

and energies of economists, bankers and statesmen must be directed, if prosperity is to be maintained.

How to Read Progress and Poverty

WE have lately listened to an argument from an old time Single Taxer to the effect that so far as the mass of people are concerned, they cannot be reached by *Progress and Poverty*. To the average man it is not a readable book—not one that they can be induced to read for the great truth taught therein.

"Consider," says the proponent of this argument, "that the reader opens the book at the chapters on Malthus. No matter now if Mr. George has successfully demolished the Malthusian theory, as thinking men believe he has. The reader will turn these pages bewildered as to what this has to do with the rights of man to the use of the earth, which is true even if Malthus was right. He must wade through the questionable chapters on Interest—and here again he will wonder what that has to do with the fact that mankind is shut out from the use of the earth. He will lay down the book and say, 'Yes, Henry George was a very great man, no doubt, and a great writer, too, perhaps, but he is beyond me. He has compelled me to read so much of matters not concerned with what his followers tell me I ought to believe that I haven't the time to master it. I cannot follow him through the Malthusian and Interest chapters to an end which may be very desirable in itself, but which do not seem to lead me to the desired goal.'"

This, as near as we can recall it, is the language of our friend. It is an argument that could be urged against many books that require intelligence for their comprehension. It is an indictment of the average mentality. In a measure it is largely true. Of the 110,000,000 comprising the population of the United States there are doubtless no more than 100,000 or 200,000 men and women capable of thoroughly comprehending *Progress and Poverty*. There are nearly one hundred million persons capable of understanding that the rent of land should be taken by government for the people. A child may be made to understand that. Shall we therefore discard *Progress and Poverty* for some more simplified statement of the principle taken perhaps from that work, with all the other chapters omitted?

The question loses sight of a great truth which we wonder our friend has not stumbled over, for it lies straight in his path. Outside of the theory of interest, in which it seems to us even Henry George was weak, it has made more Single Taxers than any other instrumentality. No epitome of the work, no plain statement of the principles that Henry George strove to teach, has ever been presented half so effectively anywhere.

Look around us. The disciples of the Georgian philosophy who are still with us got their inspiration from this

book. What our friend ignores is this: The thinking man of a community counts for one hundred at least of the members of that community. If he gets the truth that is in *Progress and Poverty* he goes out and tells it to others in his own language. He tells it in language with which his neighbors are familiar. We fancy our friend will say, Why not tell it in this language in a little book that will make the meaning clear? The answer is that language is a variable medium. There is no assurance that such a book would be read, or if read would make the kind of disciple that would go out and preach it effectively. Personality counts for much more than we credit it with. The people of a community may be profoundly affected by the argument that Jonathan Jones, Esquire, long an honored resident of the town, believes in the doctrines of Henry George, though they could not be induced to read of these in the works themselves.

This may seem like an indictment of democracy, but it isn't. Men are affected by the beliefs of others. To the degree that men of healthy sensibilities and fine sympathies respond to the convictions that radiate from the exceptional spirits of a community, will a great truth find its way. Mankind is thus constituted. What Matthew Arnold called the "saving remnant" is the really governing remnant, intellectually and spiritually. Social institutions are responsive to these influences; they are the medium of social changes. What we call the progress of truth is not the voluntary yielding to the logic of a principle on the part of the majority, but rather by its involuntary acceptance by the majority in obedience to influences of which they are in great part unconscious. To make more and more believers in our doctrines among men who will derive their chief inspiration from the fountain head is to multiply the influences at work that will assure the ultimate acceptance of our principles by a voting majority. To this end we can do no better work than in seeing that the works of Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* especially, are kept before the public.

And this raises the question which is the subject title of this editorial, *How to Read Progress and Poverty*. The question is an important one. We think that it is answered in the following letter from the editor of the Coshocton (Ohio) *Tribune*, addressed to a young friend about to leave the *Tribune* staff to fill a post on a newspaper in a larger city. We commend the letter for the beauty of its English and the fine spirit that informs it. Its author is Fred S. Wallace.

My Dear Kenneth:

I had in mind one of two gifts for you at the time of your leaving the editorial force of the *Tribune*. One was a million dollars; the other this paper bound book. I have decided on the book for two reasons. One is because I unfortunately do not have in hand at this time the million dollars; the other, because I believe the book, properly read, will do you far more good than the money.

I trust you will read the book twice, because it will serve a twofold purpose. You should read it the first

time to catch a glimpse of the prophecy it contains, the vision of a world from which injustice, involuntary poverty and the fear of want will for the first time be banished. Your impression from the first reading will be of a diction so pure, a moral tone so lofty and a purpose so exalted as to make this volume stand among the literary treasures of the race.

You can read it a second time, more slowly, as a scientific treatise on economics. In this reading you can exercise all the analytical powers of the student. From this angle you will find in it reasoning so acute, analysis so searching and logic so convincing as to satisfy completely your every mental process.

As a friend I have tried to help you in divers ways and all the recompense I ask is that sometime you will read this book at least twice. In thus granting the request of a friend you will obtain for yourself a moral tonic which will keep you sweet under the most trying circumstances and an intellectual stimulus which will broaden your mental horizon through life.

The Mayoralty Campaign in Pittsburgh

THE recent election in Pittsburgh resulted in a victory for the Republican candidate with the Non-Partisan party in second place. The latter party is composed of the remnants of the large La Follette vote of a year ago.

The democratic candidate, Prof. Carman C. Johnson, waged the campaign against great odds. He alone among the candidates made his campaign along constructive lines, with the land value tax and proportional representation as the two chief planks in his municipal platform. None of the candidates opposed the graded tax plan.

In one of his speeches, Prof. Johnson spoke as follows:

"By the graded tax law now fully in force in this city, compelling land rather than improvements to carry the big end of the tax burden, we have a start toward full solution. But let us go further. Let us still lighten the burden upon the small property owner. Indeed we might go as far as New York city and exempt all new houses, or even all houses, up to a certain value, from taxation at all for a few years or forever.

Land should carry still more of the tax burden, especially large tracts of land held out of use or required for large estates in the city, or required for unusually profitable business sites. Yes, indeed; take society's own socially produced tax or rent resources right out of the ground here in this city of \$500,000,000 worth of land values, and the small home owner will pay his share of taxes on his small lot and at the same time the large home owner will pay his share of taxes on his larger lot or acreage, and the occupant of a very profitable business corner will pay his share of taxes on his very valuable land site. This is not my invention at all, but I believe in it; and it would get plenty of money for Pittsburgh's governmental needs."

Why They Want Everybody to Economize

"AS I understand it," said the man who was being urged to practise thrift, "your idea is that instead of buying a lot of things that I need I should put my money in the bank."

"That's it. If all you consumers will just cut down on your spending, and start savings accounts, the banks will soon have twice as much money on deposit."

"And what will the banks do with all these deposits?"

"Oh that's easy. They will lend them out to manufacturers, who need more capital to produce more things for the people to buy."

The Ohio State Conference

AS we go to press news reaches us that preparations have been completed for the Ohio State Conference of Single Taxers at Columbus, on December 8.

The object is to form a State organization of the Commonwealth Land Party, though many Single Taxers not members of the party are expected to attend. The putting of a state ticket in the field next year will come under consideration; also a petition for a constitutional amendment.

The excellent vote polled by the Commonwealth Land party at the last election is the stimulating factor. While our readers are aware of the vote cast for Virgil D. Allen for governor (11,776) they may not know of the excellent showing made by other candidates: Jaspar Shuman for Secretary of State, 10,604; W. O. Blase, for Lieut.-Governor, 11,906; Mary S. Fraser, for Attorney General, 12,340.

Two Commonwealth Land party men running without party designation as Judges of the Supreme Court polled a vote as follows: Frank R. Fields, 231,465; and William A. Teutch, 116,599.

These results with the victory in Youngstown have aroused in Ohio Single Taxers the feeling that the time may be ripe for party action throughout the state.

FRENCH syndicalists succeeded in getting a small increase in wages at one point on the coast for the fisher folk, who can hardly afford to eat fish, and the simple people cannot be blamed much if they have faith in the syndicalist orators, who tell them that the way to have plenty is to produce less.

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