

## CHARLES O'CONNOR HENNESSY

It is not the tear at this moment shed,  
 When the cold turf has just been laid o'er him,  
 That can tell how belov'd was the friend that's fled,  
 Or how deep in our hearts we deplore him.  
 'Tis the tear, thro' many a long day wept,  
 'Tis life's whole path o'ershaded;  
 'Tis the one remembrance, fondly kept,  
 When all lighter griefs have faded.

Thus his memory, like some holy light,  
 Kept alive in our hearts, will improve them,  
 For worth shall look fairer, and truth more bright,  
 When we think how he liv'd but to love them.  
 And, as fresher flowers the sod perfume  
 Where buried saints are lying,  
 So our hearts shall borrow a sweet'ning bloom  
 From the image he left there in dying.  
 THOMAS MOORE.

The followers of Henry George all the world over will learn with deep grief that Charles O'Connor Hennessy is no more with us. He died suddenly at his home in New York in the afternoon of Monday the 19th October. The receipt of the news by cable was the greater shock as it had been preceded by the morning's mail carrying letters from him in his usual spirit of high endeavour, telling of the activities he had resumed immediately on his return from the International Conference in London. There was the project for example he had just been discussing at the office of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation for interesting fellow-workers in a new Dutch translation of *Progress and Poverty*. A letter dated 16th October and received after the notice of his passing spoke of an acute bronchial difficulty depriving him to a considerable extent of both appetite and sleep. The trouble developed and took him away three days after, very suddenly. He was busy till the last moment; he had been engaged in dictating correspondence ten minutes before the final coughing spell. There had in fact been only five minutes notice to anyone of the end.

The news was sudden and shattering following so closely after his visit to this country and the active days he had spent taking the leading part at the International Conference with the energy, the zeal and the dignity that was so characteristic of the man. To have another International Conference—and soon—had been earnestly pressed by him. It was largely due to his eager call, and the generous vote he gave to it in a more material sense, that the arrangements went ahead. In November last year he wrote: "Nothing is clearer to me to-day than that the twin curses of the human family are Poverty and War. Broadly speaking, I think Poverty (the results of economic dislocations that are unnatural and unnecessary) is the cause of War. We have been pointing out the truth of this. Our adherents may be relatively few, our means small, but we must, as custodians of the truth that may yet revivify and regenerate an unhappy world, keep up the work of illumination. *Let us hold another Conference.*" Even on personal grounds and for his own sake, our sorrow that he did not live longer to work in spreading this gospel of emancipation must be tempered with the consolation that he died happy knowing that the last task he was destined to undertake had been well performed; that he had the joy of being with his associates from many countries; that he had their abounding respect and affection and the testimony of their gratitude for a life-long devotion to the cause that bound them together.

Charles Hennessy was born in Ireland in Waterford and had his home in Listowel from which the family migrated to the United States when he was nine years old. It was only last month after the International Conference in London that he happily revived those early associations, although not for the first time, in the tour he made of Ireland in company with his half-sister Miss Mary Hennessy. He has died in his 77th year. Anyone who knew his age, and knew him, could not

but be astonished at his industry and the brilliance of his faculties. But his spirit was endowed with the charge he had from Henry George himself whose intimate friend he was, and whose confidence to have enjoyed as well as that of the family circle was his greatest pride. He took part in Henry George's campaign in 1886 for the Mayoralty of New York. He was chairman of the executive in the last campaign in 1897, and at the funeral he was one of the pall-bearers.

Educated in public schools in Brooklyn, he entered the newspaper business as a reporter with a paper in Troy, New York, and then came to New York to join the staff of *The Sun*. Later he became the city editor of the old *Daily News* and was the youngest city editor in New York at that time. But interest in social reform had already gripped him. He turned attention to the housing question and took the initiative in forming the *Daily News* Building and Loan Association for the benefit of newspaper men of Park Row. The business grew so rapidly that he was forced to resign from his paper and devote his whole time to the business. Within a few years it merged with several other companies to form one of the great American building societies, the Franklin Society for Home Building and Savings, of which he was President from its inception until 1934 when he retired as chairman of the board. He was also a president and director of the Savings and Loan Bank of the State of New York, the central clearing institution for the saving and loan associations of the state, and had been president of both the United States and the State Leagues of Savings and Loan Associations. Away from business there were his literary interests. His reading was profound and he had the scholarly mind. Call it a hobby if you will but there were few who could speak with such authority on the life and work of Francis Bacon to which he had devoted most careful study. He was a Vice-President of the American Baconian Society.

He had a notable career in public life. Moving to New Jersey and making his home in Haworth, he was elected to the State Assembly in 1911. From 1913 to 1917 he was member of the State Senate and among the offices he held was that of chairman of the committee on appropriations which in English phrase would be the chancellor of the exchequer. He was closely associated with the administration of Woodrow Wilson as Governor of New Jersey, and with many measures of progressive legislation including bills for the reform of the state's financial system, for municipal home rule in taxation; for the revision of the state constitution; for reforms and economies in the construction of State highways; for greater freedom of public discussion through the use of public schools; for the abolition of capital punishment; against sectarian religious exercises in public schools; and other measures that distinguished him as a statesman of a liberal point of view. In 1918 he was one of those highly (but unsuccessfully) commended by President Woodrow Wilson to the people of New Jersey as his party's candidate for a seat in the United States Senate.

It is Charles Hennessy's place in the Henry George movement and his place in the hearts of his wide circle of friends that we would speak more of, although words fail to describe it adequately. When the late Robert Schalkenbach under his Will in 1925 endowed his Foundation to promote the publication and circulation of Henry George's works, he chose Charles Hennessy as one of the Trustees; and under Mr Hennessy's direction as President the Foundation has rendered in the distribution of *Progress and Poverty* and the other books a service so great that the debt due by the movement to it is incalculable. Mr Hennessy rejoiced to see the similar Foundation established four years later by Louis P. Jacobs in Great Britain. With the work of the Henry George School of Social Science in New York he was closely associated and to the School he rendered very valuable assistance. But also he has been a patron in himself, glad to hear of the isolated worker who has been doing something for the cause, glad to congratulate him and encourage the effort. There must be many such who thought they were lonely until as a surprise to them this notice of approval came. He had that genius and human touch that would bring out the most modest in any company to reveal his powers and take courage to exercise them with the greater effect. It was that kindly humanity, that charming personality added to a most distinctive executive ability that earned for Charles Hennessy his title as a leader of men. He saw what required to be done; he knew how it could be done and he saw that it was done. His earnestness of purpose and the humour with which he infected all, the loving respect he attracted, were either inborn or acquired faculties; but these and his gracious courtesy were the assets he brought to his public and private life and they are the tradition he has left for an example.

Of all our co-workers in America he was most familiar with the situation in Great Britain, with the political scene in this country, with the nature of the propaganda and the opportunities for it. In earlier years he had made repeated visits to this side and one of his reminiscences was of having spent a night in gaol when acting as a newspaper reporter in Ireland. These visits were interrupted between 1911 and 1925 by the pressing nature of his American interests, although he continued to keep himself abreast with the most significant events in Europe. From 1925 he came over frequently, as in that year and in 1926, 1927, 1928, 1931 and 1936. In this period he took an intimate interest in the work

of the United Committee and visited League centres speaking under their auspices in Keighley, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and Edinburgh. One of his closest friendships was that with John Paul, formed as soon as the two came together, and it was his association with John Paul that led him to see the importance of the international movement.

At the Conference in Copenhagen in 1926 he ardently supported the formation of the International Union and was unanimously elected its first President. No truer tribute could have been given him than that of Sophus Berthelsen, who after this great Conference said he was the right man, in the right place, at the right time; and how abundantly he has justified that tribute every one of his associates can say. That Conference and what he saw and learnt of the Danish movement gave him new strength and encouragement; it was a new revelation of the influence of Henry George on a country's destiny. Denmark called him back in 1927 and again in 1931. Then came the Edinburgh International Conference in 1929 over which he presided, and the London Conference having taken place, it was he who set the pace for the next occasion in the resolution preparing for the Henry George Centenary in 1939. His friends would gladly have seen him re-elected as President of the Union but he insisted that he ought to have a successor in the post, without abating his co-operation in the work of the Union. Mr Bue Björner being elected the new President, the new office of Honorary President was created for Mr Hennessy to occupy.

On Christmas Eve, 1935, he and Mrs Hennessy celebrated their golden wedding. She died in April this year, and the loss was a heavy heart-break to him.

There was a speech by Henry George which Charles Hennessy recalled at the Edinburgh Conference and which is only to be found in the files of the *New York Standard*. It concluded: "Let us go on each in our own way spreading the fire and the hope of this crusade, not merely in our meetings but in our homes and our lives, talking to friends and acquaintances, in asking questions and setting men thinking. Our work is the work of education—the education of men and women of greybeards as well as of little children. What we have to do is to awaken thought, to arouse conscience, to get men to see the simple truth that justice and liberty are the greatest remedies for all social and political evils." And that also was Charles Hennessy's mission.

A. W. MADSEN.

### MEMORIAL MEETING

A gathering of Mr Hennessy's friends to express the sense of their loss and their appreciation of his great services to the Henry George movement was held at the rooms of the United Committee, 94, Petty France, on Thursday, 29th October, Mr Ashley Mitchell of Huddersfield, Treasurer of the International Union, presiding.

Sincere sympathy was conveyed to Mr Frank H. Hennessy and Miss Mary Hennessy in their bereavement.

Mr Mitchell said that their sorrow was tempered by remembrance of the joy that they had had in the friendship of Charles O'Connor Hennessy. "He was a man of magnificent character. Those of us who knew him know how true he rang on every occasion. He was anxious to see another Conference and for my part as a member of the Executive Committee I am happy that we decided to hold the Conference to have him preside over that international gathering of the followers of Henry George—and the holding of the Conference was possible largely through his generosity to the movement.

"I went to Liverpool three weeks ago last Saturday to see him away. I had the happiness of spending a last hour with him and he expressed to me his satisfaction with the Conference. He deserved to be satisfied; he had done so much. We think of him as coming to this side to our Conferences but we also remember that he came over on other occasions too, apart from Conferences, so much had he the cause at heart. It is typical of the man that he saw the importance of the International side of our movement. I want to remind you of the modesty of the man. If you will look at the reprints of his eloquent speeches you will see that he always called himself a 'follower of Henry George,' that he had that honour, as he called it; and we know how admirably he could clothe his thoughts and express the same ideas as Henry George. You will see also how beautifully he could handle the English language.

"In his Presidential Address at the Edinburgh Conference he concluded with these words: 'And in the international field we aim to teach the world that

the highest interests of the people of every land are identical with the interests of the people of every other land; that human interests are interwoven and interdependent, and that only under conditions of freedom, of mutual trust, and of friendly co-operation may men or nations attain to the higher destiny, material or spiritual, that God makes possible for them. In brief, it is our purpose as an organisation, in the interest of peace, prosperity and human happiness, to extend the area of freedom in every land, not only because we are convinced that this is the way to uplift the material welfare of mankind, but also because it accords with justice and the moral law. Here in the language of our inspired teacher is the conclusion of the whole matter: That we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

"In the concluding sentence of his Presidential Address in the Caxton Hall recently he said: 'We fervently believe and would earnestly commend to our fellow-men in all lands our deeply-felt conviction that in the inspired teachings of Henry George a troubled world may find the unerring way to that peace and prosperity for which the true lovers of our common humanity so fervently hope and pray.'

"That note he struck was part of his personality, his love of common humanity, and you can understand how, with his generous heart and feeling for the sufferings of others, the philosophy of Henry George and the discovery by Henry George of natural law attracted and appealed to him."

Among those who spoke, joining in the tribute, in addition to Mr Mitchell, were Mr Madsen, Miss Grace Isabel Colbron (on behalf also of her co-workers in the United States), Mrs L. H. Berens, Mrs John Paul, Mr F. C. R. Douglas, Mr Wilfrid Harrison, Mr F. L. Crilly and Mr H. G. Chancellor. Associated with the meeting were the hosts of friends all over the country, extracts from whose letters are given elsewhere in these pages.

## LETTER FROM MR HENNESSY

*To the Editor of "Land & Liberty."*

SIR,—Reflecting upon the success of the Fifth Congress of the International Union of the followers of Henry George recently concluded in London, I feel that one aspect of the affair received too little notice and praise. I refer to the organization work and excellent arrangement of detail managed by the Secretaries, Messrs A. W. Madsen and F. C. R. Douglas. To their indefatigable industry we owe the design of a well-balanced programme lasting five days, and the production of undoubtedly the best collection of addresses covering all aspects of the international application of the Georgeist philosophy that has, thus far, characterized any gathering of the International Union. So many of these addresses, twenty-six in number, were excellent, one should refrain from mentioning particular ones, but at least a half-dozen of the formal papers submitted exhibited a breadth of vision, a clarity of thinking and expression, and a force of logic worthy of very high scholarship and statesmanship. The wisdom and enterprise of the Arrangements Committee, and the Secretaries, in providing for the printing and circulation of these papers before the general discussions that followed, contributed greatly to the usefulness and interest of the Conference. I feel that I speak for our new President, Mr Bue Björner, as well as for myself, in offering this belated tribute to the fine service rendered by the organizers of the Conference.

CHARLES O'CONNOR HENNESSY.

4th October, 1936.

## BOOK MARK

### ECONOMIC AXIOMS

Men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion (13).

Man's desires are unlimited (98-99).

### ECONOMIC DEFINITIONS

*Political Economy*: The science of the production and distribution of wealth.

*Wealth*: Any material thing produced by human labour so as to fit it for the satisfaction of human desires (31-32).

*Land*: All the material universe outside of man and his products (30).

*Labour*: All human exertion directed towards the production of wealth (25).

*Capital*: Wealth used in the production of more wealth (32-33).

Wealth is distributed as—

*Rent*: For the use of land (116-117).

*Wages*: For labour exerted (25) (117).

*Interest*: For the use of capital (116-117).

*Margin of Production*: The most productive lands obtainable without the payment of rent.

### ECONOMIC LAWS

*Law of Rent*: "The rent of land is determined by the excess of its produce over that which the same application can secure from the least productive land in use" (121).

*Law of Wages*: "Wages depend upon the margin of production, or upon the produce which labour can obtain at the highest point of natural productivity open to it without the payment of rent" (153).

*Law of Interest*: Interest is determined by the return to capital at the margin of production (145).

(The numbers relate to pages in *Progress and Poverty*.)

## HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION

94 Petty France, London, S.W.1

*Copy of Book Mark being inserted in each copy of "Progress and Poverty" that is issued. The numbers are page references to the Henry George Foundation edition of the book.*

*This Book Mark will be supplied free to anyone making application. On the reverse side is price list of "Progress and Poverty" and other works by Henry George.*

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### Pity the Poor Landowner

The following letter and editorial comment appeared in *John Bull* of 31st October:—

"Daily we read of great landowners selling their estates as they retreat before the urban house-builder. Now Mr F. C. Tiarks, a Bank of England director, has had to dispose of his beautiful place at Chislehurst, Kent, to permit of London's rapid expansion. I am not a reactionary, but I do feel that the crowding out of members of the landed gentry is not of social profit.—VINCENT PAULE, Orpington, Kent."

*"Why are you worrying? Mr. Tiarks isn't. He is getting the extraordinary price of £1,000 an acre.*