their people with a barbarity that will hardly find a parallel in the annals of savage warfare, there was another measure got up to relieve the destitution—that was the making of the roads. Some £267,000 of public money, in addition to £5000 a-year from the public funds were, for many years, spent on making roads through the Highlands; but this grant was finally abandoned, on the ground that all it had done was to improve the rents of the Highland landlords. No such measures as that will relieve poverty. (Applause.) You cannot get rid of it in such measures as you Glasgow people adopted in your City Improvement Trust. You have taxed the masses of the people to foster corruption; to put large sums into the pockets of speculators and landlords, to improve the property of other landowners; and you have not a whit relieved overcrowding or destitution. You have simply changed the place of the disease. It is like putting a plaster on a cancer and driving it somewhere else. You cannot cure this deep-seated disease by any such measure as that; you must go to the root, boldly and firmly. Take no stock of those people who preach moderation. Moderation is not what is needed; it is religious indignation. Grasp your thistle. Take this wild beast by the throat. Proclaim the grand truth that every human being born in Scotland has an inalienable and equal right to the soil of Scotland—a right that no law can do away with; a right that comes direct from the Creator, who made earth for man, and placed him upon the earth. (Loud applause.) You cannot divide land and secure equality. It could be secured among a primitive people, such as the children of Israel, who, under the Mosaic law, divided the land; but in our complex civilisation that cannot be done. It is not necessary to divide the land, when you can divide the income drawn from the land. You can easily take the revenue that comes from the land for public purposes. There is nothing very radical in this; it is a highly Conservative proposition. Why, I had the pleasure of reading a speech delivered in this hall by your member, Dr. Cameron, proposing substantially the same thing. Dr. Cameron and myself, I am glad to say, stand upon the same plat-

form in this respect. He wants to re-establish the old, ancient tax upon land that the landowners have thrown upon the masses of the people. That is what I want to do; and when we have done that, I want to go a little further. But I have no doubt that Dr. Cameron, when he had got so far, would be quite willing to go a little further. The real fight will come on some such proposition as that made by Dr. Cameron, and I have not the shadow of a doubt that, if the people do their duty, the landlords will be routed—horse, foot, and dragoons. (Applause.)

Now, see the absurdity of the present system, even as a great economic measure. Here, in Glasgow, take that field of Burnbank. The owner allows it to be vacant, and pays nothing; but if he puts houses upon it you will then get £7000 a-year in taxation. Have you got enough of houses in Glasgow? Why should you tax houses and not land? The man is a public benefactor who puts up houses. The more you tax houses, the less houses you have. But you may tax the value of land 20 shillings to the pound and you won't have an inch less land. (Applause.) A good part of this city used to belong to your people. It was purchased by a Lord Provost named Campbell. I don't know how he got it. It reminds me of the story I heard in Cardiff, how an ancestor of the Marquis of Bute got a great part of the common of that town—now most valuable property. A predecessor of Lord Bute gave the freemen a dinner every year. In a fit of generosity they voted the common to him; but he did not continue the dinner. (Laughter.) I don't know how the Lord Provost got this property. But I am informed he paid £1500 for it. Now, his successor, Sir Archibald Campbell, draws £30,000 in feu-duties, and he does not pay a penny of the rates of the town. ("Shame.") Would it not be better to take that £30,000 in taxation, and remit your taxes on some other things? (Applause.)

And I want to call your attention to what an enormous fund you would get for public purposes in this way. The chief advantage of putting taxes upon land is that you would choke off those dogs in the manger, who are now holding the land without using it, or making deer forests of what ought to be homes of men; who, that they may compel a larger black-mail, are withholding land around your towns from building uses, while whole families are crowded in four-storeyed houses, a family to each room. (Applause.) A great stimulus would be given to industry, to the investment of capital, to production of all kinds, by the removal of the taxes that weigh and press them down. And by taking that which goes to the landowner and using it for public uses, instead of making poor people pay for the education of their children, as you barbarously do now, you could have all your schools free, and the best possible kind of education given to the children of the poor, as well as to the children of the rich; you could establish libraries and museums, and public

parks and gardens, and baths and theatres, if you chose, in every town; you could all around this coast build harbours for your fishermen; you could give a pension of enough to live comfortably on to every widow or helpless one, to every decrepit man; you could dower every girl, and give every young man a start in life. (Laughter and applause.) Preposterous does it seem? Well, it does—this thing of doing anything for the masses of the people. It is highly demoralising, we are told, to give the people something for nothing. It would destroy their independence if the poor people didn't have to pay for the education of their children! (Applause.) You don't hear anything about that when the pensions get to thousands and five thousands of pounds. (Laughter.) Your Parliament votes £25,000 a-year to a young prince, as though it were nothing at all. (Applause.) Judges, officers, and that sort of thing, get most handsome retiring pensions. It don't hurt them, it don't demoralise them. (Applause.) And see how enormously your other expenses would be reduced. Why, I saw in an office to-day a chart showing the expenses of this nation diagrammed, and, according to that chart, it was nearly all for war, and the cost of war, and preparation for war. You have been going round the world robbing and murdering and cutting the throats of other people, and out of the present taxes, according to that chart, you pay 16s. 9d., I think, a-year for war, the expense of war, and the costs of war, and 3s. 3d. for other expenses. (Applause.) Why is that expense placed upon you? Because you are governed by a land-owning aristocracy. The army is a good place for younger sons. You have been governed by the class that likes to make war, and that finds a profit in making war. With the rule of the people that would cease. (Applause.) There's enough here for all of us. There's no natural reason for poverty, or even for hard work. The inventions and discoveries that have been already made give man such a command over material conditions, that we all could live in ease and luxury if we did not scramble and tread each other underfoot. (Applause.) Once give the people an opportunity, give mind a chance to develop, and the forces of production would increase at a rate never dreamed of. Where wages are highest, there is labour always most productive, there is invention most active. And certainly it is time that something were done. Why, think if one of us, having a family of children, were to go away from home, and come back and find the big ones leaving the little ones out in the cold, keeping them in ignorance, in squalor and misery, and disease—what would we say? (Applause.) Do you believe that the laws of justice can be outraged with impunity? Not so. The whole history of the world shows that, though, on the narrow scale of individual life and individual action, injustice sometimes seemed to succeed, yet on the great scale of national life, the punishment of national crimes always comes sure

and certain. And, so sure as God lives, that punishment must overtake such nations as this. The cry of the oppressed cannot go up for ever and ever without bringing down punishment. (Applause.) Look back at the greatest nation that ever played its part on this world's stage—Imperial Rome. What was its fate? That very fate may be seen coming over this nation to-day. Italy, when the Roman power went forth to conquer the world, was the home of hardy husbandmen, independent and self-reliant. As fortunes grew, these men were drained off to the wars, evicted, driven out, and Italy was given up to sheep and cattle and great estates. That very same thing is going on in these islands to-day. What was Scotland made for? What is this earth made for? Was it not for man? Was not man given the dominion over the birds of the air and the beasts of the field? Was it not made his duty to subdue the earth? Is not man the highest thing that earth can produce? And yet here, in this Scotland, you are driving off men and putting on beasts, and the vengeance is coming. We know something of the laws of the universe. We don't yet know them all. But there is a strange thing that has been noticed in new countries, and that is the influence that man seems to have by his mere presence upon nature. The bee follows the pioneer across the American continent; where settlements are made more rain seems to fall, new flowers without planting seem to spring up, and the earth to bring forth more abundantly; and, where man retires, nature becomes more savage. See how in Italy fertile districts, when depopulated, became the haunts of fever. Look to the arid wastes of North Africa, once such a teeming hive of population. The very same thing can be seen in Scotland to-day. Upon this land the curse that follows the expulsion of men is coming. Men have been driven off the richest and best land, and the sites of their little homes and their little cultivated fields given up to sheep, and the sheep fattened. It was good grass where the men had been. That everywhere, I can learn, is giving way. I am told by capable authorities that where a thousand sheep twenty or thirty years ago could be kept in places men had been driven off, not 700 can be kept now. There is a fungus moss creeping over the ground; Scotland is relapsing into barbarism again; even sheep are giving way to the solitude of the deer forest and the grouse moor. Will you, men who love Scotland, let it go on? (Loud applause, and cries of "No.")

The CHAIRMAN intimated that any gentleman present would now have an opportunity of putting questions to Mr. George. He said that four questions had been handed in by a journeyman tailor. The first was—Why does Mr. George address meetings in large cities instead of amongst the farmers and farm labourers, the large cities being centres of commerce, and their inhabitants having no interest in the question?

Mr. GEORGE—Because I think it is in the large cities that the evils of the land monopoly are best seen, and that it is to the large cities that I look for the force that is to reform these evils. (Applause.) Those poor cowed people in the Highlands, trembling under the eyes of their factors, what can they do for themselves? It is to you men of the cities that I mainly and principally look. The towns must carry the standard of advancement, as they always do. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN—The second question is—How would nationalisation of the land tend to raise wages or shorten the hours of labour of the city artisan?

Mr. GEORGE—Because it would open the primary sources of all employment. Why are wages, generally speaking, in new countries higher than in old countries? Adam Smith, a hundred years ago, stated the reason, when he said it was because there land was cheap—because a man can there work for himself, and therefore will not work for anybody for less than he can earn for himself. When you open up the land, you relieve the pressure on every industry. It is the pioneers in a new country who furnish the foundation and market for all the others. First you have the herdsmen and farmers, and afterwards you have the operatives. It is sometimes said we all cannot be farmers; but that is the only thing we all can be. We all might be farmers, because communities have existed in which everybody was a farmer; but you never heard of a community where everybody was a tailor. (Laughter and applause.) It is not necessary, however, for us all to be farmers. But if we break up the monopoly of land, so that in the primary occupations there will be easy employment and high wages, then there will be a brisk demand for labour and high wages in all employments. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN—The next question is—If Mr. George would not tax labour products, and if the rent of the agricultural and grass land is only about 66 millions per year—56 millions of this amount being a rent imposed upon the labour of the farmer—would he explain to us how he proposes to abolish the presently existing poverty by the paltry sum of ten millions which remain?

Mr. GEORGE—The landlords are very anxious to show how little they get. Mr. Mallock has made a coloured diagram in which he pictures it as only £100,000,000. If it is so little, what is the use of making a fuss about it? The fact is, that it is an enormous sum. The agricultural rent is put at £60,000,000; but that is the smallest part of the rent. The rents of towns and cities and mineral lands ought to be at least twice as much. Nor in these estimates is everything given. It is merely rent received by the landlords. There may be feued ground that pays 20s., and which the growth of the city has made worth £10 or £20. All that is rent. The

Duke of Westminster gets, besides the rent, all the buildings upon his estates in London at the expiration of the leases. The rent of these kingdoms is at least two hundred millions—enough to pay all your extravagant expenditure in some directions, and a great deal more, and at the same time giving labour a chance. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN—The next question is—If it be unjust to hold private property in land, is it not equally unjust to build a private house upon land, seeing that to build a house upon land is putting a portion of the people's earth to private uses, and excluding every one except the owner of the house from the use of that portion of the earth. (Laughter.)

Mr. GEORGE—That is just as sensible as you will find in the reviews of your best newspapers. That question must come from the editor of one of your leading dailies. If a man takes a fish out of the sea, the fish is properly his private property; but that fact does not necessitate giving him the sea as private property. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN—The next question is—Would not the abolishing of taxes benefit the large merchants of a city rather than the artisans or labouring classes?

Mr. GEORGE—No, I don't think so. The greatest benefits would be to the labouring classes. The incidence of taxation, as now laid, benefits the capitalist, or the man who has most money. The making of liquor has been concentrated, and distillers have built up great fortunes over in Ireland. The distillers are the men who renovate and build churches. It is the same with all sorts of business. We have in our country, more than in yours, a protective tariff. The duties are paid primarily by the importers. Do you think you can get them to work for free trade? On the contrary, they profit by the duties, as their effect in increasing the amount of capital required for the business keeps competitors out. The effect of all these taxes is to concentrate business in the hands of capitalists. Now, it is said, why attack the landlord alone; why not go for the capitalist? The capitalist, as a capitalist, is doing nobody any harm. What harm is done by the capitalist is as a monopolist. It is the monopoly that you want to destroy. Now, we find when a man has a great sum of money, this power is, in the phrase of the Socialists, used in exploiting labour. Where does this power come from? Suppose I take a million pounds and go into a country where men can earn for themselves £1 a-day and put up my big factory, can I get anybody to work for less than £1 a-day? Not much. It is because these men are impoverished that they are forced to compete with each other for starvation wages. Suppose every family had, as it well might have, its own house and garden, enough to live on, would you find people working for a few shillings a-week? There's where the pressure come's from. One millstone

can't grind. It requires two, the nether millstone as well as the upper millstone. (Applause.)

A GENTLEMAN in the area of the hall asked Mr. George a question—in effect, whether, supposing the rent of the land was paid to the State, instead of to the private owner, it would make any difference?

Mr. GEORGE—It might not make any difference to the rent or in the rent, but it would make a very great difference to the people who paid the rent. That question was well answered in a London newspaper by my friend Mr. Joynes. A man wrote and said, what difference was it to the farmer whether he paid his rent to the State, or whether he paid it to the landowners? He said this was the difference—that the State was not likely to go to the Continent, or go off in its yacht and spend it. It would not be just to the rest of the people to make rents low. Every rent ought to be a proper rent, as much as the land is worth, because that is the only way of securing equality. There's the mistake our friends in Ireland have made. They have gone and turned that great agitation into a miserable little thing for the tenant-farmers. Now, the tenant-farmers are not entitled to a whit more favour than any other class in the community. The class to look to, the class to strive for, is the very lowest class—not the farmer, but the labourer. He is the man. Improve the condition of the man who has nothing but his hands, and you improve the condition of the whole community. (Applause.)

A GENTLEMAN in the gallery asked—Does Mr. George propose to confiscate the interest on bonds held by widows and orphans, which absorbs a large part of the income of land?

Mr. GEORGE—I would propose to confiscate the whole value of the land.

The GENTLEMAN—Well, what I refer to belongs to widows and orphans.

Mr. GEORGE—Do not be deluded by this widow and orphan business. That is a matter that is always put to the front. When men talked about abolishing slavery in my country, the cry was raised about the widow and the orphan. It was said, "Here is a poor widow woman who has only two or three slaves to live upon; would you take them away?" It reminds me of the story of the little girl who was taken to see a picture of Daniel in the lions' den. She began to cry very bitterly, and her mother said, "Do not cry, do not cry; God will take care that no harm will befall him." To which she replied, "I ain't crying for him, but for the poor little lion in the back—he is so little I am afraid he won't get any." I propose to take care of the widows and the orphans. As I told those people in London whom I addressed recently, every widow, from the highest to the lowest, could be cared for. There need be no charity or degradation; every one of them could have an

equal pension. It will only take twenty million pounds to give every widow in the three kingdoms a pension of £100. And in the state of society which would ensue from breaking up land monopoly, no one need fear that the helpless ones he left behind would come to want. This is not the case now. Take your Duke of Argyll or Duke of Sutherland—nothing is more certain than that their descendants will be yet tenanting your almshouses. John o' Groat was sent by one of your kings up to Caithness, and made a rich laird. But the lot of the o' Groats now existing there is just as poor and miserable as any people there. The best blood of England, as it is called, runs in the almshouses. How much better it would be for the richest man to know that he left his widow and children in a state of society where they could not possibly want, where all the influences around them were healthy, than in such a state of society as this! Why, look at its moral aspects. The vice and disease that are bred of poverty, do they rest merely with the poor people? No; they climb up through the ranks of the rich to the highest. (Loud applause.)

The CHAIRMAN read the next question, as follows:—If Mr. George would abolish ownership in land, what compensation would he give to those owners of land who have acquired it by purchase, sanctioned by existing law?

Mr. GEORGE—I would not give them a penny. I don't think this matter of compensation comes into practical politics. Why should you make any discrimination between a man who purchased his land, and a man who did not purchase it? Does it make much difference whether I am the robber or I bought the thing of the robber? Supposing I was big enough to steal one of you, and run you off to a country where I could hold you as my slave, you would have a moral right to get away from me as soon as you could; but would that moral right cease the moment I had sold you to somebody else? If you were to say we will recompense anybody who can show that they bought their land, what would be the result? Why, by the time you came to take the land, everybody would have sold it to somebody else. A gentleman said to me to-night—"Oh, Scotsmen will not hear of anything else but compensation." I don't believe that. (Applause.) I have a very much higher notion of Scotsmen than that. I believe the Scots are too logical a people to tolerate the idea of compensation. I will tell you a story I heard about this matter of compensation. There was one of your Highland lairds—a Gordon something or other—in a railway train with a gentleman, and he was talking about these wicked ideas that were floating about—this theft and Communism. The gentleman said to him, "How did you get your land?" He said, "We got our land by bringing our men into the field to fight for the country." The gentleman said to

him, "What did the men get?" Well, he had to admit that the men had not got anything. But he said, "We have had the land for a long time, and sanctioned by law. It would be robbery to deprive us of it." The other gentleman said, "How long have you had it?" "We have had it for 800 years." Well, the gentleman said, "If you have had it for 800 years, don't you think you have had it long enough?" (Applause.) Compensation is preposterous. Why, all titles to land are nothing but robbers' titles, and the titles to a large part of the land in Scotland are a great deal worse than robbers' titles. They are not titles won by the strong hand or by conquest. They are rather the titles of the sneak thief—or worse. These Highland chiefs betrayed their brethren—took advantage of a language and a law that they did not understand. They were won by treachery and treason. I don't propose to go back into inquiries of that sort, because, to my mind, it makes no difference how a man got the land. It may be said he bought it. Supposing he bought the sun? Could he buy it from any one who had the right to sell it? But where do these titles come from? Has one generation, supposing they were all united, the right to sell the rights of the coming generation? This earth belongs to all generations. You men have carried in a certain direction compensation to the extreme of absurdity, but it has always been compensation to the ruling classes. You paid the descendants of Charles the Second's bastards compensation for hereditary pensions and taxes, and you paid enormous sums to buy out the hereditary jurisdiction of your Highland chiefs. For every sinecure held by one of the ruling classes he gets compensation, but you never hear of a poor man being compensated. How much were the people compensated when the taxation was taken off the land and put upon labour? Why should you compensate the landlords? The only reason is that you have been doing it for a long time. Nobody proposes to take anything from the landlords. I would give every one his full equal share. It is not proposed to take anything from them; it is merely to stop them from taking from other people. (A voice—"What about recently acquired land?") Treat it in the same way. Supposing the land was acquired, is it not the principle of law that the buyer can get no better title than the seller has to give? If a man has no right to the land, how can he give another man the right to it? As a matter of fact, you would do no injury by laying down that principle. No one could be hurt by the resumption of the land as common property, save those who could well afford to have their incomes lessened. The man of small means who had got himself a house and lot would be the direct gainer by the change which would exempt houses from taxation, and put it upon lots, while he would be an enormous gainer by the increase of wealth and the rise in wages. Then the business men

who are landowners would profit by the improvement and stimulation of the productive energies of society far more than they would lose as landlords. The typical landlord is like a landlord in Dublin they call Cosey Murphy, who stayed in bed eight years; the typical landlord is the man who goes to the Mediterranean in a yacht, and spends the money which he draws from the toil of the people here. Consider, the real thing that would be taken from the people who demand compensation is not land, but the power which the possession of land now gives them of levying toll upon the labour of others. What does the Duke of Sutherland want with his twelve hundred thousand acres; or the Duke of Westminster with his London estates? No more than the Earl of Airlie wants with the water that he sold. They want to have the privilege of taking the wealth of the people who have produced it. That is a right that no one can have. That is a power that can be sanctioned by no purchase, and that no one can justly ask compensation for. (Applause.)

A GENTLEMAN in the middle of the hall stood up and said—"Suppose a man was induced by our Land Laws to invest £100 in land. He might have invested the money in any other commercial enterprise. Would Mr. George compensate the man who had lost his money by the so-called pernicious Land Laws?"

Mr. GEORGE—I would not. (A voice—"You will not do for Scotland." Second voice—"Keep quiet, you fool! Do you speak for Scotland?") If a man invests a gold sovereign in a bad Bank of England note, I would not reimburse him. If a man invests a hundred pounds in slaves, I would not reimburse him. (A voice—"We compensated the West Indian slaveholders.") A very wicked thing it was. I hope you will not do so again. You shunted the loss which the slaveowners ought to have incurred upon the backs of the working classes of this country. You did worse. You strengthened slavery all over the world; you taught the American slaveholder to believe that, if abolition should come, he would get a price for his human property. Up to the verge of the war slaves commanded as high a price as ever they did. If, on the contrary, that agitation had gone on on the basis of absolute emancipation, the thing would have been gradual. The value of slaves would have declined. Men would not have bought and sold them. Now, the same is true in this. I want to do this at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning; but if we all wanted to do it, it would take a good while. It necessarily must be a progressive step. We must necessarily, on account of the resistance, move step by step. And as we do this the landowners will have a chance; your recent purchaser will have a chance not to purchase. (A voice—"Why not begin at home?") The decline would be slow and gradual. Why not begin at home? I am beginning at home. I don't come over

here to preach anything I have not preached in my own country. The very conditions that I have been speaking to you about I have seen growing upon new soil, and it was because of that that my eyes were opened to it. Why not begin at home? I am here beginning at home. We who speak this language are on both sides of the Atlantic but one people—becoming every day more one. (Applause.) This agitation must go forward on both sides of the Atlantic—by action and reaction. America must be affected through England and Scotland, and England and Scotland will be affected through America. Whatever we do, we do for this whole, great imperial race—the race to whom the destiny of modern civilisation is entrusted. (Loud applause.)

A GENTLEMAN—Would you confiscate all rent?

Mr. GEORGE—I would confiscate all rent in the economic sense.

The QUESTIONER—Then, would you give compensation for improvements?

Mr. GEORGE—Let the improvements stand. Certainly I would. I don't propose to take the improvements, but to let everything stand as it is now. It is the present system that is confiscatory. It is confiscating labour every day. It is not a robbery that is done and passed away; it is robbery that is going on every week and every month, every day and every hour. It is a fresh robbery that is committed on every child that comes into the world. Now, to go back to this matter of compensation. Some people do propose to compensate. There are some who propose to compensate all who can show that they have purchased the land at the price they gave for it, *minus* the net rent that they have received. Then there is Miss Helen Taylor, the step-daughter of John Stuart Mill. She is also in favour of compensating everybody who can show that they have purchased their land with the proceeds of their labour. She proposes to make the landowners pay up with interest, and compound interest, all the back taxes from the time of Charles the Second, and then to take part of that money and compensate the people who could show that they had purchased with their own earnings. (Laughter and applause.) There are people who believe in compensation—compensation not to the landowner, but to the people who have suffered. I would cut the whole thing now. I should be perfectly willing to draw the line at "let the past be the past." If any one wants to compensate landholders, they have a perfect right, so far as they are concerned themselves, to give compensation. They could make a collection for them. You have a perfect right to do that, but I deny the right of any individual to grant away the natural rights of another individual. Be just before you attempt to be generous There is only one true basis of social reconstruction, and that is the basis of justice.

Votes of thanks to Mr. George and the Chairman concluded the proceedings.

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