

The Single Tax Review

Vol. XX

JULY-AUGUST, 1920

No. 4

Current Comment

THE result of the Chicago Conventions, the sudden breaking away of the individualistic, or half-individualistic elements from the Socialist, or half-Socialist Farmer-Labor Party, so-called, is indicative of a signal and, we trust, a permanent demarkation. The individualists in the Committee of 48 are yet uncertain of their final home, politically; the Farmer-Labor Party has taken a position, whether they know it or not, which makes them a sort of "second fiddle" party in the national orchestra to the party of Debs and Hillquit; the Single Tax Party presents the American view-point of the freedom of the individual, with which historically and traditionally, however great may have been our departures in practice, our countrymen have a real affinity.

NEVER before have the two theories collided so violently. Never before indeed have they confronted each other precisely as they did at Chicago; hence never before has the lesson been so deeply burnt in. Messrs. Hopkins, Pinchot and others, especially the Single Taxers who were members of the 48 group, were brought face to face with the consequences of their elaborate preparations for a fusion of what we sometimes call the "forward looking" elements. They suddenly saw, what of course they must long have divined, that in the groups which were finally brought together in the convention hall there was a profounder, more irreconcilable division than exists even between the friends and foes of economic privilege.

TWO theories there are; One that the State exists for Man, the other that Man exists for the State. The former conceives of the State as the creature of Man's convenience, and not something existing for the purpose of doing something for him. It realizes the progress of civilization has been a process of discarding, one after one, the pretensions of the State—in social and political matters at least. Religion broke away from it—to the benefit of both religion and the State. Even our economic relations have won some measure of freedom from State interference and State control, but these are still within its grip, and that is the measure of our helplessness. Behind the landlord's right to appropriate economic rent stands the State; all taxes levied on industry which are helping to strangle it, are the inventions of the State; peoples would trade with other peoples without question to satisfy their own natural desires, were it not for the State.

OF course the State has its functions. Its province is to interfere only in those cases where the law of compe-

tion does not apply. But first of all it must secure a free field for the laws of competition to work their unimpeded will. Then we would have the natural order. We would witness the constantly diminishing functions of the State, as well as the disappearance of those varied social phenomena of exploitation, low wages, high cost of living, unemployment, poverty, etc., which justify to so many those State activities which are no business of the State, and under the shadow of which the theory of Socialism, urging a further extension of State activities, has been built up into an economic doctrine by the superficial and shallow-minded.

WE use these terms without disrespect to the many fine intellects in the Socialist movements; to the many animated by a beautiful human sympathy. But it is well to recognize that Socialism is a shallow theory. "It does not go far enough" by unmeasurable distances; it merely skims the surface. It does not recognize man's relation to the earth; it does not seem to know the nature of society superior to the State—it has no place in its system for the natural order. Its superficiality is emphasized in an almost terrible way by its chatter about machinery and its ominous silence about the planet. Its very network of artificiality so blinds the intellect caught in its entanglements that the simplicity of the method of making the earth free by the collection of the rent of land is invisible to it. It cannot see the plain thing that is true by reason of seeing so clearly the elaborate wall it has builded between the simple truth and natural vision.

DR. THOMAS S. ADAMS, of Yale University, who was chairman of the advisory committee on taxation to the government, is an ardent advocate of the tax on sales, and has made a calculation that it would yield \$400,000,000 a year at the rate of one per cent. This is the tax—the alvacala—which according to David A. Wells, no mean authority, ruined Spain. Great men, these college authorities on taxation!

THE death of Major-General Gorgas has called forth many encomiums on his life and work, but none finer than this from Dr. Frank Crane;

"He was not called great. He was great.

His honor comes to him not from his position or from his possessions, but from his work.

He was not elected to anything. He was selected, chosen for his ability, and he did that whereunto he was chosen.

His army uniform was but the key to opportunity, for he was of a greater army.

History will record that upon the Fourth of July, 1920, there died a greater than Foch, or Pershing, or Haig, though they were great."

HOW delicate are the economic relations of mankind. A land boom in some Southern or Western State, thrusting back the labor and capital that otherwise would be busy producing, determines the amount of actual wages received by the clerk that bends above his books, the clothing cutter on the east side of New York, the cash girl in the department store, the hard worked physician in the great city, the million or more workers in occupations in which men and women are engaged. The economic world is a complex network in which the interests of all are interlocked.

THE first thing to do is to make men free. State-owned grain elevators, municipally owned-transit systems, co-operative buying and selling, collective bargaining, tax reform, will not do this. Only by making the earth free can man be made free. The land question is not the only question, but it is the first and basic question.

PERHAPS most men thoroughly misconceive the nature of economic society and their purpose in it. We speak of "getting a living." But we do not think of it as an effort to share in the product of the natural co-operation which is the only purpose of economic society. We work, and we conceive that the primary purpose is to enable us to draw our wages Saturday night. But, of course, the main purpose served is that we have contributed that quota to production, and got from it that much sustenance to enable us to continue our contribution.

How necessary, therefore, it is that in this work there should be not only no drones, but no toll-takers. How clear it is that if there is any leak in the machinery the whole operation is vitiated, that if men stand at the machinery abstracting, not contributing, the total product of economic society must tend to lessen, a continual inequality of ownership and distribution set in, and results be as we find them.

Away with the drones and the toll-takers!

Death of Major-General Gorgas

MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM CRAWFORD GORGAS, former Surgeon-General of the United States Army, died July 4, in London. He was born in Mobile, Alabama, in 1854. In 1880 he was appointed Surgeon, and successively rose to Captain Assistant Surgeon, Brigade Surgeon, and Colonel Assistant Surgeon, when he helped clean up the yellow fever in Havana, until he was made Surgeon-General. He was chief sanitary officer at Panama. He supervised campaigns against the yellow fever-breeding mosquito in Central America and Peru.

He directed the sanitary forces of the American army in France during the world war. He was made a Commander of the Legion of Honor and knighted by King George of England for his eminent services to scientific sanitation.

Above all, and of chief interest to us, this great man saw what we see. He drew his inspiration from Henry George.

He saw that wholesome sanitation, absence of disease and length of life, depended upon a high wage scale. He saw how wages could be increased, and in and out of office he preached the great truth. His modest courage in making open avowal of his convictions should have been a lesson to those who, holding public office, remained strangely silent. He was a member of the Single Tax Party and a contributor to its activities. He would probably have been the candidate of that party for President had not death put an end to a most useful career.

Somewhere Herbert, we think—we have not his poems beside us—said, in that quaint fashion that was all his own:

"Who sweeps a room as by God's law
Makes that and the action fine."

General Gorgas did his work in that spirit, whether the task set him was humble or lofty. To have cleaned up and made healthy and habitable the pest spots of the earth, is no small achievement. But higher than the achievement itself was the spirit in which the work was performed, his recognition of the laws that make for health and happiness, and his courageous insistence upon the fundamental truth which Single Tax men proclaim.

Henry George Advised His Followers

THE advocates of a great principle should know no thought of compromise. They should proclaim it in all its fullness, and should point to its complete attainment as their goal. Let the time servers, the demagogues, the compromisers, those to whom nothing is right, and nothing is wrong—let them all go their ways. Any cause that may lay hold of a great principle is stronger without them."

Away, apologists, away!
Let fools and cowards make delay,
And choose their texts beyond the moon—
Men cannot right their wrongs too soon.
The landless for their birthright cry,
Brothers their brothers rights deny;
Speak now, for they have waited long,
Say who is right and who is wrong,
Proclaim the truth from every steeple—
God made the land for all the people.

ROBERT CUMMING.

THE *New York Times* of recent date contained an article entitled "Belshazzar as Landlord. Babylonian of Biblical Fame Revealed as Profiteer in Documents Deciphered at Yale." Well, we at least know the fate that befell him. It appears, too, that they had a high tariff in Babylon since there is a record of payment of duty on imported barley.

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