

As I have often said to those who felt impatient to see tangible results from the agitation and discussion of the land question, time is a necessary element in thought. There is in the progress of ideas, a period analogous to that period in the history of a plant in which germination goes on. The seed must swell and the roots push out in darkness and silence, ere the first indication of life can appear above the surface. Our ideas have been passing through that stage of growth in Great Britain, and are now on the verge of entering - nay, they are already beginning to enter, the region of practical politics, where they will draw strength and vigor from forces that are to the diffusion of thought what the air and the sunshine are to the growth of the plant.

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From all sides forces have been and are now converging to press the land question to the front in Great Britain. The Irish land agitation and the political difficulties that it has brought, the growth of a similar agitation in the Scottish highlands, the tithe agitation in Wales, the falling in of leases in London and other cities, carrying with them the transfer to the ground landlord of blocks of valuable buildings, with enormous increase of rents, discussion of the nature and effects of mining royalties, the growth of democratic sentiment, the increasing social discontent, the decadence of the old agriculture, and the rise to political importance of the agricultural laborers, the attention that has been drawn to the condition and housing of the poor in the cities, the weakening of the trades unions - in fact the whole trend of events and of thought has been in the direction of forcing the land question upon public atten-

tion. And that a few individuals should be deemed to be the absolute owners of the land on which, and from which, a whole nation must live, if they are to live at all, is a thing so utterly monstrous, so directly opposed to the first and strongest perceptions of natural right, that it can only be maintained on condition that it is not discussed. No matter how timidly it is begun, there is in the nature of the human mind only one end to any discussion of the right of landlords to levy tribute on their fellow creatures for the use of what was here before man came.

And even the agitation and discussion of such palliatives as "free trade in land," leasehold enfranchisement, judicial rents, laborers' allotments, landlord purchase, etc., has but helped to swell the strong current that is urging it on (in many cases insensibly), to the recognition of the equality of natural rights in the element indispensable, to all human labor and all human life.

Signed: Henry George.

Dec. 22, 1888.