

## HIS ECONOMICS

It is easy to collect many passages from the writings of Jones to show what his economic ideas were. They started out from his firm belief in the people. To an opponent he writes: "I believe in you though you do not believe in me. I believe in all of the people and I believe in them all of the time—that is, I believe in the good, the God, the Divine, the Love principle that is at the heart of humanity. My hope for the nation and the race is in the patriotism, the love of the Whole, that is an outgrowth of this divine principle." Again he says, "I believe that we are all people—just people—made of the same common kind of clay, inspired largely by the same hopes, the same longings, and having a common destiny. . . . Holding these beliefs, one can easily see that the idea of governing by force another man, whom I believe to be my equal in the sight of God, is repugnant to me. I do not want to do it. I cannot do it. I do not want anyone to govern me by any kind of force. I

## Golden Rule Jones

am a reasoning being, and I only need to be shown what is best for me, when I will take that course or do that thing simply because it is best, and so will you. I do not believe that a soul was ever forced toward anything except toward ruin." And unlike many reformers he included the rich and powerful in his love. He had no patience with class feeling of any kind. "The poor are not poor from choice. They deserve little or no credit for their safety from the dangers that property-owning brings. With scarcely an exception every one of them would be a millionaire if he had a chance. The disease of ownership infects us all." But he pitied from the bottom of his heart the idle rich, who are "just as pitiable" as the poor man who cannot find work. "These rich men's sons and daughters have a right to work, to have a share in the creative work going on around them." But this belief in the heart of all the people did not involve a belief in the wisdom of majorities. "There is really no foundation in fact," he tells his men, "for the great confidence that we have in majorities. . . . Indeed they have been oftener wrong in the great events of history than they have been right." And he cites the case of Jesus, of Luther at Worms, of Servetus, and Huss and Latimer and Ridley and Garrison and Lovejoy and John Brown. His

political and social ideal was a "nation of friends," and he saw clearly how monopoly stood in the way of its realization. "It is simply an inhuman cruelty," he writes, "to teach a child how to be useful in the world, and then to turn it out to find every door of opportunity closed against it." "Could you maintain your self-respect while denied the right to a place to stand on the earth, as thousands of American citizens are to-day?" He contends that the right to work is "an inherent right, like the right to breathe, like the right to be." The problem is how to secure for everyone "the right to labor and to receive the full, fair value of what we produce." "A day's wage will never be fair so long as an employer subtracts profit from it." And we see in Jones a tendency to regard physical labor as more strictly "labor" than mental labor. "The people are coming to realize," he says, "that the source of their wealth is through labor—hard, sweating labor—and with this realization comes a revelation of the truth that those who do not labor do not produce wealth, all the fine-spun theories about brain-work and capital to the contrary notwithstanding." His immediate plan for improving conditions was to shorten the hours of labor and thus give the unemployed a chance to share in the work. "Divide the day," was his cry, and he wrote a

## Golden Rule Jones

song with this refrain. Then he preached the doctrine of public ownership, looking forward to the day when all industries should be owned and managed by the state, and he believed that the gathering of industries into trusts was a forerunner of the "co-operative commonwealth." But Mayor Jones was no economist, and in a chapter on the "Trusts" he makes no mention of the protective tariff, nor does he consider the various monopolies upon which they are based. He condemns competition root and branch, failing to distinguish the difference between competition under monopoly—the struggle of fifty men to get into a life-boat which will only hold thirty—and the natural competition of healthy industry under free conditions. In all this he followed the "scientific socialists," but they would have none of him on account of his hatred of classes and parties, and one of the leading socialists in Toledo, a doctor of high standing, was expelled from the party because he accepted an office from the Mayor. Although Mayor Jones repudiated all force, he still saw in the state "the only instrument through which the people may express their love for one another." His ideal was undoubtedly a state free from all imputation of force. He was delighted with the sign which he saw in the parks of Glasgow, "Citizens, protect your property"—"it was in such strik-

ing contrast to the 'boss' idea expressed in the order, 'Keep off the Grass.'” He always had the family idea of the state and municipality before his eyes. Each citizen was to be “a member of a family which owns its own streets, which owns its own bridges . . . waterworks . . . electric lighting plants . . . telephone and express and messenger service; a member of a family which owns and does everything for the family that can by any possibility be better done by collective than by private effort.” He finds this family feeling showing itself imperfectly already in asylums, hospitals and various similar institutions, and he anticipates a wonderful advance of the social conscience in the same direction in the near future. It is the first ray of the rising sun that he feels in his own heart, and it has already arisen. “Electricity has always been in the world,” he says, “but its power was never utilized until the last few years.” And so brotherhood is already here. Let us use it and apply it to our institutions. Charity is only a makeshift. “I want to knock the props,” he writes, “clear out from under every person who is harboring the delusion that our charity institutions are evidences of civilization. They may be evidences that we are tending toward civilization; the very need of them is evidence that we are not civilized. The way to help the

## Golden Rule Jones

poor is to abandon a social system that is making them poor." He was always appalled in New York by the long row of wretched men who waited in line every night at twelve o'clock for the distribution of bread at a bakery opposite the hotel at which he usually stopped. Back of all external reforms, however, he looked for a reform of the heart. "We cannot do better," he said, "until we *are* better." "Love is the only regenerative force. To teach love to individuals by personal kindness and helpfulness, is to do well; and to mold love into law and thus uplift and enlighten a whole city, is to do better." It was his hope that America would first undertake the practical application of his dreams. It was to be the "land of comrades," sung by Whitman, "the land of large thoughts, large hearts, and large conceptions of the value of every human soul." "America's task is to teach larger views of life and duty. We are to interpret that great word, *Humanity*, to the world." But he loved all nations, and his journeys in Mexico and Europe—extended as far as the oil-fields of Bulgaria—opened his heart to the foreigner.