

## Special Henry George Number of a Southern Magazine

OUT of Greenville, South Carolina, comes a Special Number of *The Libertarian*. The sub-title of this magazine, published monthly at 35 cents per copy, is "A Southern Magazine Upholding the Principles of Liberty."

This special Number comprises nearly one hundred pages, beginning with an Introduction by Ernest Bridges, the editor. The articles are long, but not too long, and are as follows: The Story of Henry George, by Alfred Hines; Memories of Henry George, by Hamlin Garland; George and His Disciples, by Joseph Dana Miller; Free Trade and the Engineer, by Henry H. Hardinge; Is American Liberalism a Betrayal of the Masses, by Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown; and a singularly thorough treatment of the Progress of the Single Tax Movement, by Emil O. Jorgenson. Tolstoy's Great Iniquity is also included.

We cannot praise this Special Number of the Magazine too highly. Our readers should send for copies. It should be widely distributed. No more impressive compilation of the facts regarding Henry George and the movement he led has appeared in any magazine in years. It is a monument to the enterprise of the publisher, H. P. Burbage, and the editor, Ernest Bridges.

## A Strong Basis For Land Value Taxation

PROFESSOR Brown takes certain alleged services rendered by citylandowners, among them being "foresight," but concludes that "foresight used to give a service may earn remuneration. Foresight used to obtain something for nothing seems hardly deserving of any special protection" (II, pp. 216, 217). Likewise, conceding that the expected increment in land values formerly aided somewhat in the settlement of the West, he questions whether the benefit of that increment was diffused, but concludes that the important question is, not what occurred in the past, but whether the grandchildren of the settlers are entitled to a permanent unearned increment derived from the earnings of those who came later, especially when the highly valued urban lands of the western cities are considered (II, p. 220.) Income and inheritance taxes may be carried so far as to put a check on saving, but a tax on bare-land values does not check savings—it rather increases the amount of savings in the form of improvements, etc. (II, p. 222). In general, the land values which he would have subjected to the special tax are not agricultural lands but are special sections where pure scarcity on account of the growth of population, and not decreasing productivity on account of the lowering of the margin of cultivation, has increased their values, such as urban lands, mines, and power sites (II, pp. 228, 229). His method of analysis at this point

is quite superior to that of Ricardo and Henry George, since it makes scarcity the central feature and not the reduction of efficiency at the agricultural margin of cultivation. I believe it places the argument for special taxation of bare-land values on stronger and better grounds than those that have hitherto been offered by the followers of the Ricardian analysis.—PROF. JOHN R. COMMONS in *American Economic Review* in notice of Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown's *Economic Science and the Common Welfare*.

## Labor Day Talks

LABOR DAY sermons and addresses this year were marked by less pessimism and bitterness than we have sometimes noted. The spirit animating all we have had opportunity to hear and read was excellent and inspiring.

In other respects we could detect no advance. There was still the old, mistaken habit of regarding the labor problem as a question merely of bodies of organized workers on the one side, and of large corporations on the other—or, as most of such orators put it, "the struggle between Capital and Labor."

This leaves utterly outside the great labor problem all of the unorganized who work for employers; it ignores workers who do not hire out to employers, but, as the common saying is, "work for themselves;" it does not touch the unemployed; it does not take the recurring business depressions, or periods of "hard times," into account, when both Labor and Capital seem to be struck by paralysis.

The reason for this is the habit of regarding Labor and Capital as the only factors in production, and of ignoring the third factor—Land. It was not mentioned in any of the addresses we have seen. This failure is, in turn, due to the habit of regarding land as a part of capital—an old and very serious error, which even some college professors of political economy have encouraged.

The factors in the production and distribution of wealth are Land, Labor, Capital. The Labor Day sermon or oration which does not take all three into consideration does not get far; it lacks thoroughness and scientific accuracy; it leaves the big cause of bitterness untouched.

We would not for the world discourage preaching of the Golden Rule. It is good. But to apply the Rule to the industrial situation, it is necessary to bring about just relations of workers to the land and ground rent.

—Lorain (Ohio) *Journal*.

## BOOK REVIEW

### A MULTITUDE OF WORDS WITHOUT WISDOM

That tall fir trees should be cut down and made into paper, on which to print the rambling notions and puerile suggestions of two persons who think that they have something to say upon an all important question, is one of the economic wastes for which there

probably is no remedy. So long as there are publishers with money to spend in getting out books that have no other reason for existence than the vanity of their authors, good paper and the labor of printers and binders will continue to be wasted on the production of such dreary creations as "Profits," written by William Tru-fant Foster and Waddill Catchings. Possibly the publishers, the Houghton-Mifflin Co., are not to blame for the impertinence of submitting this book as a serious consideration of the problem which it attempts to solve, for it is said to be published for The Pollak Foundation For Economic Research, and presumably was paid for by that institution.

The book has received a great amount of free advertising, through the announcement that a prize of \$5,000.00 will be given to the author of the best adverse criticism of its contents. The requirement that the successful criticism shall be unfavorable was evidently intended to shut out the tribe of writers who perpetuate essays without definite knowledge of their subject, and to limit the competition to the relatively very small number of persons who know that the theories and principles advanced in the book are the perfection of what Professor Huxley termed "clotted nonsense." As a horrible example of how economic problems should not be treated, the book may serve a useful purpose, in showing the deplorable ignorance, and incapacity for reasoning, of writers who seem to believe that they have something valuable to say.

Purporting to be an exhaustive analysis of the condition of the present industrial system, motivated by the universal desire for profits, the book sets out with an inquiry that is unquestionably the most important that confronts the world today. This is: Why must industry so frequently slow down because of "overproduction," when many millions are suffering from "underconsumption"? The author's answer is, that consumer buying lags behind production because industry does not give the consumers enough money to buy the goods produced, and because consumers under the necessity for saving, cannot spend even as much money as they receive. This idea is elaborated through 450 pages, with charts and diagrams, all showing that production constantly tends to exceed the adequate demand for goods.

Will it be believed that the writers follow their weary trail through a maze of unimportant by-paths, and reach their conclusion without once referring to the part played by our present system of land ownership in checking consumption? That they have evidently never heard of Henry George, or that they were afraid to discuss his remedy for alleged overproduction, shows them deplorably ignorant of the greatest contribution ever made to economic science. They announce their indebtedness to such "distinguished economists" as Irving Fisher, Wesley C. Mitchell and Carl Snyder, without however, explaining how these gentlemen became distinguished or entitled to be called economists. That aside, the outstanding feature of the book is its utter failure to even suggest that the principal reason why consumers cannot buy back the value of their product, is that so large a share of production goes to the owners of land who give nothing in return for the wealth extorted from the producers. Had the authors' read the chapter on "Overproduction" in Henry George's "Social Problems," they would, if they are honest, have told the truth as to why with all the wonderful discoveries and inventions that have so greatly increased production, a large percentage of mankind cannot buy the goods they need.

Some idea of the level of intelligence of these writers for the Pollak Foundation may be gathered from their assertion that there are four agents of production: land, capital, labor, and organization. Quite so, and to make bread requires flour, water, labor and dough. If any foolish person thinks that with land and labor he could produce bread without dough, he is not a distinguished economist. "Capital," is defined by the authors as "a fund." They do not say what the fund consists of, but probably used postage stamps, which are used capital, just as truly as money or currency is capital.

The book does contain one reference to the land question that is illuminating as showing what passes for economic wisdom these days.

Discussing profits from earning and profits from owning it is asserted on page 160, that: "When a corporation acquires coal lands, or corner lots or franchises, or water power, and does nothing whatever but hold the property until it can be sold at a higher price, the resultant profits are rewards for the risk incurred merely in owning the property." Yes, yes! The risk that the coal land might burn up; the corner lot be stolen; the water power cease to flow! Surely the owners of anthracite coal lands in Pennsylvania took great risks 100 years ago. Suppose that the bottom of their land had fallen out!

It is only fair to say that the book does challenge the orthodox economists, in so far as recognizing the need for increasing consumptive demand is concerned. But when it comes to discussing remedies there is the weak and childish suggestion that what is needed is a "flow of money" to consumers, sufficient to provide for their savings, and yet enable them to buy all the goods that are actually ready for final consumption. Thus the happy consumer will eat his cake and keep it, and everybody will buy and use everything as fast as it is made, and save up the rest for loaning out to a kind banker, who will lend it to someone who wants to pay interest. And this is economics according to the Pollak Foundation in this year of public school and university education, 1925.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE LAND QUESTION IN THE HISTORY OF GENESEE COUNTY

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

You will, I think, be interested in the fact that I have succeeded in getting some Henry George propaganda in the new History of Genesee County, a work of royal octavo just off the press. Judge Lockwood Doty is the editor.

I was asked to furnish a biographical sketch and sent a page about Henry George and his doctrines together with what I have done to popularize them. I said I would pay for it if the matter were admitted.

As Robert Morris was prominently connected with the history of Genesee County I quoted from him (Diplomatic Correspondence, Vol. 12, page 277) and commented on it. I also quoted from your pamphlet on "What has the Single Tax Accomplished?"

Olean, N. Y.

KATHARINE E. BRADLEY

### A PERENNIAL PLEASURE

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I enjoy your magazine very much. I agree with practically all of its opinions, but whether one does or not, every article is so well written that it is a perennial source of pleasure to read on that account.

West Hartford, Conn.

H. A. BATCHELDER.

## NEWS NOTES AND PERSONALS

LECTURES will be held every Monday evening during the Winter at the Henry George Forum in this city, 51 East 125th street, corner Madison Avenue. Meetings held in October and November have been addressed by Whidden Graham, Mrs. Helen Hanning and John J. Murphy. The subject of the first address was "Two Kinds of Housing" and of the second, "Rents and their Relation to the Public." Mrs. Hanning is the Chairman of the Housing Committee of the Community Councils. On November 9 Laurence W. Tracy lectured on "The Philosophy of Freedom" and on November 23, Mr. Murphy talked on the "Dubiousness of the Obvious." On November 30, Benjamin W. Berger spoke on Henry George and His Philosophy.

As an instance of the reward of honest toil it is worth mentioning that John W. Neal, chauffeur for King C. Gillette, safety razor magazine, has just sold a lot for \$732,000 which he bought six years ago for \$1,800 at Beverly Hills, Calif.