

RING IN THE TRUE

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.
Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

If one's sober intellect is convinced that it is *possible* and *practicable* to "ring out the feud of rich and poor" it is easier to rise above "ancient forms of party strife" and aspire instead to "ring out the false" and to "ring in the true."

Perhaps it was easier for people in general to nourish hopes of "nobler modes of life" in 1850, when *In Memoriam* was published, than to-day. At that time leaders of thought, in increasing numbers throughout the civilised world were coming to understand the doctrine of Free Trade, a doctrine based on the conviction that our neighbour's trade and prosperity cannot conflict with, but must necessarily enhance our own. This conviction with its practical application, brightens the whole atmosphere of social thought. It accords with the natural desire for liberty, brotherhood and hope.

In many quarters to-day, however, Tennyson's lines must appear only a literary curiosity. From the general tenour of the newspapers and of Parliamentary debates it might be assumed that "the want, the care and the sin" if not already things of the past, can at all events be relegated to questions of departmental administration. The strife of class against class, section against section, and trade against trade has embittered as well as debased the clash of parties and shown us that when prosperity is made to depend upon government favour and protection the struggle for power becomes more intense. The investigation of first causes thus suffers discouragement leading to indifference, and this extends to the abuses of democratic government itself.

Perhaps the most striking feature in the course of events between 1850 and to-day is the disparity between the progress of science in the physical and social spheres; and this has been accompanied by an increasing divergence of method. The physical scientist, ignoring all differences of party or class, trading freely in ideas, and basing all his researches on immutable sequences (or natural laws) has multiplied man's physical powers to an awe-inspiring degree. In social science the retrogression has been marked not only by national and class warfare but by decay of institutions that formerly appeared secure in the accumulated experience of generations.

To-day inflation and governmental extravagance pass almost unnoticed and the only principle to be discerned amid the welter of inflicting taxes is the crude communism of private property belonging *ipso facto* to the State. Even the granting of judicial powers to government departments scarcely ruffles public opinion. In economic thought the prevailing tendency is to ignore the existence of fixed laws, thus destroying the possibility of applying scientific method to this basis of social science. Economic questions are referred to experts who do not commit themselves to any general or categorical verdict and are not even agreed on the exact definition of such things as wealth and capital, the subjects of their study.

Yet people are still agreed that human nature has not changed and at Christmastide the natural impulses assert themselves against the barriers erected by folly in economic thinking. Friends and kinsfolk persist in sending as presents goods across frontiers while maintaining armies of officials and spies to prevent their receiving such supposed dangers to their employment and standard of life. This surely should provoke thought. And the Christmas atmosphere, in which animosity is allayed, should enable us to think impartially, that is to say, in the spirit that has brought progress to physical science.

Although it is seldom mentioned, there remains one cardinal principle common to all parties. We have yet to learn of any responsible party leader who admitted that his party stood for injustice. Justice involves no sacrifices. It has the quality, in common with art and literature; the more it is generally appreciated, the greater the gain to all. Everything just in the existing order, everything just in the claims of society as a whole and everything just in the claims of the individual may be perfectly reconciled without any encroachment; and the essential objects of all parties may be attained and consolidated. It remains to determine the limits of public and private property.

To think scientifically is to think universally and it is not surprising, in view of the superficial and biased nature of social controversy, that this initial step in social investigation usually proves the most difficult. When this obstacle has been overcome, however, it is comparatively easy to realise that labour applied to natural materials is the sole source of real wealth to-day, as it ever has been, although modern man uses tools (capital) and exchange to an ever-increasing degree in order to magnify his effort. By natural or universal law, therefore, all property belongs to the producer and justice requires that he be free to exchange his goods or services with whomsoever he desires. But there are all the varying advantages of situation where production is carried on, and the value of those opportunities to produce varies increasingly as population grows and the arts of production are developed. As the value of each such opportunity is registered in the value of the site (which the occupier has not produced and to which he can therefore have no claim) opportunities can be equalised without difficulty by the simple method of collecting all site (or land) value and applying it to public purposes. By this method alone can the just claims of the individual on the one hand and of society on the other hand be perfectly reconciled.

F. D. P.

"PROGRESS AND POVERTY"

Mr. Walter W. Gerver, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, commends the new condensed edition of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* in these words: "They surely did a good job, making this edition of *P. & P.* I like the sub-headings found all through the Book. Makes it easy to read and understand. Excellent for students. My idea of a good course is to have the student write a summary of each lesson. For that purpose this book can't be beaten." [The Hogarth Press—price 7s. 6d.]