

HENRY GEORGE'S PERSONALITY

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

In a paper, extolling the life and philosophy of Henry George, from the pen of Mrs. William R. Myers, of Anderson, Indiana, and read by her before the Tourist Club of that city in the early Nineties, I was particularly struck with a passage describing the appearance and personality of Mr. George. The manuscript, yellow with age, has just come to my view and that makes the passage in question all the more interesting.

In your issues of Nov.-Dec., 1916, on page 300, Mr. Thomas E. Lyons says of Mr. George that he had "a refined and intelligent face, but was deficient in emotional expression,—an agreeable but not particularly prepossessing presence, * * * * and was wholly devoid of the spell of magnetism which strong personalities exert."

This description is so out of harmony with the impression I dare say nearly everybody gets from reading the inspiring thoughts of Henry George, that it is refreshing to note the following description given by Mrs. Meyers. "I read *Progress and Poverty* in the early Eighties. I was carried away with the beautiful spirit of the book. Very shortly thereafter I met Henry George in Indianapolis. How often one is disappointed in people whose books we have enjoyed—but not so with me. As I looked into his face, there was brought to mind an account of an interview wherein Leigh Hunt, after meeting Charles Dickens, said of him, 'He has in his face the life and soul of fifty human beings.' One might multiply that a score of times and then fail to describe the face of Henry George. And his last portrait is a revelation. Twenty years of thought and action have left their impress."

Besides confirming the impression all of us have about the great personality of Henry George, this paper reveals the old time zeal and lofty moral protest against the ravages of land monopoly which inspired the adherents of the great philosopher when some of us were in our bare-foot days.

These pleasant ghosts of the past are a great pleasure to some of us of the younger generation who may sometimes think that the

desire for social justice and zeal for its consummation are almost entirely the product of our own day. The desire for justice is the golden thread that binds all eras of history. It is not the monopoly of any single period. That is the most inspiring element in the history of the race and it cannot be kept too vividly in mind, particularly by the young enthusiast who is just beginning his economics and social philosophy.

Mrs. Myers shows such a grasp of her subject and such balanced enthusiasm that even though she may declare that she has served her allotted span of usefulness, she should be a power for the Single Tax in a State that is sorely in need of such propaganda.—THEODORE TREPPE, Seattle, Wash.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE LAND AND SLAVERY QUESTIONS*

In the preceding number of the REVIEW we gave a critical summary of the contents of the first volume of Dr. Miller's new book on "American Debate," that dealing with purely constitutional questions. In this number we continue the same method in reviewing the second volume which treats of subjects that are essentially economic, land and slavery, though in the case of slavery constitutionality was the main issue in the controversy. The fundamental economic aspect of the questions has, however, enabled the author to discuss them from the standpoint of the Single Tax. In his preface in particular, taking advantage of the desirability of informing the reader of the logical plan of the volume, he has presented in epitome the economic philosophy of Henry George. He has not suggested, however, that this is a peculiar philosophy by branding it as the "Georgian" or "Single Tax," economy, for he believes that, owing to the almost universal acceptance by economists of the doctrine of the "un-earned increment" which is the basis of the

*"American Debate," a History of Political and Economic Controversy in the United States, with Critical Digests of Leading Debates. In two volumes, with separate indexes. I: Colonial, State and National Rights; II: The Land and Slavery Questions. By Marion Mills Miller, Litt. D. (Princeton). \$2 50 per volume. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

philosophy, the time has now come for assuming that the body of truth which George inherited from such predecessors as Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill and logically completed, is political economy in its purest form, and so requires no personal label. Why speak of "Georgian economy" any more than of "Smithian economy?"

The first part of the volume, which treats of the Land Question, though it is of chief interest to Single Taxers, will not be summarized here, since it has been condensed by the author into an article on "Land Legislation in the United States" for the Single Tax Year Book, which will shortly be off the press.

The scope of the second part, the Slavery Question, is best indicated by the chapter titles: The Slave Trade, The Missouri Compromise, The Right of Petition (Abolition Movement), The Mexican War, The Wilmot Proviso, The Compromises of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Law, Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, The Dred Scott Decision, Popular Sovereignty (Lincoln-Douglas Debates), and The Morality of Slavery (Issues in the Presidential Contest of 1860).

Dr. Miller has been criticised for the great space that he has devoted to the Slavery Question as giving the reader the impression that it was the all-important subject of the time. The same criticism has been urged against the "Constitutional History of the United States" by Professor Hermann von Holst. The admission has been made by both historians that they intended to convey this impression, and they have justified their intention by claiming that the Slavery Question not only was the leading issue, but that it dominated American politics, entering as a disturbing element into almost all other subjects, while in practical politics it was supreme, dividing great parties and uniting small ones, electing Presidents, and guiding their administrations in both foreign and domestic affairs. If the historians who minimize the slavery question had gone primarily to the Congressional records for their sources in the manner of Von Holst and Miller they would be forced to the same conclusion.

Dr. Miller presents in graphic fashion the succeeding phases of the Slavery Question as the parts of a great age-long debate. Owing

to the application of his views to other movements, especially the Single Tax, we quote from the beginning of the final chapter, that on "The Morality of Slavery."

"Every great political movement is in form as well as in nature an argument. In the beginning general principles, 'postulates' are laid down. Then these principles are applied, pro and con, to particular issues which arise in the history of the country. Finally, when all the imaginable arguments have been thoroughly thrashed out in relation to the events which the controversy has guided, and even has created, tending to a definite conclusion which is now seen to be inevitable, the movement assumes the character of an 'exordium'—an appeal to the conscience, emotions, and will, rather than to the intellect. Of this the great anti-slavery movement is a striking example. . . . (at last) arguments were laid aside. Decision on the question was laid before that supreme bench of appeal, the Court of Conscience, the heart and the soul of the people. The issue was not to what extent is slavery constitutional? but, is it morally right or wrong'?"

Lincoln, whose greatness was due to his unerring moral sense, became the logical leader of the anti-slavery forces in this final phase of the movement. His character is sympathetically presented, both in selection of his utterances and comments thereon, by Dr. Miller who has edited the "Life and Works of Abraham Lincoln," and other books, as well as essays and poems, upon the great President.

British statesman and publicists, forced to the position of fundamental democracy as justifying the entrance of their country into the Great War, are now turning for comfort and guidance to Lincoln, and a great interest is shown by English and Scotch writers not only in his life and character, but also in the principles of American democracy of which he was the chief exponent. Books such as "American Debate" are welcomed for information and inspiration, and even wistfully regarded as evidence of the existence in the United States of a general interest in the political history of the Home country that is not found in Great Britain. Thus *The New Statesman* of London in a review of "American Debate,"

after characterizing the book as an ingenious medley of history, political exposition, biography and oratorical anthology, says: "The result is a quite interesting work of what the French call *vulgarisation*, calculated to be of use in the education of the average citizen in the past politics of his nation, to which so much more deliberate attention is paid in the United States than in this country. The English student will find it not only a handy guide. . . . but also full of human and historical interest. The question arises whether a similar book might not very usefully be written for the United Kingdom."

In a similar spirit *The Glasgow Herald* commends the volumes for "permitting the study of Imperial"—a Criticism for Federal—"international, administrative, and economic matters in a foreign atmosphere, while at the same time the past and present relations of the United States and Britain give the discursions a certain intimacy and a distinct importance."

The author states in his preface that he intends at some future time to complete the work by a third volume on Finance and Taxation. We trust that he may do so, and succeed in making these formidable subjects as full of human interest as those of the present volumes, a task which needs not appall one who as a Single Taxer has a philosophy which, more intimately than any other, shows the relation of economic law to the individual life.—J. D. M.

ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE VERNACULAR*

Of the making of books by Bolton Hall there is no end. One wonders if he ever sleeps. Some he manufactures, some he writes. This one, like his "Mastery of Grief," he has written. But it is different. One will wonder where Mr. Hall has obtained his knowledge of *patois*, his almost uncanny proficiency in the language of the common folk, even to their street slang.

Much of it is such light literary banter that we do not suspect the preaching. For he carries us along easily, and he has a point

*Thrift. By Bolton Hall, 12 mo. Clo. 247 pp. Price \$1. B. W. Huebsch, New York City.

to enforce in every chapter. And there is a vast fund of information on a variety of topics.

Mr. Hall had an object in writing it. It would have been a poor book if written without a purpose. Mr. Hall says he got more pleasure out of it than from any book he has made. We can therefore imagine his satisfaction in concluding a work well done with this striking paragraph, which is the last in the book:

"Who can longer shut his eyes to social conditions, the misery, the hate, the destitution of body and mind that have driven millions from sly commercial war into open military war! Not revolution nor Anarchy, nor red radicalism, but law, business, respectability and "patriotism" have forced our ignorant and our educated brethren alike into the shambles of battle as, if unchecked, they will force us. Instead of making sofa cushions of "Reform" against the day of Judgement let us arise and while there is yet time save, save, save the love of men for the love of God."—J. D. M.

A WOMAN FREE.

We acknowledge receipt of a beautifully printed paper covered volume of poems by "Ruth," of 72 pages, prefaced by the "good gray poet," Edwin Markham.

Ruth Le Prade is the young Joan of Arc of the California Great Adventure movement. She is a California girl, twenty two years of age. From birth she has been a victim of spinal trouble and has only recently recovered from an attack which brought her near to death. Her parents are old fashioned Marxian socialists and Ruth still thinks along those lines, although the spirit of the Great Adventure is rapidly modifying her point of view.

These poems are mostly of the unrhymed sort, *verse libre*. We confess to a preference for more conventional forms of verse, while not denying that the newer and more revolutionary (shall we say more prosaic forms?) may furnish the vehicle for great thought and impressive presentation.

Miss Le Prade needs experience and a wider acquaintance with what has been written by the long line of poets of all times. Her lack of