

Honoré Daumier

HONORE DAUMIER was a remarkable French artist of the nineteenth century who drew political cartoons for various liberal periodicals. Though regarded as simply a clever caricaturist in his day, he is now recognized to be one of the world's great artists, with a brilliant gift of deep insight into humanity. His keen pictorial comments on the issues of his day have a universal quality—they are also comments on our own day. He seems to have touched eternal verities.

Daumier was deeply concerned with the welfare of the people. He was angered over their oppression, and lashed out against their oppressors. Because he championed the cause of the "common man," he is claimed by the Marxists as an artistic champion of the "class struggle." In truth, however, Daumier comes nearer to Georgeist than to Marxist thought. Were he alive today, it is not unlikely that he would embrace the Georgeist cause. The shortcoming in the Marxist claim is evidenced by his cartoons depicting Commerce as champion of the right of initiative and enterprise in industry. What Daumier did stand for was Democracy and Freedom, Justice and Tolerance.

Honore Daumier was born at Marseilles in 1808. Most of his life was spent in illustration for such journals as *La Silhouette*, *Le Monde Illustré*, *La Caricature*, and *Charivari*. He was once imprisoned for a caricature of



COMMERCE (to Politicians):—Gentlemen, when are you going to finish playing that game? . . . I'm getting tired of paying all the expenses of your party!

"The present method of taxation . . . operates upon energy, and industry, and skill, and thrift, like a fine upon those qualities."

—*Progress and Poverty*.

King Louis Philippe. He died, nearly blind, in 1879.

Mr. Anthony Bertram has written an essay on Daumier, some of which will be worth quoting here:

"Daumier chose to display their (the people's) wrongs, their sufferings, their sorrows. Outside the crowd there are the lawyers, the soldiers, the rulers; them he shows as the cause of wrongs, sufferings, and sorrows. At least, that was how, as a political cartoonist, he saw them; but he gave them such individuality, such intense vitality, that we realize that they also are Tom, Dick and Harry, though for the moment they are playing the part of this or the other abstraction, the law, the army or the ruling class. It is this reality, this individuality of his people, that makes Daumier's exposure of a topical grievance into an exposure of all humanity.

"From the stuffy little offices of radical journals, from prison, from the barricades, from his garret, Daumier looked out on a vast concourse of human beings. . . To the world he was a poor persecuted hack; but his kingdom was all mankind."

The Daumier cartoons reproduced here are from *Charivari*, and they range in date from 1850 to 1870. We present them through the kindness of Mr. Francis Neilson. The cartoons are accompanied with quotations from Henry George, to illustrate the similarity in thought.



COMMERCE (to Politicians):—How do you expect me to make headway if you always hold me back?

"These are the substitution of governmental direction for the play of individual action, and the attempt to secure by restriction what can better be secured by freedom."

—*Progress and Poverty*.



THE PEOPLE JUDGE THE BLOWS.

“Under all forms of government the ultimate power lies with the masses . . . The working-men of the United States may mold to their will legislatures, courts and constitutions. Politicians strive for their favor and political parties bid against one another for their vote.”

—Protection or Free Trade.



THE REIMBURSEMENT OF 45 CENTIMES
NEW TRICK INVENTED BY THE CELEBRATED BERRYER

—See, my friend, I take this 5-franc piece out of this pocket (tax of 45 centimes), and I pass it over to your other pocket (tax on salt) . . . It is then very clear that you're a hundred sous to the advantage. . . *Cri, craque!* . . . The trick is done!



—My field plundered. . . my horse taken. . . my money stolen. . . That's what they call patriotism!

“That, as declared by the French Assembly, public misfortunes and corruptions of government spring from ignorance, neglect or contempt of human rights, may be seen from whatever point we look.”

—Social Problems.



LIBERTY (to War):—Pardon, my dear, let's try out my powers before yours! . . .

“Who is Liberty that we should doubt her; that we should set bounds to her, and say, ‘Thus far shall thou come and no farther!’ Is she not peace? is she not prosperity? is she not progress?”

—The American Republic.