

business men by holding out to them the alluring prospect of lower rents, through the exemption of all real estate improvements from taxation, together with a like exemption of all personal property. Mr. C. F. Adams declared, at a single tax banquet about a year ago, that the adoption of this plan in Massachusetts would, in his opinion, make our Commonwealth "the paradise of manufacturers." We suppose President Fillebrown was trying, last night, to make his guests believe that it would also render Massachusetts the paradise of merchants.

(From the Rockland (Mass.) *Free Press*.)

President Fillebrown, of the Massachusetts Single Tax League, has evidently decided that to reach a man's good will, efforts should be made through his stomach. Mr. Fillebrown is a genial entertainer, and deserves credit from all for his untiring efforts in behalf of the single tax. His is a campaign of argument and education, and if the present wisely directed efforts continue, must make an impression in time.



ALBERT L. JOHNSON

. . . THE MAN . . .

BY HENRY GEORGE, JR.

(*Expressly for the Review.*)

It was on the 17th of June, a glorious summer afternoon, and just a few days before he unexpectedly passed, that I had my last chat with Albert L. Johnson, a man in many ways as remarkable as his more widely known brother, Tom L. Johnson. We sat in the court, with its double line of columns, of his Pompeian *villa marina*, at Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn. The air was warm and balmy. The gentlest of breezes swayed blossoms and palm leaves, and tossed a diamond-beaded fountain that made soft music beside us. Beyond the house and lawn and the bank's sheer descent lay the Narrows, dividing inner and outer bays. Through the gray-blue waters slid steam and sailing craft, connecting the great port with the remotest parts of the earth, yet almost as unreal and dreamlike as seemed the feathery clouds that floated in the transparent heavens.

My friend sat in a large armchair. He was attired as befitted the occasion and his invalid condition—without coat or waistcoat, and his linen shirt open at the neck.

"Do I look sick?" he asked, and his blue eyes looked bluer than usual.

"Your color is excellent, considering that you have been indoors and inactive for a number of days," I replied.

"The doctors say that I must keep quiet for a few weeks," he remarked; and then he continued in a meditative way: "That's a hard thing for a man like me to do. I never before in my life have been so long quiet. I have been thinking of all I shall do when I get out again. I'll do things that no man ever ventured to do. I'll make money for myself, but at the same time I'll do things for the human race. I'll make it easier for human beings to come together.

"What makes man the first of animals is brains. What animates those brains is bringing one man within easy touch of another. Mental power then multiplies. We know what a toll gate is: it is a barrier to free intercourse. Ease of communication is freedom, and freedom is the reverse of slavery. Ease of communication is one of the chief secrets of civilization.

"If I can break down impediments existing between one human being and another, and bring them into close touch I shall, in effect, multiply active mental

power—**increase that thing that invents and constructs machinery, that makes books, that contrives microscopes, that does all the wonderful things that belong to our era and to the eras that have gone before ours. Isn't that something to work for?**"

I answered with a nod as he looked inquiringly at me. Then he gazed away at the ships and the sky, and for a space was silent.

"I don't say that I don't want to make money," he resumed. "I have made a lot and I shall make a lot more. I want wealth because I like the comforts and the luxuries it brings. But I want it also because of the power it gives to its possessor. I want wealth to help me do great things that I know I can do."

"I'm not proud. I know what I came from—poverty. My father lost all he had in the Civil War trying to keep chains on the black man. He did not think black slavery was wrong. He thought a 'nigger' was different from a human being. He fought, and his side lost. I was born in Helena, Arkansas; a hotbed of 'niggers, mules, and cotton.' The war broke out at that time, and my mother carried my brothers—Tom and Will—and me around after the Southern army as well as she could. When the war was over my father had nothing left of his planter's estate. He had to begin over again. He got into the street railroad business in Louisville, and that is where Tom and I began our railroad careers.

"After awhile we went to Indianapolis. It was Tom's scheme, and my father and I went with him. He had obtained some money for an invention. He borrowed some more. We got hold of a dead road, and we put life into it. All of us worked, and worked hard. I was a conductor on one of those Illinois street cars. I pulled a bell strap and worked a bell punch eighteen hours a day for \$1.85, the prevailing wages then. I rose to the place of foreman, afterwards to that of superintendent, and in later years I became president of systems that made that Illinois street line in Indianapolis seem insignificant. But I learned a lesson working on the rear end of a car that I never forgot. I saw what the other side—the seamy side—of life was. It would push your heart back to know what it is to work so long for such small pay, and realize that tens of thousands of families have to be sustained on such wages.

"Perhaps it was because we knew all this, because we ourselves had been through it, that my brother Tom and I have always since been friendly to organization among workingmen, and particularly railroad men. We never had a strike, not even in Cleveland in 1892, when Mark Hanna's lines were tied up. And we may justly claim that we did much to raise street railroad wages. We raised them little by little, until from \$1.85 for eighteen hours, such as I had received in Indianapolis, we paid in Cleveland \$2.10 for ten hours, and we never anywhere paid less where conditions were the same.

"Of course, business is one thing and generosity is another. I don't pretend to say that these high wages were paid from mere kindness. We knew that good pay and shortened hours would get the pick of the men and their best efforts. That's just what we needed. Our policy was to cut fares to a minimum. Of course, to reduce fares is to increase traffic, and to increase traffic necessitates improved management, so that we had to have the most skilful and most careful men. In handling increased traffic we had to take precautions against accidents. We found it cheaper to pay high wages to efficient men who would have few accidents, than low wages to men who would pile up damage suits.

"But all this is an old story. What I want to do now is to get at the new things. I want to reduce fares over a great area. While we were increasing the men's wages, my brother and I cut street railroad fares in Cleveland from twenty-five cents to five cents, and gave free transfers; and in Brooklyn we connected the Bowery with the ocean beach for five cents. We did that and made fortunes for ourselves, while we gave cheap transportation to the public.

We found that the traffic rose as the fare fell—that the new business more than offset the cut in charges. Of course we knew that there must be a limit to the minimum charges—that we must reach a point where the increase in traffic would not counterbalance the reduction in fares. But we have not as yet found that point, and I do not believe any man to-day can say where it is.

“My brother, experimentally, reduced fares to three cents for a few days in Detroit while he was president of the system there, and then returned to the five-cent fare. He found that the receipts during that three-cent period were exactly equal to the receipts of a like five-cent period preceding, and that when fares were increased again to five cents the business correspondingly fell away, so that the income remained stationary.

“This confirmed our speculations. The reduced fare was a two-thirds saving to the public, without hurting the company, and it is certain that if the three-cent fare could have been continued the business would have grown and made a good profit for the company. But my brother did not own control, and the other owners were afraid to continue the experiment. In fact, they had not given their consent to it in the first instance. My brother acted without consulting them. It proved that his belief about low fares was right.”

From this Detroit experiment Albert Johnson's discourse turned to his project to connect New York and Philadelphia with an electric system which should make time equal to the steam express trains, but at a very much lower fare. The Westinghouse and the General Electric companies had each offered to guarantee an equipment that would run cars sixty miles an hour. As a matter of fact experiments have since been made on a military electric road in Germany, and a sustained speed of close to one hundred miles an hour has been attained. Mr. Johnson's idea was to build a road as straight as possible between the two cities, with no grade crossings, and to make no stops or slow-ups, having special cars or trains run to or from intermediate points, and switch to or from the main line. He had commenced the formation of this line by the purchase and extension of an electric road between Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey. He had also purchased a bridge over the Delaware river, and another part of the Johnson system is now in operation between Trenton and Yardley, and other points on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware. He intended to buy or to construct other roads and thus make a through line between New York and Philadelphia, cars to be running between the great cities within a year.

“The rate of fare between New York and Philadelphia is now \$2.50,” Mr. Johnson said, continuing his favorite line of thought. “I propose to put my fare at fifty cents to start with, although I make it this high only because others raise an outcry and say I'll ruin myself. But the truth is that I have made careful calculations upon what my electric system in the Lehigh Valley, Pa., is doing, and I say candidly that I'd be ashamed to tell the public how much money I could make at twenty-five cents a passenger from New York to Philadelphia, and that there is a big fortune at a five-cent fare.

“That sounds like a dream, I know. But I am no dreamer. I am a practical railroad man who has created new railroad business by reducing fares. I have my own and my brother's business experience in a number of the large cities of the country, and knowledge gained through my Lehigh Valley system, connecting a large number of towns and villages, to guide me both in the construction and in the operation of electric railroads. I have also had Westinghouse electrical experts make special calculation for me, and I am prepared to prove that no more electricity is required to send a car that makes no stops or slow-ups at a high rate of speed from New York to Philadelphia than it does to carry a car from end to end of a system in New York or Brooklyn, where there are frequent stops at street corners. From seven to twelve times more electricity is required to start a car than is needed to keep it going after it has once been put in full motion, so that a car travelling the long distance, but making no stops,



HOME AT FORT HAMILTON, BROOKLYN, WHERE ALBERT L. JOHNSON DIED.



DRAWING-ROOM OF ALBERT L. JOHNSON'S HOME.

would use no more power than one travelling the short distance with frequent stops. The wages charge would be the same in both cases. Damage charges are very heavy in a large city. The Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company had a million dollars against it in damage suits last year. A million dollars would raise or depress every crossroad along the line of a New York-Philadelphia railroad, so that there need not be a single grade crossing, and the most fruitful source of accidents would thus be cut off. Then, the expense of building a street railroad is very great, as compared with that of a railroad through an open country. In this way I reach the conclusions that railroad fares between New York and Philadelphia should be no greater than those of railroads in the cities!"

This will indicate the daring genius of Albert L. Johnson. "Progress is doing new things," he said once in my hearing to some of his lieutenants, who hesitated to carry out an experiment his fertile mind had suggested. Because others were reluctant to leave the beaten path, he was, in most new matters, his own lieutenant, and no president of a railroad ever knew more about every detail of construction and operation. He knew, because he himself had served in every capacity.

The New York-Philadelphia project grew out of the years of experience, first in Cleveland, where his brother and he had started with a little line on the West Side, their service being provided by "four second-hand cars and nineteen mules." Against the masterly opposition of Mark Hanna, the railroad king of Cleveland, they pushed into the heart of the city, and then into the East Side. Leaving Cleveland, Albert Johnson took hold of undeveloped railroads and franchise rights in Brooklyn, New York. Out of these he and his brother Tom built the Nassau system, famous in the street railroad world for its long haul, low fare, and enormous traffic. Losing control of the management through the sale of the stock of one of their partners, they disposed of their Nassau interests. Tom L. Johnson was free at last to do what he had long desired to do—to devote himself to the single tax cause. Albert Johnson turned to the development of a Lehigh Valley system in Pennsylvania, in which he had previously embarked with the view, sometime, of making it a large enterprise.

He had started an opposition railroad in Allentown, and with low fares, improved equipment, and better management had compelled the General Electric Company, which owned the original line, to sell out to him. Mr. Robert E. Wright, who managed the fight for the other company, was taken into the Johnson company. He became Mr. Johnson's chief legal adviser, and on the latter's death was elected to succeed Mr. Johnson in the presidency of the company.

Beginning with the Allentown road, lines in neighboring towns were absorbed or constructed, and connecting links built, so that at the time of his death the Lehigh Valley Traction Company ran through and connected more than sixty towns and villages, and supplied electric light to a score. His plan was to connect all these communities with Philadelphia. The fare on the steam trains from Allentown to Philadelphia is \$1.80. He proposed to make as good time, but to charge at start only fifty cents, and less, subsequently.

From this Lehigh Valley-Philadelphia plan developed the Philadelphia-New York idea. And Mr. Johnson had the confident expectation not only of carrying passengers at revolutionary fares, but also of carrying freight, too, and at rates that would astonish the world. The steam roads charge a dollar or more for transporting a ton of coal from the anthracite regions to tide water. He saw "millions of profit" at twenty-five cents a ton.

"Most railroad men may call me crazy for proposing to do such things," he said in conversation, "but that is because they themselves, or their stockholders, have not the courage to try it, or else they do not know how. But I

can tell you that where I lead, other men will follow. They will get courage, and will see how simple it all is—provided, of course, the right kind of management is supplied. And then it will not be long before the whole country will be covered by a network of these electric railroads, each running its single cars, or its trains, as necessity may demand.

“My belief is that, with the kind of development which I know is possible, there would be large profit to an electric railroad carrying passengers from New York to Cleveland for forty cents, and from New York to Chicago for \$1.50.

“I’m no dreamer. I am a practical railroad builder and operator. I have made a fortune by putting fares down and improving equipment and management, and I am willing to stake all I have on an extension of this policy. I talk about that with which I am familiar. I don’t go thinking about flying machines when I know what can be done with railroads.”

It was in this bold, open style that Albert Johnson proclaimed his purpose to ask the people of Philadelphia for the right to construct a new railroad system on all the unoccupied streets of that city. “I talk publicly,” he said at the time, “because I propose to go into partnership with the public by giving, in low fares and free transfers, what usually goes to the politicians who peddle railroad franchises. I shall give a three-cent service that will be better than the present five-cent service.”

The Johnson proposal was hailed with rejoicing by the masses of the people, but the politicians were not slow to see their own advantage. The Quay faction, commanding at Harrisburg as well as in Philadelphia, rushed through a bill, and then, by virtue of that act, several franchises, giving all ungranted street railroad privileges in Philadelphia and several other cities of Pennsylvania to members of their own “gang,” and when Mr. John Wanamaker offered to give to the city of Philadelphia two million dollars, and to the franchise stealers themselves half a million dollars, for the newly obtained grants, they scorned to answer, treating him with contemptuous silence. Nothing so brazenly corrupt had ever been done in notoriously corrupt Pennsylvania. Albert Johnson foresaw the reaction that would sooner or later come. His comment, when he heard of the franchise robbery, was: “These politicians are really helping me, for their theft of these franchises comes very close after my unusual proposal to give the people three-cent car fare. The politicians propose to give the people nothing. They have stolen those franchises, not to use them, but to sell them, and the people will get no benefit. I shall fight, however. I shall carry the matter into the courts, and in the meanwhile I shall build my Lehigh Valley road down to the city line of Philadelphia, where my passengers may find cars of the Union Traction Company, the street railroad system that now serves Philadelphia.”

Albert Johnson was as strong in the single tax faith as is his brother Tom; and while he had no desire to enter politics himself, he encouraged his brother to do so. Indeed, he was his brother’s chief political as well as business adviser. Brothers were never closer than these two. But for all that, Albert Johnson was as strong and independent in his opinions as was the older man. While, for instance, the latter advocated the public ownership and operation of railroads, Albert Johnson, in four characteristic words—“bad management plus stealage”—summed up his objection. He saw the rotten state of politics, and he thought the public management of railroads would intensify it. He advocated private ownership and operation, but a kind of ownership and management that involved pursuance of the Johnson policy for the maximum of public convenience and efficiency at the minimum fare—the reverse of common experience under private ownership and operation, a policy of poor service and fare based upon “all that the traffic will bear.” Yet, while professing belief in private ownership and control, Albert Johnson was really his brother’s closest and best counsellor in the latter’s work for municipal ownership, and

stood ready with his fortune to back that brother's street railroad policy, or anything else that that brother desired to do.

"Man proposes, but God disposes," and so it was that great, stalwart Albert Johnson, a very giant to outward seeming; Albert Johnson, with his brilliant plans—plans that he believed would lift humanity to higher planes—was called to the long sleep. He had all that a man could desire to live for: a happy home, an affectionate family, a wealth of friends, a large and rapidly increasing fortune, and he was elated by exalted aspirations. In the prime of manhood, for he was but forty, and in the flush of success, he was called. Years before, while driving twelve horses before a snow plough over the street railroad system in Cleveland, he had been thrown to the ground by breaking harness. It is supposed that he then injured an artery in his chest. Time, with its stirring action and heavy mental strife, insidiously developed the injury, until, with warnings that could scarcely be believed, Nature yielded to Death.

The end came suddenly, as befitted the man of action that he had always been. He died standing, enfolded in his brother Tom's arms—united to the last with that brother to whom he was so devotedly attached, and for whom he had such loyal, such unstinting admiration.

He sleeps at Greenwood, at the crest of the hill viewing the ocean, beside his father and my father. He sleeps, but his ideas will not sleep. They will fire other minds. Other hands will fulfil his vivid day dreams, and in so doing, will raise a monument to his genius. In that good time many will come to repeat the words of his mother when she saw her son cold in death: "Thank God for these forty years!"



THE ELECTIONS AND . . THEIR GAINS . .

BY THE EDITOR.

THE elections have passed, and the net gains to the single tax movement, though small, are of sufficient moment to bear capitulation. First, as to New York. The municipal campaign in this city was chiefly remarkable for the activity of single taxers in both camps. The differences were not vital, and the divisions were on minor points. Some of these differences were so minute as to seem petty, and were certainly not so obvious as to carry conviction. In Brooklyn, the activity of single taxers in the Citizens' Union ranks was especially marked. Peter Aiken, President of the Brooklyn Single Tax Club, Chas. O'Connor Hennessey, Joseph McGuinness, Robert Baker, D. B. Van Vleck, and others were supporters of Mr. Low. It looked at one time as if Mr. Baker would get the fusion nomination for sheriff, but his candidacy was defeated by republican opposition.

Both parties sought the support of single taxers, and their attitude is significant of the respect in which our movement is held. In a letter read at a meeting in Avon Hall, Brooklyn, Mr. E. M. Grout, the successful candidate for comptroller, said in a letter addressed to the secretary of the meeting:

"The Anti-Tammany fusion ticket in this campaign stands for what Mr. George stood for in municipal politics; not only is this so as to the opposition to Tammany and the demands for an honest administration of municipal affairs, but in the Citizens' Union platform of this year upon which the fusion candidates stand, there are the demands for equal taxation of unimproved and improved real estate, for the direct employment of labor by the city, and municipal ownership and proper taxation and supervision of all street franchise corporations, which were always advocated by Mr. George in his campaigns. It, therefore, seems to me the most natural thing in this campaign that the followers of Mr. George should take their place in opposition to Tammany Hall."