

to universities as an institution—as the “prophet, priest and philosopher” of democracy. “The university,” he said, “must lead the people.” Mr. Harper has a somewhat distorted notion of democracy. In democracies the people lead themselves. They may make use of universities for securing knowledge as it is acquired, as a sort of intellectual storehouse, just as they use the library or the primary school; but the university as prophet, priest and king would be as repugnant to thorough going democracy as any other species of priestcraft and kingcraft. The true object of universities is to help men to think, not to do their thinking for them.

But that is not the object of the university as Mr. Harper sees it, nor as the professorial cult would have it. Another one of this cult, also attached to the Rockefeller establishment, made that plain in a newspaper article published soon after Mr. Harper's discourse. We refer to C. R. Henderson. He assures us, not without some angry grinding of his teeth, that it is dishonest for any man to set up for a teacher in the field of social reform, economic and political, without equipping himself by many years of special study of industrial history, economic science and modes of administration. Thus, according to the professorial cult, no one is fit to form an opinion as to the righteousness of any public policy, unless he has gone through the professorial mill. Acceptance of that doctrine would indeed make the university the prophet, priest and king of democracy. No one would be esteemed fit even to vote unless he held a university diploma for excellence in industrial history, economic science (“as she is taught”) and modes of administration. What university, governed by professors and endowed by millionaires, could safely be entrusted with such authority? Macaulay said that professors of physical science could not be trusted as authorities upon the law of gravitation if great pecuniary interests were at stake. How much less, then, can economic professors be

trusted as authorities upon questions of fundamental property rights, which do involve great pecuniary interests?

Then what reason is there to suppose that “solid learning,” as it is called, will imbue professors with the good judgment and sound sense necessary to make trustworthy economic priests and kings? Here, for illustration, is Prof. James Mavo, of the University of Toronto. He is doubtless well crammed with industrial history, economic science and modes of administration, to say nothing of Latin and Greek. With the “authorities” he is as thoroughly conversant as any of his cult. But in an article in the Toronto Evening News of Christmas eve, he demonstrated the inadequacy of these acquirements.

Prof. Mavo, of Toronto, had been moved by much the same impulse that stirred Harper and Henderson of the Chicago university. He, too, wants the public to look to the university as prophet, priest and king. Popular propaganda, consequently, is to him exceedingly distasteful. His antique and rather wordy disquisition in the Toronto News we must as a whole pass over. To reply to a paper against propagating opinions in a democracy would be a waste of space; none the less so as the professor's paper is utterly void of argument. But Prof. Mavo makes two or three observations in his paper to which attention may be called as showing how little “solid learning” has assisted him to do straight thinking. At one point, referring superciliously to socialists, he says: “If the existing ‘competitive’ system is obnoxious to anyone, it is not so difficult after all, on this continent at least, to retire from the competitive field, and to live a wholesome though isolated rural life.” For our part, we have no fault to find with competition. On the contrary we believe it to be essentially as natural and beneficent as gravitation. But the man who seriously and honestly says that it is possible to retire from the com-

petitive field shows lack of perception of the simplest conditions in which he lives. He may be full to bursting with knowledge of all that has ever been written in industrial history, economics and administration, but it wouldn't be safe to take his advice on the simplest practical proposition. Then again Prof. Mavo observes that “if the payment of rent to the ‘robber landlord’ is disagreeable, land may yet be had for the clearing of it.” This is a professorial slant at the single taxers, of whom there are many in Toronto. If it fairly exhibits Prof. Mavo's understanding of the single tax, he proves himself again short in sense, however long he may be on “solid learning.” Even a professor should know that the single taxers insist not only that all men have a right to land, but that they have a right to exemption from taxation on their labor, and to equal participation in the values which general growth, as distinguished from distinguishable individual effort, attaches to land. Yet Prof. Mavo implies that single taxers can secure these rights by taking up wild land and clearing it. Even if they abandoned their rights to a share in existing communal values, where could single taxers find a place on the habitable globe in which they would be secure against having their individual earnings confiscated by taxation? There is no such place. Prof. Mavo's apparent obtuseness goes in some degree to show how woefully incompetent men of his class would be as the prophets, priests and kings of democracy. As school teachers, conveying to immature minds an understanding of what the books contain, the class is useful; but when it sets itself up as authority for full grown men, not only on what the books say, but also on what is true and right, it is pretty apt to expose the intellectual limitations that are inseparable from mental cramming.

Somebody having published a paragraph asserting that a free silver newspaper could not get the news from the Associated Press, the manager of that news-gathering associa-