

AN APPRECIATION OF LOUIS F. POST.

BY STOUGHTON COOLEY.

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One of the strongest of paradoxes is the position of the newspaper editor. The herald of all men, he remains unknown. The maker of public reputations, he must efface himself. The master of the art preservative of all arts, he is barred by the ethics of his craft from announcing his own name to the reading world. Day after day he gives of his best, lauding this man or condemning that, setting up one man or pulling down another, yet all the time helpless to add one jot to his own publicity. And so he toils on at his thankless task through an uneventful career, till at last, yielding the pen to a younger hand, he leaves the world as quietly as he passed through it. His modest obituary may tail along after that of a small shopkeeper or a petty contractor.

How many readers can give offhand the name of even the editor-in-chief of the paper that comes daily to their door? Eagerly they scan its columns to see what is said of this man or that; but never a word do they hear of the editor himself, or of his brother editors. They are the clever manipulators behind the scenes who pull the strings to make Punch and Judy perform their stunts before the public. Now and again, though at very rare intervals, a man like Horace Greeley or Henry Watterson becomes known to the general public; but these for the most part are men who have achieved distinction through personal participation in public affairs rather than as editors.

EDITORS ARE TOO MODEST.

Why should not editors speak of each other as freely as they do of the rest of humanity? Why should it be necessary for an editor to die to realise some other appreciation of his worth than the pay roll? Why should he not be privileged to see himself as others see him? Editors have been too modest, and we all are too slow to applaud good work while the worker is quick to hear. Many a man might press on to the charge with a lighter heart if an honest friend were to say to him while he is yet in the flesh some of the kind words that will be carved upon his tombstone. The minister has his individuality and identity; the teacher, the publicist and the statesman are personalities; but the editor, hiding himself behind the royal pronoun "we," is little known and less appreciated by the people whose lives he helps to mould. It is gratifying to know that this seal of silence which has so long restrained editors from speaking of each other is less strictly observed than formerly.

Louis F. Post, who has been called from his position as editor of the PUBLIC to the office of assistant secretary of labour, is a man in point. And it is most gratifying to those who know Mr. Post that his fellow editors did not greet the appointment with the customary flippant notice of a "plum" that has dropped into the gaping maw of a "hungry politician."

HAS WIDE REPUTATION.

Mr. Post has a much wider reputation than might be supposed from the modest circulation of the weekly paper that he has edited for the last fifteen years. But this is due to something more than his work as an editor. He has identity; he possesses a charming personality that has endeared him to countless men and women whom he has met on his lecture tours through the country. Yet, notwithstanding the fact of his fifteen years of service here, including innumerable addresses before local gatherings and such services as that of member of the Chicago Board of Education and member of the charter commission, his name may still be familiar to comparatively few people, and many who have heard his name do not appreciate his worth. As one

of the leading editors, who served on the charter commission, and came to know him well, said recently, "The people of Chicago little realize the greatness of this man who has been working so quietly in their midst."

In what does the greatness of this man consist? One might say, In his logical mind; another, In his grasp of human problems; another, In his wide range of information; another, In his broad humanity; another, In his love of justice. So many, indeed, are his attributes of greatness that his friends look upon him as an all-around great man. If there is one characteristic more striking than another it is his modesty, his simplicity, his sincerity; and no one need ever withhold a compliment for fear of spoiling him. So gentle is he in the ordinary amenities of life that a stranger might be tempted to think him effeminate; but let a principle be at stake, or a duty in question, and the very elements cannot turn him from his purpose. When truth is in question his soul is aroused and he becomes a Titan in the fray.

REFUSED FOR A LONG TIME.

Some months ago when Mr. Post's friends besought him for permission to present his name for a Cabinet position—and some of the leading men in the nation's affairs were back of the movement—he peremptorily refused, and would have gone to the length of writing Mr. Wilson himself had it not been for the appearance of refusing something that had not been offered. It was only after long discussion that he could be got to remain silent and let his friends sound the President-elect. While these negotiations were in progress he was asked if he would serve, in spite of his protestations, if he were appointed. His answer was: "I will serve anywhere, down to ditch digging, if it can be shown to be my call."

That is the keynote of his life. Show him where his duty lies, and he will follow unfalteringly, no matter where it leads. But when the call came to serve as assistant secretary of labour, he had to be convinced that it was a call. At first he refused point-blank. Friends urged, but he turned a deaf ear, declaring he must attend to his paper. Telegrams began to pour in from different parts of the country. Still he refused. Finally, when the telegrams bulked so large on his desk that he had to measure them instead of count them, when leading men in the administration implored him and men came from Washington and other places to persuade him, he capitulated.

OFFICE SEEKS THE MAN.

One hears now and again about the office seeking the man, but it is generally received with the same credulity that greets the announcement that the missing link has been found. But the unbelievable has actually come to pass. It is a marked characteristic of the present administration that responsible places have sought men with a view to efficient public service, rather than the discharge of political debts.

And where in the whole executive department should greater care be exercised than in manning the Department of Labour? The youngest of the Cabinet positions, it may quickly become one of the most important; for it is of vital concern to all the people and especially to that large part of society that has heretofore received so little intelligent consideration from the government. Consideration of a kind labour has had in plenty. Every demagogue with an itch for office is the friend of labour just before election. Countless are the meaningless proposals in its behalf made after election. But few men go to the heart of the matter and discover where and how labour is despoiled. Fewer still have the moral courage to stand out boldly for justice to all.

WILL BENEFIT NATION.

The appointment of Mr. Post will do more to raise the new Cabinet position from a mere "trade union adjunct,"

as too many have been disposed to consider it, to its rightful place as the agent of all industry, than any other man in the country. For not only does he enjoy the confidence of labour itself, but he sees so clearly the cause of the friction between labour and capital and understands so well how unnecessary that friction is that his work will be constructive, and the people at large will soon realise that political economy is not a dismal science, that there is a way out, and that the discoveries and inventions of science can yet be turned to the service of the whole people.

This is why those who know Mr. Post best have urged him to hearken to the call. They know and appreciate the great work he has done as an editor, for he has helped other editors to see more clearly, and they believe he will do a like service as a statesman in helping other statesmen to do more efficiently. His philosophy goes to the bottom of the social problem, and he has the courage to take such steps toward bringing about economic righteousness as opportunity may present. He can repeat, as few others can, the words of Henry George when introduced to a New York audience as a man who stood for labour: "I am not for labour," said Mr. George, "I am not for any class. I am for men."

Mr. W. A. Watt, the Prime Minister of Victoria, in an interview published in the DAILY NEWS AND LEADER (June 17th), said he thought the slums of London were appalling and ghastly. He hoped the British people would forgive him for saying so. The B.P. should by this time be quite familiar with such judgments, but, like Mr. Watt, they don't like lingering too much on the problem.

* * *

"Liberty consists in being subject to the laws alone," say some republican writers, as if a man oppressed by an unjust law was free? This would not be true, even on the supposition that all the laws are the work of the assembled nation; for, after all, the individual has his rights, which cannot be taken away from him except by violence and by unlawful use of the general strength.—TURGOT. (Letter to Dr. Price.)

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THE HENRY GEORGE MOVEMENT IN SWEDEN.

Superficial political observers often make the mistake of judging the strength of Georgian sentiment in a country by the numerical strength of the Single Tax organisations. If they were right then there would be no "Georgism" in Western Canada, for instance, because very few, if any, purely Single Tax organisations are to be found there. But the fact is, as is well known, that the tendency for land value tax is very strong in that part of the world.

So in Sweden the strength of the movement cannot be judged by the number and membership of the tax reform leagues or the Economic Freedom League—the national organisation of the Swedish single taxers—although the number of tax reform leagues and committees has increased considerably during the last nine months. But most of the sympathisers are outside the organisations and are likely to remain outside even in the future. Our opponents also are wise enough to measure our strength by the strength of our ideas, and it is well worthy of note that some of the Tory leaders, such as Dr. Karl Hildebrand, M.P., the editor of the leading conservative daily, the Stockholm DAGBLAD, regard our movement as the most dangerous that the privileged class has to fight. It is, of course, a great encouragement for the Single Tax workers to know that their work is so highly valued.

Important Resolutions and Petitions.

On the initiative of organised single-taxers the following resolutions were circulated among progressive members of the provincial legislatures. In a short time the resolutions were signed by nearly one hundred such members, and on January 10th last they were presented to the Swedish Ministers of State and Finance. A few days later these petitions, accompanied by a memorial, were presented also to the members of Parliament. This memorial—as the Chicago PUBLIC says—is a model of clear and dignified reasoning that, taken in conjunction with the many representative names attached to the petitions, shows in a most gratifying manner the strength and rapid advance of the Single Tax movement in Sweden during the last four years.

Petition on the Tariff Question.

Whereas custom house taxes, without exception, involve a great and obvious injustice, i.e., take from some for the benefit of others, without giving any reasonable compensation; Whereas, these taxes retard the development of the country's trade, shipping and other more primary industries; Whereas, on the other hand, they largely facilitate the development of trusts and trade combinations, resulting in the prevailing high cost of living, while being, in general, a hindrance to the solution of the social questions; Therefore, the undersigned members of Landsting wish to declare that the custom house taxes must very soon, and in the shortest possible transition period, be entirely repealed. And we hereby make an earnest appeal to the liberal parties to work

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