

Alfred Bishop Mason Passes

ALFRED BISHOP MASON is dead in Florence, Italy, where he has lived for a number of years, and was engaged almost to the very last in literary work. His most recent work was "Horace Walpole's England." As late as 1929 a novel appeared from his pen, "A Duchess and Her Daughters."

Twenty years ago he turned to the writing of juvenile fiction, and his stories had a wide vogue among the young. Before the appearance of "Progress and Poverty" he had written a "Primer of Political Economy" which showed the trend of his thought that made him a ready convert to the teachings of "Progress and Poverty," the doctrines of which he eagerly embraced.

The *Herald Tribune* of this city says of him: "He crowded several careers into his life. He was a corporation lawyer, a railroad president, an editorial writer, and a translator of books on economics and constitutional law."

He was at one time president of the American Cotton Oil Company and was one of the founders of the Provident Loan Association.

A busy and useful life is closed. Those who knew Mr. Mason, and they included most of the Henry George men and women in this locality, will recall his charming personality, his graceful faculty of speechmaking, and his courtly manners. He was a marked man in any company, and carried his years with amazing ease, as those present at the dinner given in his honor on his visit to the United States about two years ago will recall.

He was president of the Manhattan Single Tax for several terms. Born in 1851 he had seen much, written much and met many distinguished people. He was the son of R. B. Mason, once mayor of Chicago, and was a descendent of Stephen Hopkins, a signer of the Declaration of Independence; and Captain Levi Mason, of the Revolutionary army.

Dare Not Repeal It

(A. W. MADSEN, in *Letter to the Memphis Conference*)

NEVER in the history of our movement have we had such a responsibility to shoulder or such an opportunity for new advances placed at our feet. It is an opportunity to use, with the assistance of all who will make common cause with us. It is ours to organize and rally again the powerful sentiment that exists in this country for the land value policy, a sentiment created by years of persistent endeavor, its influence proved in the three great parliamentary victories of 1906, 1910 and 1931 and in the demand on the part of hundreds of British municipalities for legislation to take public revenue from the public value of land.

If the sentiment for the Land Value Policy did not exist in the constituencies, if it did not have a dominating place in the programmes of both Labor and Liberal parties, no

such victory as that in 1931 would have been possible. Even now, the worst that our National Government dare do in compliance to Tory hostility is to suspend the operation of the Land Value Tax measure embodied in the Finance Act of last year.

To have repealed the Land Value Tax Act would have broken up the National Government, as responsible Ministers have freely admitted. Repeal would have aroused the same "seven devils" as were feared by the Conservative leader, Mr. Baldwin, when his party in 1917 wanted to destroy the 1910 Finance Act; and Mr. Baldwin the Conservative leader, refused for the same reason to permit the repeal of the 1931 Finance Act. He knows what it means to antagonize the sentiment for Land Value Taxation. The 1931 legislation stands on the Statute Book to be put into force and extended as soon as the present administration gives place to one more progressive. The day of change may not be far distant, if recent by-elections registering an immense turnover of votes against the Government, are any criterion. The reaction against protection has set in.

George L. Record's Conviction

(From a Letter to the Memphis Conference)

IN my judgment a great reform cannot be predicated upon financial advantages. It must be founded upon an appeal to the sense of justice of the average man. Whatever advantages can be shown were justified, and it is shrewd policy to show, but stripped of all verbiage what we really propose to do is to confiscate the value of the land which the land-owner owns, for which he has paid money. If we ever reach the political stage the land-owners will organize against us, and we will have a fierce battle over this point, which does not now come up in our discussion in any practical way; but if you appeal to a man's moral sense you are on solid ground, and our appeal on that side is powerful. We should try to show that the ownership of land as at present defined, involving the power to hold land out of use either for speculation or to sustain monopoly, is a privilege, exactly as slavery was and that the effect of it ultimately will be to destroy this Republic. We should use Lincoln's analysis of slavery and his conclusion that slavery would have to be abolished or the country would become all slave, and his appeal to the moral sense of the community for the right of the slave to eat the bread which he had earned by the sweat of his brow. That is the widest and strongest appeal we can make. Jefferson said, "that the land belongs in usufruct to the living," and if there is any moral truth in this world that is true.

The value of the land is created by the community and belongs to the community by every moral law to which the average man yields consent. At this particular time we should stress the point that the tremendous rise in land

values was the most powerful contributing cause of our present depression, as it was to all previous depressions which we have had, and that it will create in due time another depression after the deflation of land values results in a new temporary wave of prosperity.

Straight Economics

WHILE one group of people is asserting that labor-saving machinery is a cause of depression, another group is working feverishly on the invention of improved labor-saving machinery as a means of promoting prosperity.

Would it help or hinder prosperity if a steel or wood house should be designed that could be built so cheaply as to cut the price of a workingman's dwelling in half?

Contracts for thousands of the cheap houses would be let at once. Two or three houses would be constructed where one was built before. More labor would be employed. More people would get houses. All would be better off.

One group, however, would profit more than any other. This group would be the land owners. Land owners take a slice out of everything that facilitates commerce and industry.

John Stuart Mill, the great English economist, was puzzled by the phenomenon that the lot of labor was not more quickly improved by the use of machinery. What he failed to see clearly was that the greater share of the improvement in industrial processes goes to swell economic rent, or the value of land, and that land is owned by a minority of the population.

Into the pockets of land owners is drained off each decade an increasing share of the joint product of labor and capital.

Proposals have been suggested for correcting this situation, but we will not go into them here. We merely wish to identify that labor-saving machinery and other devices of efficiency are not an evil but an unmixed blessing.

Not a living soul cares to scrap any labor-saving device that has been in existence long enough to establish its value through use. The advance from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age, and thence to the Iron Age, was comparable to this civilization's advance from the horse to the automobile and thence to the airplane. What woman would care to scrap her suction sweeper, electric refrigerator, washing machine and electric iron, returning to the broom, icebox, wash board and flatiron? To ask such questions is to answer them. Equally foolish is the solemn consideration of other labor-saving machinery as a cause of unemployment.

What we should determine is whether the rent of land takes too large a proportion of the nation's income. A land owner collects a toll for the use of something he did not create. He simply bought the privilege of collecting the toll. Society may some day decide that this privilege is too great a burden for labor and industry to bear.

—*The William Feather Magazine.*

Shaw Gives His Case Away as Marx Did

ALL this (exploitation) would have been avoided if we had only had the sense and foresight to insist that the land should remain national property, that all rents should be used for public purposes. If this had been done there need have been no slums, no ugly mean streets and buildings, nor any rates and taxes. Everybody would benefit by the rent, everybody would contribute to it by work and no idler would be able to live on the labor of others.—BERNARD SHAW in the "Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism."

Too True

"YESSIR, not 10 years ago all this land around here sold for a dollar and a quarter an acre."

"And what does it sell for now?"

"Taxes."

IT is because that in what we propose—the securing to all men of equal natural opportunities for the exercise of the powers and the removal of all legal restriction on the legitimate exercise of those powers—we see the conformation of human law to the moral law, that we hold with confidence not merely that this is the sufficient remedy for all the evils you so strikingly portray, but that it is the *only possible* remedy. Nor is there any other.

"The Condition of Labor," Part III.

WHEN in all trades there is what we call scarcity of employment; when, everywhere, labor wastes, while desire is unsatisfied, must not the obstacle which prevents labor from producing the wealth it needs, lie at the foundation of the industrial structure? That foundation is land.

PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

GOVERNMENT is taxing checks when people think it ought to be checking taxes.—*Weston Leader.*

Clear Sighted

IN a speech at Stockholm urging closer relations between nations, the Prince said: "Economic nationalism is of no use in the present world depression. The only remedy is cooperation. For that purpose personal contact is of the greatest importance, and I am glad that you try so energetically to persuade British youth to come to Sweden and Swedes to visit Britain."

No greater or more authoritative condemnation of the policy of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Government could be made than this. Apart from the fact that he is heir to the Throne, the Prince states what he knows to be true,