

CHARLES EDWARD CROMPTON

DEEPLY WE regret to announce the death of Charles Crompton, which took place on 16th May at his home at Newbie, Annan, Dumfriesshire. His age was 63.

A son of the late Mr Edward Crompton, inventor of the well-known Cochran steam boiler, Charles Crompton was educated at Sedburgh, and subsequently had engineering experience both in the workshops and in the drawing office of the Vulcan Foundry and Engineering Company, and later in the firm of Cochran & Co., Birkenhead. In 1898 when the company transferred their business to Newbie, Annan, he became the secretary; in 1904, on the reconstruction of the company, he was appointed a director, and on the death of Harry Llewelyn Davies in 1923, he was appointed chairman.

He was cousin to the brothers Llewelyn Davies, Crompton and Theodore and Harry, and it was under Harry's influence that he was brought up, as it were, to be the ardent disciple of Henry George that his life's work, outside of business itself, has proved him. It was especially in the Annan and Carlisle area that cousin Harry and he, partners in business, spread their influence and gained their adherents up till the war broke out; and the "Single Taxers of Newbie" were known and applauded far beyond the immediate area of their operations. But already in 1905 Charles Crompton had taken up the cudgels, author of a 40-pp. pamphlet *Am I a Protectionist or a Free Trader?* giving the Single Taxer's exposition of freedom of trade and freedom of production, in answer to the then Chamberlainite demand for "Tariff Reform." In the same year he was in controversy with Dean Kitchin, to whom he wrote an open letter, and the Dean himself admitted that important as education was, still more important was the analysis of the primary cause affecting the opportunities to labour, and what determines the remuneration such labour shall receive. The Dean wished that the letter might have a wider circulation. It could be read now or quoted with profit, with its simple straightforward message, so characteristic of all that Charles Crompton gave out by pen or voice.

For some years before the war he resided in Carlisle, and there at 113 Botchergate he established the busy Land Values Depot and book-shop "open daily 12 to 2 p.m. and 4 to 9.30 p.m.; Saturdays 9 a.m. to 9.30 p.m." Thousands of pamphlets and tens of thousands of leaflets must have issued from that depot during the couple of years it ran, and one of the most popular and most saleable was *The Penny History of England*, by Alderman Wilkins of Derby. The campaign reached its zenith, at the time, at the large and representative Carlisle Conference in November, 1912, addressed by Lord Advocate Alexander Ure, which Charles Crompton helped to organize. On one occasion he stood for a place on the Carlisle City Council. It was his one and only adventure into "politics" in the sense of seeking public office, for, as he often said, he was no politician; but he was certainly a propagandist, impatient at slow progress and seeing "politics" so often not an avenue but a barrier. He would point to the success of the women's campaign for the vote, which he did much to assist, and would ask: "Can we not have such or similar militancy in our campaign for economic justice?" and from time to time he did formulate plans for the purpose.

His activities were occasionally interrupted by illness, sometimes prolonged, and he irked to be up and doing. He had joined the United Committee in 1913, and it was especially in the seven or eight

years succeeding the war that the Committee was indebted for his help both financially and with the example of his zeal. "If we are all of us inspired," he said at a meeting, "by the teachings of the teacher who gave us our philosophy, I think it is up to us and easy for all of us to take a very much larger part in the propaganda work necessary to make it a swinging success. If the people see we are in earnest you may be certain that they will realise that there must be something behind that earnestness." He wanted to know the movement thoroughly and the workers at each centre, and he went on a visiting and speaking campaign that took him not only to Wales, Manchester, Liverpool, Yorkshire, the Midlands, but to many other parts of the country. Over and over again at such meetings and at conferences, when subjects were being chosen for the various speakers to take, his by preference was, "What can we do to advance our objects?" One cannot detail all the events of that busy period but several, and one in particular, stand out. He presided at the National Conference in Edinburgh in 1922, on the eve of the General Election which gave us a Tory, though perhaps not so bad a Government as that which ruled in the name of "Coalition" from 1918 to 1922. After the Conference the leaflet distribution which was planned there was carried out in hundreds of constituencies—aimed at compelling attention to the taxation of land values. He treasured the Chairman's silver bell, with inscription, which was presented to him in token of his services.

Charles Crompton was President of the greatest Conference of all, the "International" at Oxford in 1923, where nearly 30 countries were represented, and where the highest hopes for the future were upheld. There the International Union was born, to be confirmed and made an adult at the equally successful Conference in Copenhagen, where he unfortunately could not attend. But he was a leading spirit at the Edinburgh "International" in 1929, urging and stimulating many new enterprises that would take shape in more education, one of which was the Essay Competition conducted by the Henry George Foundation, which earlier in that year Louis P. Jacobs had founded. He was elected Chairman of the Executive of the International Union, an office he held till 1936, when he felt he had to retire because of inability to travel about as much as heretofore. Health considerations had warned him once more to be careful.

We mourn the loss of a colleague and co-worker, who gave the Henry George cause, as he of all men was entitled to regard that teaching and its promotion, a service that may never be forgotten. The United Committee loses one of its foremost members and the associate of Mr W. R. Lester in the office of the joint treasurership.

The funeral took place in Glasgow on 19th May from the Glasgow Crematorium, and on the 20th May a memorial service was held in St John's Episcopal Church, Annan. To Mrs Crompton and their son Hugh, and to the family circle, we extend our heartfelt sympathy in their bereavement.

It is with special regret that I, his colleague and joint Hon. Treasurer, learn of the death of Charles E. Crompton.

In 1913 Charles Crompton became a member of the United Committee, and in 1921 was induced to associate himself with the treasurership, bringing to its duties and responsibilities a mind which while never losing its high idealism and grasp of principle, was also the practical, critical mind of the man of affairs in close

contact with the worlds of commerce and engineering, in which he held positions of distinction.

During all these years of association and comradeship his peculiar gifts and wide experience were unreservedly placed at the command of the cause in which he wholeheartedly believed and they will sorely be missed by those left behind.

Charles Crompton will be missed not only by his partner in the post left vacant by his death, but by all with whom he came in contact during his long years of association with the movement, and whose respect he won in high degree. The special gifts of a mind, keen, critical and searching, even in times of sickness will long live in their memories and by all he will be mourned as a true and steadfast friend. W. R. LESTER.

"The truth that I have tried to make clear will not find easy acceptance But it will find friends; those who will toil for it; suffer for it; if need be die for it. This is the power of Truth." So runs the epitaph on Henry George's grave, and no words could be more fitting for the preface of a notice such as this in memory of one of George's lifelong disciples.

To the very end Charles Crompton had but one thought; how to get across to the people of the world this great message, the adoption of which would abolish poverty and war for ever and bring justice and economic security to all. The very last message Charles Crompton sent to me a few days before he died bore on one of the many plans we had but recently discussed together for the purpose of intensifying propaganda.

It would not be possible to enumerate the vast work which Charles Crompton did for the cause throughout his life. His support was generous and unfailing and his activities so numerous, his thought for the movement so constant, that it would take volumes of this paper to do full justice to the service which he rendered.

As an engineer and industrialist he had but two aims: one that whatever was produced in the works under his control should be of the highest standard summarized by his motto for the works: "Only the best is good enough for Newbie"; the other that all with whom he worked should share fairly in the results of their efforts and be left free to live their own lives in their own way assured that so far as in him lay justice should be done to all. The thriving and almost unique community now in existence at Annan is a monument to his vision, perseverance and enterprise.

Perhaps the most striking of his many speeches and addresses was that made on 13th February, 1922, to the Midland Land Values League at Birmingham, when he took for his theme "When I am Prime Minister." The best hope that his friends and acquaintances may entertain is that from amongst his many hearers and admirers one day may arise a Prime Minister who will carry through the policy he so lucidly and crisply set forth in that address.

Humbly he could never stand: truth and simplicity he constantly sought. Though his friends suffer what in human terms can only be described as an irreparable loss, we must all be proud to have been privileged to be associated with him for so long, and glad to have shared in the advantage of his inspiration.

R. R. STOKES.

Mrs Charles E. Crompton has received so many letters of kind sympathy from the different leagues and from a great number of individual supporters in the Henry George movement that she would find it difficult to answer each and all. She wishes to express through *Land & Liberty* her gratitude to all her friends and her sincere thanks.

JOSEPH DANA MILLER

THE AMERICAN Henry George movement, and the world movement, has lost a renowned leader in the death of Joseph Dana Miller, a personal loss to very many, which will be deeply felt. Joe Miller, as he was affectionately known by his friends, died at the Fairmount Hospital, Jersey City, after some months illness which had been aggravated by a fall in the streets of New York when he was blown over and injured on one of the stormiest days of January last. He had been making for a meeting of the trustees of the Henry George School of Social Science. He had reached the age of 74.

Wherever the Henry George movement is known, so also is known the *Single Tax Review*, never mind that its name was changed in later years to *Land and Freedom*; and so also Joseph Dana Miller is known. He founded the journal in 1901, which has helped and informed and educated a great host of readers. The tributes paid by correspondents to the value of this work, and their gratitude for it, are on record in issue after issue. Everyone will hope that a successor of equal talent will be found to continue the traditions of the *Review* that have been so ably set and maintained by its late editor. The opening pages for which he in particular was responsible, the "Comment and Reflection," were ever the most attractive and appealing, in their exposition of the Henry George philosophy and its application to whatever economic, social or political matter was in discussion. This is all the more remarkable in view of the high standard of the articles regularly contributed by others.

He was a close friend and associate of Henry George. In 1919 he was the Single-Tax candidate for the president of the Board of Aldermen in New York, and in 1921 he was candidate for mayor. In 1917 he issued the *Single Tax Year-Book*, an invaluable work of reference, with which many authorities collaborated from all over the world, recording the history of the movement, its status and progress in many countries, much descriptive material and many articles theoretical and practical. It was intended to be quinquennial; and perhaps a reason that this enterprise was not carried out is that its function was largely fulfilled by the material made available at the International Conferences in 1923, 1926, 1929 and 1936, the proceedings and publications of which developed the same ground.

Mr Miller was widely known as a writer of poetry, his published books being *Verses from a Vagrant Muse* and *Thirty Years of Verse Making*. Among his many magazine articles and contributions on the subject of Justice in Taxation was his article on Income Tax in the Questions of the Day Series. His literary activities were so long and faithfully devoted to the advancement of the Henry George Teaching, and in the gatherings and the counsels of the movement he filled such a high place, that he will be sadly missed.

Born in New York, he spent 25 years of his life in Jersey City, and then moved to Brooklyn, returning to Jersey City about three years ago. He was unmarried and beside his brother is survived by a niece, Mrs Dorothy E. Griffin. To them we convey our sympathy in their bereavement.

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