

Tributes to Oscar H. Geiger

I am deeply grieved to read of the death of Mr. Geiger and can only hope that his work will be continued.—REV. MERVYN J. STEWART, Bishops Stortford, England.

I cannot tell you of my deep regret upon learning of the death of Oscar Geiger. No one will miss him more than I for though I saw him only once I wrote him often. I need not tell you of my great admiration of his sincerity and the splendid work he was doing. It was with a keen sense of personal loss I learned of his passing. Please convey to Mrs. Geiger the assurance of my sincere regrets.—ABE D. WALDAUER, Memphis, Tenn.

I am shocked to learn of the death of Mr. Geiger. It seems that fate is treating us unkindly. Mr. Brown's death was a sad loss indeed. Now that Mr. Geiger has been taken what can be done?—DR. F. M. PADELFORD, Fall River, Mass.

May Mr. Geiger's noble adventure be carried on by the younger adherents and the assistance of friends to a great success.—EMIL KNIPS, Fairhope, Ala.

It was with the keenest anguish that I learned a little over a week ago of the death of your dear friend and associate and humanity's servant, Mr. Geiger. I never enjoyed seeing any two persons together so much as you and your "Oscy" as I used to like to hear you call him!

Honor to him who knew no compromise,
The loyal soul, who when his strength was spent,
And there were mists of death about his eyes,
Betook him, like a soldier from his tent—
His people called—he loved them and he went.*

[*From "Henry George—Anniversary Ode," by Joseph Dana Miller, read by James A. Herne, of Shore Acres, at Grand Central Palace, this city, 1899.]

During those all too short years that Mr. Geiger devoted to the Henry George School of Social Science he lived what to many men I believe would be a life-time. Of course he did more than start the School. He demonstrated a method of propaganda that will be adopted widely as the years go on. Without having known of Mr. Geiger's passing Mr. Albert J. Milligan and I had been talking of establishing a Pacific Coast branch of the School in San Francisco. Mr. Milligan has conducted several classes in "Progress and Poverty" but he was hoping that he could go East this fall and study with Mr. Geiger to learn the secret of his great success as a teacher.—JOHN LAWRENCE MONROE.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS

Harry Weinberger has won an enviable reputation as a defender of those who speak for despised or unpopular causes. It may be guessed that with some of these causes our friend has scant sympathy, but like Voltaire he is willing to champion the freedom to express them. For, as he says, "The liberty of the press is the right to say foolish things as well as the right to say sensible things."

It must be remembered that only recently there has emanated from administration circles a threat in which the licensing of the press was covertly concealed. The haste with which it was disavowed may help to reassure us, but only by eternal vigilance can liberty be made safe.

In these two addresses bound together in board covers and neatly printed our distinguished friend tells of the early struggle for the

freedom of the press in this city, a freedom which we cannot be too certain is permanently secure. Indeed Mr. Weinberger points out that only recently the New York Court of Appeals has decided that street meetings could be prohibited by municipalities. "Yet the American Bar is not shocked, the American Bar is not aroused and the people are too busy with their economic problems, or too indifferent, to protest and correct this invasion of their liberties."

In the first address delivered at Independence Hall before the Philadelphia Bar Association Mr. Weinberger gives an interesting account of the trial of John Peter Zenger for criminal libel during colonial days. Zenger had expressed views contrary to those held by the autocratic governor.

The second address was made before the New York Bar Association, and the subject was Andrew Hamilton, who had come from Philadelphia at the age of eighty to defend John Peter Zenger without fee. Andrew Hamilton protested the court's decision to have the jury decide only the facts; he contended that the jury should decide both the law and the facts, and he won out, and John Peter Zenger departed a free man.

Hamilton's triumph was complete. The Common Council which included the Aldermen and Mayor presented him with the freedom of the city and money to buy a gold box to enclose the seal of said freedom.

Mr. Weinberger has told the story well and with occasional eloquence and a full apprehension of the significance of this great fight for the liberty of the press.

The little work can be had for \$1.50. It contains a photostat of the affidavit of John Peter Zenger never before published. It came recently to light in an old house that was being torn down in New Jersey.—J. D. M.

GEORGE MISREPRESENTED

Our friends, the "liberationists" of West Australia, contend for the abolition of interest as the inevitable result of the adoption of the collection of the full annual rent of land. They indict George's theory of the origin of interest as well as his defense of its justice and persistence.

The author of this work agrees with our West Australian friends that interest will not persist in a society where the full economic rent is appropriated by government. But curiously as it may appear to many of our readers he defends his thesis by a direct appeal to the teachings of George himself.

To do so he is forced to wrest certain factors out of their due relation and to give a new and wholly unjustified meaning to a number of George's statements. When he says that "interest will not go to the individual for the use of capital" we wonder where the maker of capital, preferring to lend rather than to consume, comes in.

We question the validity of most of the author's premises: For example this: "The payment of interest for the use of wealth—capital—implies the payment of a price greater than the cost of production."

And this: "Interest is not produced by labor or capital either singly or collectively. *It is a land product.*" (The italics are ours). Yet the author tells us that "interest is swallowed up as rent and wages." Then it is received by labor and we do not escape the reality by changing the name. We need to remind the author that interest is a part of wages paid to the creators of capital who prefer to lend rather than to consume. To deny the justice of this is to deny the justice of wages, since a man owns what he creates. The author contends that "capital cannot earn interest because capital is inert." This is a palpable evasion of the economic truth that capital is not inert when united with labor.

Mr. Green expresses the opinion that "rent will neither rise nor fall as a result of a change from slavery to freedom." We think it dem-

*The Profits of the Earth, by Charles A. Green, 12 mo., clo., 143pp. Price \$1.25, The Christopher Publishing Company, Boston, Mass.

onstrable that rent will rise as a totality. Taxes on improvements tend to depress land values. With all taxes removed we enter upon a period where all industry is released and the result will surely be reflected in increased land values. Oscar Geiger, in his illuminating lectures, so held and illustrated it with diagrams amounting to a practical demonstration.

Nor do we agree with the author that resort to the immediate collection of the full economic rent would occasion any greater shock to existing institutions than the depression begun in 1929 through which we are now passing. For it must be remembered that with the resumption of man's right to the use of the earth something will have occurred that has marked no other financial shock or depression by immediately abolishing all obstacles that now cause wide-spread unemployment. For with the immediate declaration of a free earth all or nearly all land that has any value would almost at once pass into use. While we need not expect that this great change can be accomplished without certain losses to individuals, such losses would not approximate to the wholesale depression and consequent deprivation to which nearly all classes have been subject in the years 1929-1934.

We do not like the chapters on money, not only because we wholly disagree with them, but additionally because of the abusive terms he uses against the advocates of a metallic basis. His own suggestion for a monetary system, the issuance of certificates based on public improvements, has never had anything but a limited sanction in history and is "void for uncertainty." Knowing the fury of the inflationist when aroused we dread what might happen when a supposed scarcity of money would lead to an expanding programme to provide additional "scrip." We prefer to see the economic fundamentals settled first, leaving the problem of money—if it is a problem—to a generation free to consider it without bias and with a clearer apprehension of natural laws.

This work is written to set Georgists right. But Mr. Green has wholly misrepresented George's position on the question of interest. The work will do no good and may do a deal of harm.—J. D. M.

A FRENCH RENDERING OF CONDITION OF LABOR

Recently, through the enterprise of M. Sam Meyer, leader of the French followers of Henry George, there has been published a fine French translation of Henry George's "Condition of Labor," comprising the famous letter to Pope Leo XIII. The translator was M. Paul Passy who is head of the Christian Socialists of France, but who has taken great interest in urging upon his followers a reading of the books of Henry George. A limited issue of this excellent French translation of a famous book (paper cover—78pp.), is offered for sale in the United States by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, at the price of 25 cents per copy, postage paid.

Correspondence

IDA TARBELL ON HENRY GEORGE

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

The otherwise excellent article by Ida M. Tarbell in the current *Forum* is marred by coupling the name Henry George, a political economist, with Edward Bellamy, a novelist. The former possessed a scientific, self-trained mind, capable of reasoning from cause to effect. With the precision of an engineer he attacked every economic problem.

The latter lacked these qualities. To associate these two personalities, simply because both dealt with the same subject matter, economic reform, is pointless. There might have been some justification for contrasting them.

Likewise, Miss Tarbell is most unfortunate in referring to Father McGlynn as the Father Coughlin of his day. In truth, Father

McGlynn was everything but that. Both, to be sure, were adherents of the Catholic faith and presumed to discuss economic questions. But there the likeness ends.

New York City.

BENJ. W. BURGER.

DR. JORDAN MISSES THE POINT

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Dr. Virgil Jordan made an address over WJZ tonight on the topic "National Wealth and Income." It was very cleverly arranged to convey the idea to the listening public that depressions are but natural phenomena in a world in which the distribution of wealth is both just and proper. Such statements by men or women who are entitled to the term Doctor carry so much weight with those mortals of lesser degree of scholastic learning that the need of such institutions of Truth as the Henry George School of Social Science is apparent.

Dr. Jordan began by pointing out that many persons, even government officials, use government statistics to prove the necessity for the New Deal. He was particularly emphatic that the statement that two per cent of the population receive eighty per cent of the income is a fallacy. He then started to define the term National Wealth and included land as wealth. No Single Taxer could find fault with his statement that money, stocks, bonds, checks, etc., are not wealth but mere tickets giving the holders a claim upon the stock of wealth. Not so fortunate was he when he defined wealth as that which enables man to produce an income, showing that he confuses all wealth with a portion of it known as capital.

He blamed government officials and all agitators outside of the government for speaking of the need of a new method of distribution, but the only method he mentioned as possible other than the present one is one of equal sharing by all workers in the products of labor. If he knows that there is such a suggestion as an equitable distribution of income, the full product of his labor to the laborer, the full product of the use of capital to capital, and the economic rent of the land to the whole people, he did not betray himself. In fact rent did not enter into his talk at all and we learned that labor gets so much of the return that capital gets but a trifle. Many businesses have been paying interest and dividends out of their savings of the fat years so that workmen may draw good wages according to the Doctor, all of which may or may not be true, but if true it is because of something that so far as Dr. Jordan's address goes is non-existent.

Dr. Jordan decries the talk about the profit system and seeks to explain that it is a profit and loss system, in bad times the workers taking the profits and the employers the losses. In fact one can hardly be blamed for getting the impression that Dr. Jordan both believes and does not believe in the existence of a depression. He calls the New Deal a New Steal in one breath, and then tells us that we own half the National Wealth and receive more than sixty-six and two-thirds per cent of the income; how else are we to take his statement that of about 27 billions produced in 1933 over 20 billions were paid out as wages, and the rest as salaries, interests, and dividends.

But Dr. Jordan in objecting to the use of statistics to prove what he calls a fallacy is illogical because his own use of statistics is to prove untrue statements since he left rent of land out of the reckoning. Also he states that in a certain year about forty per cent of the population owned their own homes and forty per cent of the farmers owned their farms. This is not true since a large part of these properties were and are mortgaged and are not truly the property of the holders until such mortgages are paid. Furthermore, he speaks of the large amount of insurance on the lives of millions of the population as potential wealth but he does not state that this wealth is partly present existing wealth produced by labor out of land with or without the assistance of capital, and as such it