

SAILORS' SNUG HARBOR AND THE RANDALL FARM.

By W. T. UROASDALE.

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters," lead a life of peril, hardship and excitement that makes any home ashore a very haven of rest when, worn out and weather-beaten, they abandon the sea. How doubly delightful then must it be to such men to find themselves the heirs to a life estate in a palace by the salt water, fanned by sea breezes and in full view of the shipping of a great harbor crowded with craft flying the flags of all nations. Such may be the happy lot of every sailor, of whatever nationality, who can prove that he has sailed for five years under the flag of the United States, and such also is the privilege, it is whispered, of some who have never seen a foreign port or sailed five years under any flag, provided they have what New York politicians call the necessary influence.

On the shore of Staten Island, within thirty minutes' sail of the Battery, stands a group of stately buildings surrounded by handsome grounds and known as "Sailors' Snug Harbor." The closely shaven lawns are shaded by beautiful elms and dotted here and there with statuary. Old men stroll along the well paved walks, and beneath the trees a group of bronzed tars may often be seen listening, for perhaps the hundredth time, to some well spun yarn, in happy unconsciousness of the invention of the chestnut bell. Inside the building a comfort and elegance worthy of the exterior are maintained. The hard wood, and encaustic tile floors are literally swept and garnished. A library is open to all, and across the hall is a reading room furnished with newspapers and current periodicals. The dormitories are clean and cool, and each man has a comfortable bed to himself, though three or four generally sleep in a room. Long dining rooms, capable of seating nearly a thousand men, are kept scrupulously neat. Two noble buildings serve as hospitals, and the sick have the best of medical attendance and nursing, and should they die they are buried in a cemetery on the grounds.

OCCUPATIONS OF THE INMATES.

The inmates of Snug Harbor are furnished with food, clothing, tobacco and the other necessities of life—among which grog is not counted—free of cost, and they are under no obligation to do any work whatever. Most of them do work, however, in order to obtain money of their own. Some want money to send to children or other relatives, and a good many want it to buy that one commodity not furnished by the management—rum. There is, however, comparatively little intemperance among them, as habitual drunkenness would forfeit their right to their home. A number of the best inmates are employed by the management as guides, and they are paid by the institution for the service. These men

show visitors over the buildings and grounds and courteously answer the many questions put to them. Another set of inmates act as waiters in the dining room and receive monthly pay for their services. Others work on the farm, if so inclined, while a great many engage in making baskets, mats, miniature vessels, hammocks, etc. The institution furnishes rooms especially fitted up for this purpose, and the men buy their own material. This at least was the custom, but the relation of employer and employed has grown up among them. Some of the men having the necessary capital buy palm, cane and cordage in quantities and make contracts to deliver a given quantity of goods to city dealers, and these hire others to work for them. Quite an industry of this kind has sprung up through a recently created demand in the fancy goods stores for doll hammocks. But though the relation of employer and employed has grown up, there is no conflict between labor and capital. If any man does not like his wages, he quits working for an employer and sets up in business for himself; though, of course, he has not so sure a market as has the "contractor" who has engaged to furnish baskets, hammocks or mats to a city store. No fear of want drives the workman to submission, and a few dollars of capital, easily earned, will set him up in business. Neither is he confined to Snug Harbor in seeking opportunities for business or pleasure. He can walk out of the gate when he chooses, and has merely to give notice to the governor, such as any member of a family would give to its head, in order to "go ashore" and stay as long as he pleases. When he is ready he goes back, sure that his bed and place at table are awaiting him. Some inmates, overcome by a longing for the sea, go off for a voyage and remain away for a year or so, while the number absent on visits to friends or relatives is always considerable. Snug Harbor is, in fact, a true home, where inmates enjoy that liberty to come and go without which it would be a prison.

NOT PAUPERS, BUT HEIRS TO AN ESTATE.

This liberty is not to be wondered at when we remember that these men are not paupers, but the heirs to a handsome estate. During the revolutionary war a Scotchman named Randall, who had settled in New Orleans, then a Spanish colony, finding that port open for the sale of the prizes of Yankee privateers, entered actively into privateering as a business, and by the close of the war had amassed a moderate fortune, which he left to his children. Robert Richard Randall, his eldest son and principal heir, settled in New York, having exchanged estates with an old New Yorker, who found himself compelled to reside south on account of impaired health.

In 1801 Robert Richard Randall called in Alexander Hamilton and Daniel D. Tompkins, not for consultation on some grave question of statesmanship, but for the purpose of making his will. After making numerous bequests to his relatives and servants, he consulted the two lawyers as to the best disposition of the remainder of his property, and it is said that it was Hamilton who suggested that a fortune made on the sea might well be devoted to making comfortable the declining years of worn out and disabled seamen. Randall accepted the suggestion and made a will, appointing as trustees to carry out his purpose the chancellor of the state of New York, the mayor and recorder of the city of New York, and the president and vice-president of the marine society, the president of the chamber of commerce, the senior minister of the Episcopal church and the senior minister of the Presbyterian church, in the same city. The selection appears to have been a wise one, as the purposes of the testator have been faithfully carried out, and the constitution of the board is such that it cannot become a self-perpetuating body.

THE RANDALL FARM.

One would suppose that the estate bequeathed to these trustees was a truly magnificent one, if it was to enable them to maintain in the style described a number of inmates increasing from 33, admitted at the opening of the institution in 1833, to 844, the number now in Snug Harbor. An examination of the property bequeathed must, however, have caused the first trustees to conclude that it would be some time before the income at their disposal would be sufficient to maintain the fifty sailors mentioned in the will as the proper number to start with. The principal property bequeathed to them was the farm of twenty-one acres on which the testator had lived. Anyone leaving New York for a stroll into the rural districts in the year 1800 would, after a walk of a mile or so, have come to a pale fence at a point where Broadway and Astor place now meet, and he would there have found the entrance to Randall's farm. On the property were a mansion and stables. This farm was bounded on the north by the property of Henry Brevoort, on the east by what is now Fourth avenue, on the south by the Sandy Hill road, a portion of which is now Waverly place, and on the west by a run which disappeared many years ago beneath the then newly opened Fifth avenue. It was a good farm, however, containing an excellent orchard and market garden, and the prophetic eye of the real estate men of that early day saw that it was a gift not to be despised. The trustees managed the estate at first as executors of Robert Richard Randall, but the frequent changes in their personnel caused inconvenience, and in accord with one of the provisions of the will they applied to the legislature for an act of incorporation, which was granted February 6, 1806. The preamble of this act recites that "the said trustees have represented that the said estate is of considerable value, and if prudently managed will, in time, enable them to erect such hospital." The facts at the time appeared to warrant the hope, for the reported income from the estate in 1806 was \$4,243;

eight years later in 1814 it had increased to almost \$6,000, and in 1817 it was \$6,659.92. The growth of population from 1800 to 1810 had been more than fifty per cent, but the war of 1812 caused an actual loss of population which from 93,373 in 1810 fell to 93,634 in 1816. This accounts for the failure of the income from the farm to increase between 1814 and 1817. In 1820, however, the population numbered 123,706, and then began that rapid increase which soon caused the estate to advance greatly in value. This began to be so apparent in 1817 that the trustees applied again in that year for legislation permitting them to buy elsewhere less valuable land on which to erect their buildings. The petition was not granted until eleven years later, and during the intervening time the trustees had their hands full in defending their title to the estate, which had clearly become a valuable prize, well worth fighting for. This great law suit largely absorbed the revenue of the estate, and it was not until 1820 that the United States supreme court rendered its decision sustaining the will. In May of the following year the trustees purchased a farm of 130 acres on Staten Island (the present site of the institution) for \$10,000, and they subsequently added twenty-one acres with a water privilege at a cost of \$6,000. The corner stone was laid in October, 1831, and the institution was opened Aug. 1, 1833.

RAPID INCREASE IN VALUE.

During the ten or twelve years of litigation that prevented the development of the estate, between 1817 and 1830, the population of New York had more than doubled, and by 1855 it had again more than doubled, that is to say, from 93,634 in 1816 it had increased to 515,547 in 1855, and hence it is not remarkable that the income of the Snug Harbor estate had increased from \$6,659.92 in 1817 to the handsome sum of \$75,000 in 1855. As the population has since grown to nearly one and a half millions the advance in income has continued, and it has been further increased by judicious investments of the surplus funds. In 1870 the income of the estate was \$127,000; in 1875 it was \$363,808.31, of which \$248,612.50 was derived from rents, and in 1886 it was \$302,643.24, of which \$276,196.71 was derived from rents. The annual report for 1886 is dated March 9, 1887, and has just been forwarded to the proper officers. It is as follows:

The annual report of the comptroller of the "Sailors Snug Harbor in the city of New York," showing the receipts and disbursements of the trust, from the 1st day of January to the 31st day of December, 1886; showing also the present state of the funds and an estimate of the income for the year 1887:

Receipts.

Balance of cash on hand Dec. 31, 1885.....	\$24,385 54
Amount of New York city bonds maturing May 1, 1886.....	54,500 00
Balance due on P. Whearty's bond.....	8,000 00
Dividends on Marine bank balance.....	4,053 72
For sundries sold by the governor of the institution for account of the trustees and for the use of the harbor, docks, etc.....	5,965 18
For rents during the year.....	276,196 71
For interest on investments, etc.....	22,431 35

Disbursements.

Purchase of \$100,000 United States 4 per cent bonds.....	\$127,794 52
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Improvements and repairs on the Institution buildings.....	58,216 85
Expenses of the institution for maintenance of the inmates, including taxes.....	178,656 22
Balance of cash Dec. 31, 1886.....	28,547 53
	\$395,531 90
	\$395,531 90

Statement of the Funds.

Buildings and lots obtained by foreclosure of mortgage, etc., at cost.....	\$362,367 74
Loans on bond and mortgage.....	212,500 00
United States bonds, par value.....	150,000 00
New York city bonds, par value.....	50,000 00
Temporary deposits in trust company.....	70,000 00
Marine bank balance.....	20,568 60
Balance of cash 31st December, 1886.....	28,547 53
	\$593,978 92

Estimated Income for the Year 1887.

Rents of lots and buildings.....	\$238,127 50
Ground rents outstanding and collectible.....	6,500 00
Interest.....	21,125 50
	\$265,753 00

New York, December 31, 1886.

THOS. GREENLEAF, Comptroller.

MEAGER REPORTS.

In 1816, some difficulty having previously been experienced in ascertaining who were the senior members of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches, the legislature passed an act designating the rector of Trinity church and the minister of the Presbyterian church, then located on Wall street, as the clerical trustees of the corporation, and at the same time it added a clause requiring the trustees to make an annual report to the legislature of the state and the common council of the city of New York. That given above is the report made in obedience to this requirement for the year 1886. These reports appear to grow less explicit from year to year. That for 1875 specified certain buildings from which rent was derived, and gave the ground rents in a separate item. The report just made puts all rents under a single head. The report for 1875 showed that there had been paid out for salaries \$16,166.64, for wages \$10,925, and for supplies \$48,175.76; that for the past year lumps all of these items in the single line, "Expenses of the institution for maintenance of the inmates, including taxes, \$178,686.22." A much more remarkable instance of official reticence is shown in the statement of the property held by the trustees. In the report for 1875 the dwelling houses at 8 and 10 Clinton place were mentioned and valued at \$17,774.12; in the last report this item has risen to "buildings and lots obtained by foreclosure of mortgage, etc., at cost, \$362,367.74," and in neither report is any estimate given of the value of the ground in this city from which the trust derives its income, or of that on Staten Island, on which the institution is situated. This policy extends to the withholding of a map of the company's property from the register's office, and to a general reticence about the extent and value of the property. Mr. Greenleaf, the comptroller of the corporation, positively refused to permit the writer of this article to have made a copy of an interesting and curious map of the Randall farm before it was intersected by streets and cut up into building lots. He curtly declared, "It is our private property," and said that no one outside of the company had any right to see it. It is not presumed that this reticence covers up anything, that there is any cause for concealing, unless, perhaps, a generous salary list, but it appears to be com-

mon to all corporations holding large blocks of real estate in this city. Trinity church, for instance, conducts its affairs with such absolute secrecy that even those county officers whose business it is to deal with real estate are refused a copy of its maps, and no information whatever concerning the source, extent or disposition of the enormous revenue of the corporation can be obtained by any individual. In the interest of honest tax valuations, if for no other reason, the legislature ought to compel public reports and the filing of maps by all such corporations.

ACCUMULATING WEALTH.

The last annual report shows that the income of the estate exceeded by more than a hundred thousand dollars the expense of maintaining the institution. Included in these expenses are not only the liberal salaries of the governor, chaplain, physician, steward and numerous other officers of Saug Harbor, but the wages of superintendence paid to the people who perform for the property in this city those duties usually undertaken by land owners and their agents in the management of private estates. The blind and confusing annual report of the trustees offers no clew for ascertaining the amount thus allowed, but the style maintained in their elegant offices in Wall street and the air of prosperity attending their servants indicates that such payments are not niggardly, and are sufficient to secure whatever ability is required for the successful management of a great property. Yet, despite such liberal expenditure, there is a steady and rapid increase in the company's property outside of and beyond its original real estate. The annual report for 1875 showed such property amounting in value to \$279,449.93, but the report for 1886 showed that this species of property owned by the trustees had advanced in value to \$393,978.92. As a corporation of this kind can have no object in accumulating property beyond what is necessary to yield an income sufficient to discharge its trust, the presumption is that such increase arises through the mere necessity of the case, and that the inevitable tendency of land ownership is to bring about enormous aggregations of wealth. To this tendency, rather than to the possession of any unusual sagacity on the part of their possessors must probably be attributed the tremendous increase of values in the Astor, Rhinelander and other great estates.

Another obvious inference to be drawn from the great and ever increasing surplus of the Saug Harbor estate is that seafaring men are a notably thrifty class. It is true that this has not been the general opinion, but it appears that in this, as in many other matters, common opinion is wrong. How can it be otherwise when we find that, with such a delightful home as Saug Harbor open to all sailors who have seen five years' service under the American flag, a sufficient number do not apply for admission to absorb the current income of an estate devoted to that purpose; for, of course, the trustees would not keep any out with a view to increasing the capital at their disposal. That would be a breach of their trust.

THE LEASE SYSTEM.

The system of leases by which the trustees of the St. Mary's Saug Harbor rent their lands is

simple, and inures in the long run to the benefit of the lessors. The leases usually run for twenty-one years, and they stipulated, before the property was all covered, the character of the building to be erected. They generally contain a clause providing for renewal for a like term at their expiration, but at a new rental based on the valuation of the land made at the time of such renewal. No absolute right to renewal is given to the tenant. The ground rent and the building are separately valued by disinterested parties and the trustees retain the right to choose whether they take the building at the value thus fixed or accept the new rent named by the arbitrators. Furthermore, if a lessee defaults on interest or taxes, which latter he obligates himself to pay, he, after a stipulated time, forfeits his lease, and his building is only worth to him what it will bring at a forced sale, which is substantially whatever the trustees choose to offer. It would seem that in these ways considerably over \$300,000 worth of buildings have passed into the possession of the trustees within the past ten years. The estate is therefore constantly becoming richer, not only by the increased value of the bare ground, but by this falling of buildings into the company's possession. So far as the trustees are concerned, they do not pretend to do anything to add to the value of the estate. Their policy is the safe and conservative one of ground rents, and hence the growth of land values through the pressure of population is admirably shown in this case. The fact that this increase is devoted to a worthy and generous public purpose only makes it more clear that the diversion of the unearned increment to public purposes in all cases would have an enormous influence for good, while the existence of such magnificent stores as the Stewart building and many others is a conclusive refutation of the theory that the public taxation of land values to an extent that would destroy speculative values would prove a bar to the erection of handsome and permanent buildings. The tenants of the Saug Harbor estate not only pay ground rents that increase enormously with each renewal, but they pay all the city and other taxes on the property they occupy, and yet the estate has been steadily improved and the temporary set back given it a few years ago through the removal of retail business up town has already been recovered to an extent that promises further building operations.

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS.

The history of the Randall farm answers most of the queries propounded by the ignorant and incredulous as to the practical working of the proposed system of land taxation. It proves that men will not only build upon and improve property not their own, but that they will contract in advance to pay rental, in time, on the increased values created by themselves and others, and to surrender at an appraised price the improvements that they have themselves made. Here is a copy of a clause that appears in the Saug Harbor leases:

"It is hereby mutually covenanted and agreed, that if, at the expiration of the term hereby granted the said parties hereto shall agree upon a renewal of this lease for a fur-

ther term of twenty-one years, and shall by mutual consent fix upon the annual ground rent to be reserved in such renewed lease, then the said parties of the first part, their successors or assigns, shall and will execute to the said party of the second part, his executors, administrators or assigns, at his or their expense, a new lease of the aforesaid premises for the further term of twenty-one years, and after the expiration of the term hereby granted at the annual ground rent, payable half yearly, agreed upon between the said parties aforesaid. But if, at the expiration of the term hereby granted, the said parties shall not agree upon a renewal of this lease or upon the amount of the rent to be reserved for such renewed term, then each party shall choose a disinterested person, who shall be the owner, in fee simple, of one or more lots of land in the neighborhood of the premises hereby demised, and the said persons so chosen shall under oath appraise the land hereby demised, considering it as a vacant lot at its full and fair worth at private sale, and they shall also under oath appraise the building now erected on the said lot or any other building of like description as its substitute, which shall cover the whole front of such lot, be constructed of brick or stone, two or more stories high, and covered with slate or metal, with its front finished in such style as may be approved of by said parties of the first part, their successors or assigns, at its then actual worth, without reference to the ground on which it stands; and in case the said appraisers shall differ in their valuation or appraisement, either of the lot or building, they shall then choose an umpire qualified as aforesaid, whose decision under oath shall be final and conclusive, and the said parties of the first part, their successors or assigns, shall have the full liberty and choice either to pay to the said party of the second part, his executors, administrators or assigns, the value of the said building, so determined as aforesaid, or to grant a renewal of this lease unto the said party of the second part, his executors, administrators or assigns, at an annual ground RENT OF FIVE PER CENT on the value of the said lot, so determined as aforesaid. And it is further mutually covenanted and agreed that at the expiration of each and every term which may be thereafter granted by each and every subsequent renewal of this lease, the said parties of the first part, their successors or assigns, shall still have and retain the full liberty and choice either to grant a further renewal for the further term of twenty-one years, at such annual rent, payable half yearly, as shall be ascertained and determined in the manner aforesaid, or to pay unto the said party of the second part, his executors, administrators or assigns, the value of the said building or its substitute, to be ascertained as aforesaid. And it is further mutually covenanted and agreed by and between the parties aforesaid, that whenever the said parties of the first part, their successors or assigns, shall refuse to grant a renewal of this lease as aforesaid, the said building or its substitute shall be valued and paid for as aforesaid.

Provided, always, that the said party of the second part, his executors or assigns, shall not be compelled to surrender the premises until such payment be made as intended.

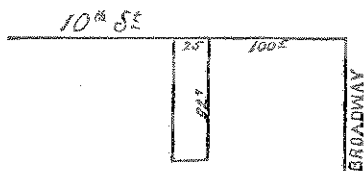
The party of the second part to pay and discharge all duties, taxes and assessments during the term hereby granted.

Thus it appears that numbers of people have been found willing to agree to erect houses of a style prescribed by the lessors, paying for the ground a rental of five per cent on its value at private sale and giving the lessor, at the expiration of the lease, full liberty to take

their buildings at an appraised value or to renew the lease at five per cent on the value of ground at the time of such renewal. This is a conclusive answer to one of the objections most frequently urged against the proposal to concentrate all taxation on land values. The tenure of land under such a system would be much more secure than it is under the Snug Harbor leases, which give the lessee an assurance of but twenty-one years' possession, and obligate him to surrender his building at an appraised value if the trustees demand it, even though the tenant be willing to pay the increased rent. Under the system of taxing land values advocated by the united labor party of New York, the occupant would have full liberty of choice as to whether he would pay the increased tax or sell his building (probably at its appraised value) to some one else; and so long as he chose to pay the tax he would hold the land, not on any twenty-one years' lease, but in fee, by a right perpetual and transferable. Again, when rental values shall have been fully ascertained under the new system it is not likely that the increase in taxes will be any more rapid than it has, under the existing system, been on this Randall farm, all of which increase has been met by the tenants and not by the owners of the property.

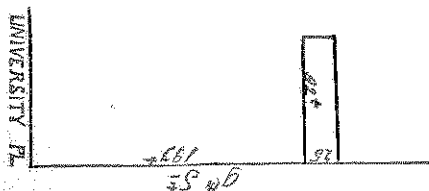
THE INCREASE IN RENTS.

The rapid increase in the total income from the Randall farm has already been shown. A few examples taken at random from the recorded leases in the register's office will show how this has affected individual properties during the past forty or fifty years. A plan showing the size and location of each lot referred to is herewith given. The first is a lot 25 by 92 feet, situated on the south side Tenth street, 100 feet from Broadway:



This lot was leased May 1, 1844, to Asher Kirsheedt for twenty-one years at \$300 per year. The same lot was leased May 1, 1865, to John Thornley for twenty-one years at \$500 a year, and at the expiration of that term it was leased again on May 1, 1886, to Jefferson M. Levy for twenty-one years at \$650 a year.

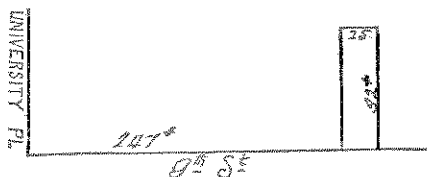
The next lot is on the south side of Ninth street, near University place:



It was leased May 1, 1844, to Charles B. Hatch for twenty-one years at \$175 a year. Leased again May 1, 1865, to Alexander Van

Rensselaer for twenty-one years at \$400 a year, and again on May 1, 1886, to Louisa Van Rensselaer for twenty-one years at \$500 a year.

The next lot is in the same block, a few doors east of the one last described:



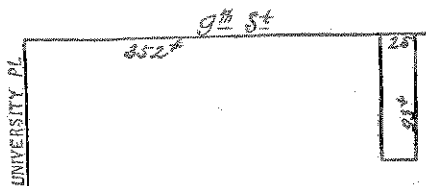
This was leased May 1, 1844, to Barzilla Deming for twenty-one years at \$175 a year; on May 1, 1865, to Hiram Geer, executor of Margaret Geer, deceased, for twenty-one years at \$400 per year, and in May 1, 1886, to Sarah A. De Venny for twenty-one years at \$500 a year.

The next lot is at the corner of Clinton place and University place:



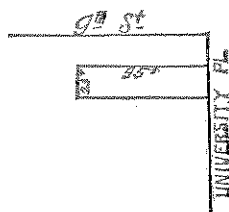
It was leased May 1, 1835, to Edgar Jenkins for seventeen years at \$168.50 a year; on Nov. 1, 1853, to Morgan L. Smith for twenty-one years at \$300 a year, and on Nov. 1, 1873, to the same for twenty-one years at \$750 a year.

The next lease examined is that of a lot on the south side of Ninth street:



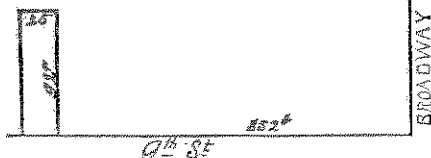
It was leased May 1, 1833, to Gordon Barnham for twenty-one years at \$100 a year; on May 1, 1854, to Ross W. Wood for twenty-one years at \$200 a year, and on May 1, 1875, to the same for \$500 a year.

The next property is on University place:



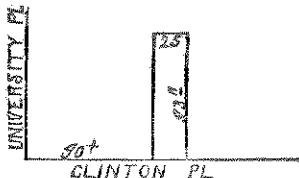
It was leased Nov. 1, 1841, for thirteen and a half years to Anson Baker for \$72 a year; on May 1, 1855, to the same for twenty-one years at \$200 a year, and on May 1, 1876, to the same for twenty-one years at \$600 a year.

The next lot is on the north side of Ninth street:



It was leased May 1, 1855, to Marcus S. Hutton for twenty-one years at \$200 a year, and again leased to him May 1, 1876, for twenty-one years at \$500 a year.

The next lot is on Clinton place, near University place:



It was leased May 1, 1855, to Ann Bunker for twenty-one years at \$300 a year, and again on May 25, 1885, to Albertina Matthews and Caroline Homer for eleven years eleven months and five days at \$500 a year.

These leases are representative of the less valuable property of the estate, and do not include any property on Broadway or Washington square. They show that the rental value of the land has tripled during the past forty or forty-five years, the increase varying with the location. In a few instances the same person has held through a twenty-one years' lease and made a renewal, but usually death or some other cause has prevented this. It appears, however, that no serious difficulties have been encountered in such cases in making transfers, since the property was taken at the expiration of the lease at as high a rental as was paid by those who held on through a period of twenty-one years and then renewed the lease.

On Broadway the advance in rents reaches figures that enables one to understand the enormous growth in the income of the estate. The block bounded by Ninth and Tenth streets, Broadway and Fourth avenue, was leased to A. T. Stewart on May 1, 1869, for twenty-one years, with the privilege of renewal, at an annual rent of \$12,000 for the first four years, and at an annual rent of \$36,000 for the remaining seventeen years. At the time this negotiation began there were some twenty odd leases of lots on this block made to divers persons from 1848 to 1852, yielding to the trustees an aggregate rent of \$5,220. Mr. Stewart bought up these leases and surrendered them to the trustees, and then received a lease for the whole block on the terms stated. The trustees, it will be seen, did nothing, but the tenant rendered an enormous service to the estate and agreed to pay an enormous rent for the mere privilege of occupying the bare ground.

A lot one hundred feet deep, having a front of twenty-five feet on Broadway, was leased in May, 1850, to James Blackstock for twenty-one years at \$275 per annum, and this lease was renewed May 1, 1871, for twenty-one years at an annual rent of \$3,700.

The lot at the southeast corner of Broadway and Ninth street, having a front of 23 feet 4 inches on Broadway and of 9 feet 11 inches on Ninth street (now occupied by Fredericks, the photographer), was leased Nov. 1, 1852, to George P. Parker for twenty-one years at an annual rental of \$900. It was again leased Nov. 1, 1873, to Elizabeth M. Campbell, administratrix of George P. Parker, for twenty-one years at a rent of \$3,500 a year.

A lot 100 feet deep, with a front of 23 feet, on the east side of Broadway, above Eighth street, was leased in May, 1850, to Samuel R. Johnson at an annual rent of \$225, and the lease was renewed on May 1, 1871, at a rent of \$3,250 a year. Large as the increase on the rental of the ground occupied by Stewart's store appears, it was not proportionately so great as the increase of rent on these small lots, on which rent advanced tenfold in twenty-one years.

WOULD PEOPLE BUILD?

But, it is constantly asked, would people build on land practically owned by the public. To this it would be a sufficient answer that people will build themselves as comfortable homes as they can afford on almost any tenure that will assure them possession during the ordinary length of time in which a man expects to remain engaged in a profitable business. But the Snug Harbor experience is a practical answer to the query. None of the older portions of the city of New York is better built upon than the Randall farm. It is occupied by vastly better buildings than the properties immediately north and south of it. Any man who wanted to erect a house for himself could arrange to build it on the estate without spending money for a site for his dwelling. He was assured possession for twenty-one years, with an understanding that if he would agree to an advance in rent at that time, based on the increased value of the land, irrespective of the value of his house, he should have a renewal of the lease for twenty-one years more. On these terms men were glad, forty or fifty years ago, to build substantial houses. The tenure was not in any way more secure than it would be under a system that established practical public ownership of the soil by levying a sufficient tax on land values. In the latter case the tenure would be perpetual, provided the tax were paid, without any fear that a satisfactory agreement could not be made at the end of twenty-one years. It is true that the revaluation would be more frequent, and probably from year to year; but this would subject the builder of the house to no risk that he does not now run. The increased assessments could only come on the value of the lot, while he is now, under the Snug Harbor leases, bound to meet the taxes on such annual assessments on both the house and lot. The question is one of fact, not of argument. Some of the finest buildings in the city have been erected on this old farm, on which the bare ground of a single lot, 25x100 feet, now rents for more than a fair-sized farm devoted to agricultural purposes and improved by buildings. On Broadway, occupying the whole block from that street to Fourth avenue, and from Ninth to Tenth streets, stands the great iron building erected by A. T. Stewart, and still commonly known as "Stewart's up town store." A

block below, on Broadway, stands the Sinclair house, a well known hotel, and adjoining it is the handsome and costly building owned by Mr. Potter, and occupied as a large clothing house. Opposite the Sinclair house is the handsome building erected by the Saug Harbor trustees and occupied by Dodd, Mead & Co., the publishers. On the same side of Broadway are the well known retail dry goods houses of Daniels & Son and Kaughraan & Co. On Waverly place, between University place and Fifth avenue (known as North Washington square), stands a solid and handsome row of dwelling houses, in what was some years ago the most fashionable residential part of New York, and which is still one of the most desirable and costly places of residence in the city. On the Fifth avenue front of the Randall farm stands the famous Brevoort house. The Church of the Strangers on Mercer street, half a block from the New York hotel, stands on the property, as does also the building on University place formerly occupied by the Union Theological seminary. Clinton place (Eighth street) and Ninth street, from Broadway to Fifth avenue, run through the property, and are lined with dwelling houses from three to four stories in height and very largely used as boarding houses. In fact, this little farm now has a population of thousands, and in numbers, business activity and in the style of buildings surpasses many of the smaller cities of the country. Not a foot of this land has ever been sold to any of the occupants who have covered it with fine buildings, and, of course, no such sale can be made. Had this unearned increment gone to the people who created it, not only in this, but in all cases, this city would have been burdened with no debt; no taxation could have been borne by its inhabitants beyond an amount equal to that which they have paid as rents to private individuals, and the activity and enterprise of the metropolis would have made it not only the greatest city, but the most comfortable place of residence on the continent.

HOW THIS INCREASE IN VALUE IS BROUGHT ABOUT.

The increase in the value of the Randall farm has been manifestly brought about solely by the pressure of population, supplemented by the labor and capital of the tenants. There is not so much as a peg on which to hang a doubt in the case. An old man about to die, some eighty years ago, was in doubt as to what disposal he should make of his property. He accepted the suggestion of his counsel that he should devote its income to the maintenance of disabled seamen. He named as his executors and trustees a number of men occupying positions to which they were appointed without any thought that they would be thus associated in the control of property. Many of them are men having no claim to special sagacity in business or to any peculiar fitness for the management of real estate. The claim of prescience or shrewdness often set up in behalf of private owners of land cannot be made here. All that these men had to do was to maintain their grip on twenty-one acres of Manhattan island and wait for the community to do the rest. They made no outlay on the property. They

opened no streets, graded no lots, built no sewers, paid for no light or water. All of that, by the terms of every lease, they made their tenants obligate themselves to do. The owners of the property built no houses on the land. That also was done by the tenants. As soon as these tenants had built so many as ten houses every remaining vacant lot on the Randall farm had an increased rental value, which went, not to the builders of the houses, but to the owners of the land. Without ceasing, though varying from time to time, this increase has gone on, and the estimates for the coming year show that it is still going on.

In 1790 the population of New York was but 33,131, and Mr. Randall obtained his twenty-one acres as a country seat at rural land prices. In 1800 the population had risen to 60,483, and when he came to make his will, a year later, it was seen that the property was likely to become valuable. The extent of the rise in value was not imagined, however, since it was the original intention to build the Saug Harbor on the farm itself. The relation between increase in population and the rise in the value of land after that time is shown as follows:

Population.		Income from Estate.	
1790.....	33,131	1806.....	\$4,243 00
1816.....	93,594	1817.....	5,459 97
1831.....	513,547	1853.....	75,989 00
1870.....	942,292	1874.....	127,000 00
1875.....	1,096,037	1875.....	202,838 37
1880.....	1,396,590	1880 No report discoverable	
1886 (estimate).....	1,500,000	1886.....	\$42,643 24

These figures cover the eighty-one years that have elapsed since the growth of the city northward began to add to the prospective urban value of the Randall farm. During that time the population of the city has grown twenty times as great as it was in 1805, but the income of the Randall farm has become more than seventy times as great during the same period.

The people who cause it do not obtain one cent of this increase. It all goes to the trustees, who make no pretence of doing anything to bring it about, and through them, ultimately, it goes to the sailors who are so comfortably taken care of down at Saug Harbor. It would be difficult to find a more perfect illustration of how the whole community causes the increase in land values, or one more fully demonstrating how a few landowners, who render no service whatever in return, absorb the whole of such increase. In this case the revenue thus obtained is devoted to a charitable purpose. But this is but the one hundred and eighty-sixth part of the 3,305 acres covered by Manhattan island below Forty-second street. From the vast remainder of the area now included within the city limits thousands of private land owners, who, as such, render no service to the community, draw yearly tens of millions of dollars of income from values created by the whole community, just as the existing values of the Randall farm have been created by the community. Every consideration of justice, equity and social progress demands that this process shall be stopped, and the advocates of the new system, so far from being subject to the reproach of holding immoral doctrines, may justly claim that they are the only people having the sagacity to perceive and the courage to oppose the continuance of a system that enables a favored class to appropriate the

which it has no hand in bringing into existence, and to rob others of the fruits of their labor. The injustice that has been done cannot now be undone, but every delay that greed or ignorance is able to interpose to the recovery by the people of that increase in values, which they are still creating from day to day, is a crime against the most sacred rights of property and a blow at the rights, the happiness, the freedom and the prosperity of generations yet unborn.

VALUES AND ASSESSMENTS.

These are facts systematically ignored by the newspapers that misunderstand or misrepresent the proposal to levy all taxes on land values: but the logic and eloquence of Rev. Dr. McGlynn's address on "The Cross of a New Crusade," and perhaps also the number and enthusiasm of his hearers produced a profound impression on at least one of the papers that have attempted to ignore the land question. That paper acknowledged that the "address is entitled to rank with those great orations which, at critical times and from the mouths of men of genius, have swayed the course of public opinion and changed the onward movement of nations." After such a declaration and in the face of such a speech, animated by the loftiest Christian feeling, the attempt to stigmatize the doctrine of the land for the people as immoral was necessarily abandoned, but the journal in question attempted, in a patronizing way, to show that the money necessary to accomplish the objects sought could not be obtained through the taxation of land to its full rental value. The argument put forth is that the annual expenditures of our city government "are about \$32,000,000, while the aggregate value of all the real estate within the city limits, improvements included, is \$1,257,275,003. Deducting only half of this amount for the value of improvements, which is much too little, there remains \$628,637,951, and a rental of even four per cent on this sum, which would be more than could be obtained by the city government, would be only \$25,145,518, or nearly \$7,000,000 less than we now obtain."

It is certainly a great step forward to have thus had the cant and moral false pretense of the opponents of reform in taxation brushed aside and the discussion transferred to the economic aspects of the measures proposed. But in this, the first attempt in this direction, the unfairness that has marked the advocacy of the existing conditions in the earlier stages of the discussion is still displayed. No one having the slightest knowledge of the taxing system imagines for a moment that the figures of the assessment above quoted represent the selling value of the land and buildings within the city limits. On the contrary, it is universally acknowledged that the assessment does not aim to include more than sixty per cent, or three-fifths of such value. The figures given above are, therefore, intentionally misleading. If the \$1,257,275,003 given in the assessment represents three-fifths of the value of land and improvements, five-fifths, or the whole, of that value would be \$2,095,459,838. The half of this would be \$1,047,729,919, and four per cent on this would be \$41,909,196.76, giving an annual surplus of sixteen and three-quarters of millions over the expenditures as stated.

Thus the argument absolutely fails the moment that one of the false premises on which it is based is corrected. But this is by no means the only false premise in the statement quoted. Not only is it a notorious fact that the assessment is designed to cover but sixty per cent of the selling value of improved property, but it is equally well known that the assessment is proportionately much lower on unimproved lots, and hence, in any attempt to make it the basis for a valuation of the bare land within the city limits, it is a gross error to assume that the buildings are equal in value to the land, or nearly equal. A valuable illustration of the under valuation of bare land in the assessment has recently come to light. A number of vacant lots on 147th street, belonging to the estate of the late President Arthur, were sold at auction. There were seven of them, and they brought a total sum of \$95,475. These lots are valued on the assessment books at \$27,000—that is, at but twenty-eight per cent of their value at auction sale. A few days afterward fourteen vacant lots on 135th street were sold at auction for \$49,000, but they are assessed at but \$13,000, about thirty-seven per cent of their auction price.

Again, the assumption that four per cent is the highest rental value that could be obtained by a great and growing city from the ground included within it is mere guess work, and entirely without foundation in fact. Few if any ground rents are now fixed at so low a rate, and yet occupants of property thus leased pay this rent to private claimants, and, in addition, pay to the public the full taxation imposed by the city on the land and also on the buildings that they have erected on it.

WHAT RANDALL'S FARM RENTS DEMONSTRATE.

This is not a matter of mere argument or opinion. The Randall farm is in the heart of the city. It contains property valuable for business purposes on and adjacent to Broadway, and other property available for private residences and boarding houses. It is a fairly representative tract. Its ground on Broadway will not rent for anything like the sum easily attainable for Broadway property down town, or even for property on the same street between Fourteenth and Thirtieth streets. Its land occupied by the handsome residences on Fifth avenue and Washington square cannot be compared in value with land further up Fifth avenue, while the remainder of the land, occupied by less pretentious dwellings and small stores certainly does not yield rents beyond the average for all that portion of the city lying below Forty-second street. This is no assumption resting on guess work, but an obvious fact that will be admitted by every honest man familiar with real estate values. This estate, as has already been shown, has increased in rental value more than seventy fold during a period occupied in increasing our population to twenty times the number it had when the growth of the town toward the Randall farm began. It has been shown that this tract occupies but the one hundred and eighty-sixth part of the area of the city below Forty-second street, and that its owners, starting with practically but the bare ground, have, in eighty years, been able to establish and support an extensive

home for sailors, acquire many of the buildings erected by others on these lands, create a surplus of nearly a million dollars, and bring their rent roll up to \$375,196.71 in 1886, and to estimate an increase to more than \$300,000 for the present year. It is furthermore shown that this splendid revenue has been derived solely from ground rents until quite a recent date, and that such additions to it as have since been made arise from a surplus accumulated through ground rents.

A HUNDRED MILLIONS A YEAR.

No better basis than this can be found for making a moderate estimate of the rental value of bare land in New York city. Of course, in many cases the owner of the ground also owns the building. In no such case, however, does the selling value of the bare land fail to become an important factor in fixing the rent, while the shorter leases in such cases enable the owner to tax the increase in value more frequently than is possible under the long Snug Harbor leases. It is therefore certain that such owners obtain a higher ground rent than is yielded to the trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor by the five per cent paid to them on valuations of their land made every twenty-one years. The estimate based on their experience must therefore fall short of the total amount of ground rents derived by private individuals, estates and corporations from the possession of the soil of New York city. Taking, then, as the basis for such calculation, the actual rents from the Randall farm for 1886 and omitting all other income, it is clear that the ground rents for that portion of this city south of Forty-second street were at least, for that year, 186 times \$276,191.71, or \$51,072,538. This is no guess work, but a safe and moderate calculation based on actual business experience. For reasons already given it is manifest that this is much below the amount for the whole of the area. It is therefore clear a ground rent on the bare land of the lower half of Manhattan island can and does yield to somebody more than \$50,000,000 a year, an amount to be increased for the present year (1887), according to the Snug Harbor estimates, to \$55,451,715. But large as are these figures they fail to indicate what it is possible for the city to derive from a tax that shall appropriate to public use the full rental value of land. The people who paid the sums to the Snug Harbor trustees as a five per cent rent on the values of the Randall farm, also paid the city taxes amounting to about half as much more. It is therefore evident that the city and the owners together are able to obtain fully \$75,000,000 out of the land of this island below Forty-second street; and it is certainly a moderate estimate that the land above that street would, if thus taxed to its full rental value, yield a third as much more, and thus give to the public \$100,000,000 a year, \$32,000,000 of which is now taken by the city and \$68,000,000 by private individuals. However great an allowance may be made for a reduction of rental values through the stimulus given to building by encouraging the use of land now held vacant, the necessary remainder will still be great enough to show how absurd is an estimate of \$25,000,000 as the full ground rent

of this city, while actual experience shows how erroneous is the declaration that four per cent is the maximum that the city could levy as a land tax.

FUTURE INCREASE OF REVENUE.

The advocates of the land for the people doctrine are not, however, to confine themselves to the consideration of present land values. There is not a land speculator in New York who does not know that the marvelously rapid rise in these values in the past is sure to continue in the future. So certain is this that millions of dollars have been unhesitatingly staked upon it. The income from the Randall farm has increased more than seventy fold during the past eighty years. The testimony of the late Edward H. Ludlow before the senate committee on labor and education in 1883 showed that the gross value of the land of this city had increased *more than a thousand millions of dollars* during his lifetime. The total income of the Snug Harbor estate has increased over one hundred and thirty-eight per cent during the past sixteen years, and the last annual report of the trustees contains an estimate of income for the present year showing that the increase in rents for 1887 over that of 1886 will be more than 7½ per cent, a ratio but little below that of the past sixteen years. If so much can thus be done under private ownership, how much more can be done when the vast revenue derived from the land shall be expended in public improvements and in other additions to the comfort and attractiveness of city life? "Cold arithmetic," so far from playing havoc with the attractive picture drawn by Dr. McGivern in his address on "The Cross of a New Crusade," fortifies all his statements, and opens up a vista that even enthusiasts may well hesitate to attempt to describe.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

This hasty, and necessarily imperfect, study of the history of one of the many farms since covered by the growth of New York, demonstrates the folly of the existing system of land tenure, and gives us a glimpse of the blessings attainable from the ownership of land by the people as a whole. Here we find a little farm, lying on the outskirts of the city fourscore years ago, that was then worth less than many a potato patch or cabbage garden of equal area on Long Island is worth to-day. It fell, almost by accident, into the hands of trustees, whose duty it became to maintain the property intact and nurse its revenues for a specific purpose. They did not fertilize it or cultivate it. No use of the ground for agricultural purposes would have ever made it capable of supporting eight, much less eight hundred, men in comfort and idleness. Neither did the trustees attempt to increase its value by building on it or otherwise rendering it suitable for human habitation. It was the commonality of New York, to use the expressive phrase of the city charter, who laid out the present streets, built beneath them the sewers necessary to health in a dense population, brought to the city pure water, lighted the streets and paid the police to preserve order. It was the whole people, acting through their municipality, that thus wrought the direct improvement necessary to make the Randall farm a compactly built portion of

a great city. Again, it was the private activity and enterprise of these same people that caused the growth of business and crowding of population which brought the farm in demand for residential purposes. Lastly, it was the private capital and labor of these same people that built the dwellings on the property, the builders paying roundly for the privilege. At no stage of this growth did the trustees need to so much as raise a finger to promote the increase in the value of the land committed to their control. All that they needed to do was to hold on. The city was bound to grow northward, and it must grow over the Randall farm. The trustees were in a position to block the way of that growth unless their terms were complied with. For not enterprising such an obstacle; for consenting that the whole people should make their land valuable and that private individuals should, by their labor and capital, adapt it to human use, these trustees were enabled to demand the rents that now yield a splendid revenue beyond their power to spend in the discharge of their trust. In thus playing the dog in the manger and levying blackmail on the labor and capital of the whole people, to which, as trustees, they contributed nothing, these men but fulfilled their trust and obeyed the law. They deserve praise, not blame, for their conduct, and no one can censure them or the thousands of private owners of land who have followed the same course, reaping where they have not sown and eating bread earned in the sweat of the faces of other men. It was the law and custom, and appeared, both to the oppressor and the oppressed, to be the natural order of affairs, as unquestionable and as fixed as then appeared the right of a white man to own a "nigger." Had the law been different; had the whole of the taxation for municipal purposes been laid on land values, and had such tax been increased so as to appropriate the continued increase in land values for the benefit of the people who caused it, we should not perhaps have had this single institution for the benefit of a small and ever decreasing class, but we should have had something far better—the fairest and stateliest city on earth, dotted with parks, intersected by perfectly paved streets, connected with the main land by tunnels and with Long Island by numerous bridges, spreading over miles and miles of the adjacent country, and closely knit together by a perfect system of street transportation, owned and operated by the people for the public comfort and convenience. No private greed would have suggested the erection of vile tenement houses to be crowded to suffocation by miserable creatures, and no such abject poverty as now curses our people would have dragged down human beings into a willingness to occupy habitations unfit for dogs.

No debt of millions would now press upon the people occupying the territory over which the city would have grown, and though human nature might not have been changed, we may, at least, believe that a prosperous people, occupying individual homes and fitted with a sense of a share in the common ownership of the soil on which they lived, would have been more public spirited and virtuous than a population largely made up of those con-

demned to live in abject poverty amidst the most degrading surroundings.

That the money to make such a city was easily obtainable is perfectly manifest from a study of the growth in value of the Randall farm. The people who built upon and occupied that land paid not merely a ground rent averaging five per cent on the valuation of the land at the time the lease was made, but they paid all of the city and state taxes on the property in addition. Had the whole of this gone to the public, to whom alone the increase in values was attributable, it would have been easy to make New York the busiest city on earth and the most delightful place of residence.

LAND VALUES AND LABOR.

The effect on labor of the constant expenditure in improvements of the public revenue and of the activity in building assured by the inevitable spreading the existing population over the unused ground now held in the grasp of speculation, will be manifest to all who will let their minds dwell upon it.

The growth in values of Randall's farm not only gives us a hint of the revenues that would thus be made available for public use and benefit, but the disposition of the Snug Harbor funds suggests a method of disposing of any surplus over and above that needed for public works. Every civilized state now recognizes its obligation to see to it that the old and infirm shall, if necessary, be cared for at the public expense. The conditions under which such aid has been extended have, however, been made such by the ruling class that its acceptance carries with it a disgrace often more dreaded than death by starvation. Yet men are not, under other circumstances, chary of receiving pensions. The United States government pays out millions annually to the soldiers of the late war, not one of whom feels any disgrace in accepting what has been awarded him. He has done the nation a service, for which his pension is, in part, the reward. Again, the inmates of Sailors' Snug Harbor do not account themselves as in any way humiliated by their acceptance of the bounty that the hand of a dead man gathers from a considerable number of the present generation of New Yorkers and freely hands over to them. They are no paupers, but the heirs to a great landed estate sufficient to provide them with all of the necessities of life. Have they not, too, through years of perilous toil rendered the state some service? Should the state of the future conclude to thus pension to the extent of its ability all who had reached a certain age, or fallen wounded or sick in the battle of life, why might not the shame-bearing word "alms" disappear from our legal vocabulary and such people accept pensions without loss of self-respect? What would become of the labor problem in a community where constant activity provided abundant work for all able-bodied men, where access to natural opportunities elsewhere took away all incentive to over-crowding, and where the old and infirm were honorable pensioners upon a well filled public treasury, it is not difficult to imagine. The question is not, however, left to the imagination to settle. The labor problem of the world would be somewhat like the labor problem in

Snug Harbor. Enterprising men would still become employers, as enterprising sailors now do there. The certainty of a market, the necessity of supervision or other causes would still make it profitable for many men to work for these employers, so long as the latter did not exact too much in return for their enterprise, sagacity or skill. If such extortion were attempted workmen would drop off from such employers to work for themselves, the most intelligent and skillful being naturally the first to leave, since they would be the men best able to set up in business for themselves, or to adapt themselves to the use of opportunities open to them elsewhere. On the other hand, if men demanded so much wages as to leave to the employer no compensation for his capital, sagacity or skill, he would go to work himself rather than yield. Thus the bargain of industry would

be made fairly between equals, and not between an employer on one side who aims starvation as a weapon at the heads of the other parties to the bargain. In short, Snug Harbor, while it is the outgrowth of a vicious system of topsy turvy political economy, which disinherits God's children of God's earth, and gives rule over many a fair and populous province to the mere whim of men whose eyes closed in death while such place was yet a wilderness, nevertheless is full of suggestions of a better condition of society, in which there shall be neither master nor slave, landlord nor tenant, where God's will shall at last be done on earth, and his disinherited children, restored to their patrimony, grow up into a race living joyously in a fair and fruitful land, in which the hopes and heroism of past patriotism shall be justified and Liberty's dream of the ages be fulfilled.

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