

Land and Freedom

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Comment and Reflection

THE struggle for liberty is long and slow. But it is worth while. "Only in broken gleams and partial light has the sun of Liberty yet beamed among men." We have never enjoyed the full warmth and light of that sun. Not yet has it permeated every corner of our lives. The soul of man still yearns to freely express itself. But let us not depreciate the few gleams that come through. We know they trace their origin to the great, beautiful sun of Liberty. And it must be remembered that those gleams were won with great sacrifice.

IN the midst of tyranny and oppression, and a defiling of the rights of man, the voice of Liberty continues to whisper, "*These others have a right to live, too.*" A hero hearkens, and to the call he dedicates his life. With what agony and blood a few concessions are won is too well known. And with what ease they can be lost again need not be cited. The recent experiences of Spain, China, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Finland have shocked us. We imagined that Ormuzd had triumphed. We underestimated the strength of the powers of darkness. But we must not deceive ourselves. Ahriman *does* win victories, and there are times when Ormuzd, wounded, is compelled to retreat.

THEREFORE, let us not slip into a complacent inertia, satisfied with the few rays that have been won. Let us rather take them as a weapon to continue the struggle. Let us use them to beat back the dark clouds of injustice, so that the full light of Liberty may shine forth! The few gleams that come are a challenge to us. That they are shining at all, means that so much of the dark forces have been dispersed! Knowledge does not come to us all at once. We must constantly struggle for it and keep on winning it. So it may be that our understanding of Liberty has to come slowly. Perhaps it is not something that springs full-armed and perfected like Pallas from the head of Zeus. Rather, it has humble beginnings and grows only with the growth of intelligence, tolerance, and love.

WHEN the English barons forced King John to sign the Magna Charta, that was certainly not the consummation of Liberty. Was it not class interest that prompted them to curb the Plantagenet? Yet, in spite of themselves, they advanced the cause of Liberty. It was a step forward, in that it restored some rights to a group of people who had somehow lost them in the course of history. It was a great achievement for that period.

GEORGE WASHINGTON was essentially aristocratic, as were many of the early statesmen and leaders of our country. At that time the step toward freedom and democracy may have had to be taken in a cautious way. Perhaps a sudden, violent advance causes us to slip and fall rather than make progress. The Russian Revolution is a case in point. We know too that the work of Liberty was not fully accomplished with the work of Abraham Lincoln. But who can deny that his name belongs among those of the heroes of Liberty? Did he not have a vision of equal rights, and did he not strive for a restoration of rights to a greater group of people than before? Universal suffrage did not sweep away all the clouds. But did not another gleam come through?

THE steps toward Liberty in the past have meant the attainment of certain rights for special groups of people. The progress of Liberty has been in the broadening of these attainments to larger and larger groups. True Liberty will be achieved only with the realization of the universal brotherhood of mankind. True Liberty can stop at nothing less. For what is Liberty but the recognition of the rights of *all* the sons of men? Are we ready for such liberty? Would we recognize it if it came thus, full-grown? We wonder. After all, Liberty comes to us only as we are able to comprehend it.

THUS far, we have only appreciated the reflections of the sun of Liberty rather than the sun itself. The toilers for Liberty in the past have striven mostly for political and intellectual freedom. But, slowly, mankind is beginning to realize that economic freedom is the basic form of Liberty. Political, yes, even intellectual

freedom, may be said to derive from economic freedom. But the work of those who toiled for Liberty has not been in vain. The rays of the sun do not penetrate an overcast sky. The clearer and purer the atmosphere, the more radiant is the solar glow. Our forebears in the struggle for Liberty have helped to clear that atmosphere. We, who toil for economic freedom, will find our work easier because of what they did.

"Please, Son—Carry On!"

THE following letter was written by Joseph Dana Miller, in 1934, to a student of the Henry George School of Social Science. Mr. Miller had an abiding faith in Oscar H. Geiger's vision—to spread the truths of political economy and real democracy by educational methods.—Ed.

"Dear ——:

"This is indeed a personal letter.

"This is an appeal from a man who has devoted a half century to the propagation of a religious conviction, to one who has recently acquired a knowledge of this philosophy, and to whom the old man cries out:

"Please, son—carry on!"

"You do not know me, perhaps. I am Joseph Dana Miller, the Editor, for over thirty years, of LAND AND FREEDOM, official organ of the Single Tax Movement in America. During these years I have recorded in the pages of this bi-monthly the activities, ideas, hopes of thousands of men and women who have poured out their life's blood at the altar of economic liberty.

"In all these years no single effort to advance the movement, to increase the number of those familiar with the philosophy, has been nearly as successful as the class method developed by the Henry George School of Social Science. In only two years thousands* of thoroughly-informed converts have been added to the movement, and plans afoot indicate that within less than a decade at least one hundred thousand followers of Henry George will be recorded.

"My one wish is that my life shall be spared until I see that achievement, for from the dynamic force of so many devotees, the political enactment of at least part of our philosophy will be more than a possibility.

"But, even if I am not here, I hope there is some provision in the scheme of things beyond that will permit me to look on while you and others like you carry on the work, to bless you, and to comfort my soul with the thought that the years I carried the torch were not in vain.

"You will, I am sure, carry on.

"Yours sincerely,

"Joseph Dana Miller."

* Today, the number of graduates and students is around 13,200, according to a recent report of the Henry George School of Social Science.

The Economy of Spain

By ROGELIO CASAS CADILLA

IN the fourteenth century, Spain was a free and prosperous country. The arts were cultivated, the profession of letters was protected and many industries such as textiles, steel of Toledo, silks, spices and carpets, were very flourishing. From all countries people came to buy and sell their products. Freedom of thought was respected in all its purity. No one was persecuted for his ideas. Mohammedans had their mosques, Jews their synagogues and Catholics built their cathedrals. The most famous cathedrals of present-day Spain were constructed in that epoch.

The dignity of man and the sacred respect for individual rights had always been the glory and honor of the Spanish people. The citizenship which evolves from individual liberty was a quality of the Spaniard of those glorious times. Kings were treated familiarly and they were denied the right to reign if they lacked the support of moral law. This was the indomitable race of the "Fuero Juzgo"; the Court of Leon was convoked seventy years before the English established their parliament in London in the twelfth century, in the Court of Borja, the predominance of the community or peasantry was recognized and from the time of Alfonso the Third the right and duty of insurrection was proclaimed. In Aragon the mar called "Judge" became superior to the man called "King." The fearful "yes" or "no" of the Justice was upheld before the throne. It was a people who, at birth held Charlemagne in check, and at death repulsed Napoleon.

The intrigues of religion brought into power the daughter of King Henry of Trastramara and the famous battle of Toro gave the power to that lady who, meanwhile, had married Fernando of Aragon. This marriage brought about what is known as "National Unity"—the beginning of the downfall of the Spanish people. The attempt to dominate the whole Peninsula involved them in a struggle over the region in the hands of the Arabs. After sixteen years of bloody warfare the Catholic monarchs emerged victorious. At the end of the war, which was really one of extermination, Queen Isabella granted honors and title to all who had aided her economically and gave them dominion over the towns and lands. The common people who had been happy with their "ejidos" or public system of land ownership, were gradually impoverished. Under their public or municipal system of land ownership they aged were provided for; there was no need to impose taxes upon consumption and there were ample funds for public education. However, when the newly created nobles deprived them of their lands and properties, they lost everything.

Queen Isabella realized the great error she had made in paying for services rendered with lands and properties that were not hers, and she requested, in several royal