

From an Amateur Journalist of the Past

MY acquaintance with Joseph Dana Miller dates back to 1878. He had begun the publication of *The Argosy* and soon rose to eminence in the little world of amateur journalism, as an editor, essayist and critic, but more particularly as a poet. In the exercise of that precious talent he soon outstripped all competitors and was unanimously elected Poet Laureate of the National Amateur Press Association, to which honor was added that of the Essay-Laureateship. His lyrical talent grew with the years and his poems soon found their way into professional publications and anthologies. Surveying the field of amateur journalism for the past seventy-five years, it may truly be said that he had no rival. His range rose from light "society" verse to the majestic tributes to Abraham Lincoln and William McKinley.

I had the good fortune to become his neighbor in the early eighties and found him deep in Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill and more especially in Henry George, the dissemination of whose philosophy became his life work.

He was one of the founders of "The Fossils," a unique organization which perpetuates the friendships formed in boyhood, and of "The Fossil Fellowship," a smaller and more intimate group, which meets semi-monthly for dinner and reminiscence. Here he relaxed from his strenuous life-work and was a boy again.

I treasure a presentation copy of his "Thirty Years of Verse Making," on the fly-leaf of which he wrote, "To the most loyal of friends and truest of gentlemen." Let me use these same words in describing him.

CHARLES C. HEUMAN.

Some Thoughts of Joseph Dana Miller

BY JAMES F. MORTON

THE loss of Joseph Dana Miller is so staggering a blow to all of us who have accepted the gospel according to Henry George as our unchallengeable guide through the mazes of economic and political problems, that we have not had time to catch our breath; and a careful appraisal of all the attributes of this peerless leader and many sided veteran in human service must await a later time, when many threads of his career can be gradually drawn together, with a thoughtful study of their relative significance. The utmost that can be expected from any of us at the present time is an inadequate expression of our sense of loss and such personal

tribute as we can express as the result of our first reaction.

I cannot write impersonally of Mr. Miller, or rather of the "Joe" Miller whom his friends and comrades were privileged to know. Despite the clarity of his vision and his masterly powers of intellectual analysis, it is always as a vital human being that I am compelled to think of him. He was profoundly human, with intense feelings and sympathies, and, although a master-logician, was as remote from being a "thinking-machine" as can well be conceived. It was no ice water that ran in his veins, whether in his inspiring vision of the ideals of freedom which he did so much to bring closer to actuality, his tremendous moral indignation against all forms of injustice or oppression, or his warm affection for his friends.

My relations with him extend back over a period of fifty years; and my associations with him have been extremely close in a number of different fields. We had been intimates for some score or more of years before, some thirty years ago, after long wanderings in many paths of social and economic inquiry, my eyes were at long last opened to the wonderful simplicity of the giant truth revealed by Henry George, and already for many years clearly visioned by the comrade with whom I now entered upon a new period of joint relations in common service to the cause of land freedom. We were affiliated in amateur journalism, an agency of self-expression by young writers, who published little papers without thought of profit, for pleasure and self-improvement. From this activity, many have graduated into the fields of journalism and literature; and a number have won distinction. Mr. Miller was one of the shining lights of this unique institution, and learned from it many of the lessons which guided him to later success in his chosen field. Besides being a master of exposition and discussion, he was a poet of no mean ability; and a volume of his collected poems, which was given to the public a few years ago, met with high recognition among the appreciative. Somewhat later, we were associated with the development of *The Fossils*, a body formed to perpetuate the memories and lessons of amateur journalism among its graduates of ripened years; and his interest in this movement continued among his foremost activities to the day of his death. In the field of general literature, to which from time to time he made notable contributions, we likewise had much in common, our community of interest ranging from the revival of interest in old classics and the combatting of the Baconian theory of the authorship of Shakespeare's plays to the latest phases of our time. In the severe task of warfare against the meanness of race prejudice we were also joint-laborers.

To the readers of *LAND AND FREEDOM*, Mr. Miller is best known for his matchless labors in the *Single Tax*