

General Gorgas—then Major Gorgas—knowing but not accepting, since the scientific world had not yet accepted, the mosquito origin of the disease, ordered the burning down of a whole city in Cuba—Siboney—and said afterwards that it served no purpose in getting rid of yellow fever unless it had happened to destroy at the same time some of the yellow fever bearing mosquitoes.

\* \* \* \* \*

In fact all these precautions were useless. They never prevented a single case of infection nor saved a single life. The sole cause of the disease is the *Stegomyia*. And the breeding places for the *Stegomyia* are the swamps and stagnant pools that are allowed to collect in various ways. The abolition of the scourge must be begun at its source—the extermination of the insect by the destruction of its breeding places.

\* \* \* \* \*

Did this simple and single remedy find easy acceptance? By no means. The persistence of the older theories to account for the scourge, despite the new discoveries, is vastly instructive as exhibiting the obstinacy of stupid conservatism to new truth. But it finally triumphed. The harbor of Havana, almost the sole breeding place for the pestilence that swept New Orleans, Mobile and other Southern cities, was cleaned up; great sums were appropriated for the destruction of stagnant pools and marshes adjacent to towns and cities, and yellow fever in its epidemic form disappeared from the New World. Instead of the causes of the disease being many and complex as appeared the cause was single and simple, as was the remedy.

\* \* \* \* \*

We do not wish to press this analogy beyond the limits it will bear. But it is instructive as showing that the real origin of the dread scourge was absurdly simple. The origin known, the remedy was obviously quite as simple. And whatever economic ills the social body endures today may be traced to one primary maladjustment. It is as with the physical body, what we call a "complication of diseases" has its origin nearly always in one primary ailment from which these other ailments have developed.

\* \* \* \* \*

The seat of the disease or diseases, of the economic body is to be found in the impediments raised to the free circulation of its life blood. It cannot function freely because the normal play of its members—"factors" we say in economics—is held down by artificial restraints. Ground rent should flow freely to the state; it is forced into other and improper channels by our system of land tenure. Wages should go to the worker; instead, because of an unnatural congestion caused by closed opportunities, wages go in part in tribute to monopoly or in taxes to the state. Interest, considering it now as divested from so many things that are not interest, should go as deferred wages to the worker, whereas it goes now in great part to the holders of concentrated wealth

who can demand of the borrower an exorbitant return for the loan of capital based upon the greater necessities of the poor. From these causes arise other complications of ills which tempt your superficial schools of sociologists to prescribe cumbersome remedies for the relief of the patient, forgetting that after all there is but one primary maladjustment, which may almost be described as deficient or improper circulation due to artificial impedimenta. Evidently the remedy, quite adequate and very simple, is to arrest the diversion of economic rent through these improper channels, and send it where it belongs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Inadequate? Reflect that if you close the avenues to man's sustention, to the opportunities that provide food, clothing—all the things that minister to man's happiness—you have prepared the way for quite a number of human ills. But if you make free these avenues, these opportunities, you have fitted man for the attainment of his developed stature. The indispensable condition of human progress, as Henry George has told us, is "association in equality." This the collection of the rent of land with the consequent freeing of natural opportunities, will secure. Is anything more necessary to start the human race right? Is not the reform adequate for the accomplishment of all and more than is claimed for it? Will it not reach the heart of the trouble—the primary maladjustment from which spring those associated evils that are really only symptoms of the deeper-seated sickness of our civilization?

## The Decline of Great Literature

"BELIEVE me—and I have spent a part of the last ten years in watching some 320 elementary schools—we may prate of democracy, but actually a poor child in England has little more hope than the son of an Athenian slave to be emancipated into that intellectual freedom of which great writings are born."

This from Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. One Athenian and one Roman slave did make great literature, as Sir Arthur could have told us, but these are exceptions. Slavery is not conducive to creative art, and though genius does sometimes spring out of unpromising soil, poverty is scarcely fertile ground for great literature.

Go over the list of great writers in poetry and prose. A few suffered hardships in their youth; a few remained poor to the end, like Poe, or dwelt like Burns in very humble surroundings. Keats, it is true, was pitifully circumstanced. But Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Lowell, Emerson among the poets were removed from the bitter struggle for a mere livelihood; the great novelists, Scott, Dickens, Bulwer, Thackeray, Cooper, Eliot at no time felt the pinch of real poverty.

To revert to the question at the head of this article: Has great literature declined? If it has, there must be a reason for it. But first we must determine if it be true or not.

To have a great literature there must be an audience. The opportunities for culture must be sufficient to create a receptive intelligence, a wide spread taste for things of the imagination. A civilization that spends so much of its energies in the pursuit of wealth spurred on by the fear of falling below their fellows in equality of possessions, cannot hope to call forth the higher messages of the written word. And so our creative literature is at a low ebb.

Does this statement require confirmation when if challenged to cite one great name in the American literature of today we should be obliged to fall back upon Edith Wharton, or possibly Theodore Dreiser, as worthy to survive the slow alembic of the years that separates the alloy from the gold. If we are considering England we would be forced to name Bernard Shaw, but who else? Not Wells, little removed from the host of very clever men like Gilbert Chesterton and Hillaire Belloc. In this country we have a lot of second rate but very admirable essayists like Katherine Fullerton Gerould—though her nose is perpetually turned up—Mencken, with his sneering superficial cleverness, and so the list would run. But never a Charles Lamb, nor a Maccauley, nor a Hazlitt. Smart, very smart these essayists are—with their eternal striving for the astonishing twist or turn of phrase, which while it astounds is seen to be like the murmur of shallow waters. But everywhere the great deeps are dumb.

Some day some one will write a great book on Economic Determinism in the character of our literature, or something like that. Perhaps something on the order of Taine's English Literature—and, *en passant*, with all its faults have we any literary criticism today like the work of the great Frenchman. Or Sainte Beuve, or Matthew Arnold?

And what this work which we have anticipated will prove will be that liberty is the atmosphere in which the spirit of literary and artistic creation thrives best. It will prove that great literature is obedient to the law which Henry George has declared to be the law of human progress: "Association in Equality." For this provides both the leisure and the call for its creation and the audience to welcome the artist.

## Greek Government Appoints Its Official Delegate to Single Tax Conference

THE Greek delegate to the Single Tax Conference at Copenhagen, Mr. Pavlos Giannelia, on his return to his post of duty at Vienna, learned of his official appointment by his government to the Conference. So not only were many nations represented but at least *one government*. Taking this with the tender by the Danish government of the free use of its Parliament buildings for the Conference, we may well regard such official recognition as significant.

## The Henry George Congress at Philadelphia

THE HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION BEGINS  
UNDER SPLENDID AUSPICES

IT was a great Conference that assembled at Philadelphia, September 2, 3 and 4. It was characterized throughout by a dignity and earnestness befitting the occasion. It seems possible now that the disciples of Henry George in this country may be brought together for effective work, and that the Foundation, now organized and chartered under the laws of Pennsylvania, may indeed be a "clearing house" for Single Tax activities.

Differing as many of those present do in their opinions as to methods, it is doubtful whether any differ in their interpretation of the great Message. And where the differing terminology of groups seem to have erected temporary barriers between them, there was for the first time an inclination to bridge them, to seek for points of reconciliation rather than to accentuate differences. There was no need to repeat Emerson's caustic phrase over the squabbles of his fellow abolitionists, "See how these reformers love one another," for there were no squabbles, nothing that could possibly leave any bitterness. Instead, many of those gathered here renewed the old friendships that had been unnecessarily interrupted by differences as to method and recognized for the first time that there is really no difference of aim. Even those who, unconsciously perhaps, have yielded to the temptation to soften or even to attenuate the truth George stood for, may under the new inspiration gather a conviction of the necessity for a bolder emphasis on the fundamental change by which alone civilization may be saved.

And it was this conviction that animated the Congress. Always the applause was greatest that greeted the insistence that what we stand for is a free earth. Mr. Shaffer's assurance at the banquet that there need be no fear on the part of any present of the slightest attempt by the Henry George Foundation to minimize the doctrines, was not the only gratifying utterance of the many speakers during the three days' sessions.

That very efficient and capable young man, Percy R. Williams, secretary of the Foundation and of this Congress, beginning his explanation of the "Pittsburgh Plan" (of which Pittsburgh Single Taxers are not a little proud) said, "I am no mere fiscal reformer," and then proceeded with his very lucid and intelligent analysis of the half rate tax on improvements in that city.

Perhaps the high spots of the Congress were the speech of Charles O'Connor Hennessy on the afternoon of the 2nd, the address of Will Atkinson at the banquet, the talk of Mrs. Ruth White Colton, a plea for the ethical and spiritual values of Henry George's message, at the Educational Building on the Sesqui-Centennial grounds and Mrs. Gaston