

RUPERT EAST

Mayor of Aylesbury



Our hearty congratulations go to Councillor Rupert East, of Aylesbury, who on 9th November was unanimously chosen Mayor of the Borough for the ensuing year. Councillor East has many years of public service to his credit, having been elected member of the (then) Urban District Council of Aylesbury in 1910. Except for a short period in 1928, when he resigned from the Council (being re-elected at a by-election in January this year) his local government administration work

has been continuous, and in its course he has occupied the chairmanship of many committees. In the political life of the town, of which he is now chief citizen and where his business is centred, he has long taken an active part. For 20 years he was hon. secretary of the Mid-Bucks Liberal Association and in that capacity, as well as in his place in the Town Council, he has used many an opportunity to advance the case for the taxation of land values.

It was characteristic of him that, in his address to the Town Council expressing his sense of the honour just conferred, he did not content himself with a review of the progress and future of the Borough (conventional on such occasions), but he worked into his speech his advocacy of the civic reform that was most needed. He said:—

No matter how one might cry for economy, or for the rates to be kept down, the community's insistence on an ever-increasing standard of efficiency increased the total of expenditure. The problem of a local governing body in the past had been to provide necessary public services, not forgetting the roads and so on; but it seemed to him the problem of the future was to discover ways and means of paying for them. He held the view that most of those services—most of which were termed burdensome and sometimes unremunerative—had reflected themselves in the value of Aylesbury's sites. He hardly needed to instance the remarkable increase of rents obtained and obtainable by centrally situated properties in the borough. The revaluation of properties, in his opinion (and probably that was now realized by the occupants), had tended to throw upon them a larger share of the burden, particularly upon those properties which had been very much improved. In other words, it had acted as a heavier fine on improvements.

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Unfortunately, it had still left untouched valuable sites left derelict or under-used, and until public opinion was fully aware of the way in which the present system operated to the disadvantage of those who put their properties to the best use they would not be able to get any change.

Mayor Rupert East is one who knows his *Progress and Poverty* and who for years has been a loyal supporter of *Land & Liberty*. He was present at the three International Conferences in Oxford, Copenhagen and Edinburgh. He has attended hosts of gatherings for promoting the land value policy, so that his circle of personal friends within the movement is very wide indeed.

We are sure our readers will join with us in wishing Rupert East a successful term of office as Mayor of Aylesbury.

A LAY SERMON

By Alexander Mackendrick

"It matters not what bats and owls may think."

(Emerson.)

"Eyes and ears are bad witnesses to barbarian souls."

(Heraclitus.)

The question as to whether vision or reflective intelligence is the more important part of a good man's equipment for his battle with the forces of evil, is one that meets us in many forms. In the texts quoted above the case for each side is stated squarely and succinctly. If it is true that mere thinking avails nothing where the senses do not report accurately upon the facts of the outer world, it is equally true that the knowledge that comes through sight and hearing is worthless until it is rightly interpreted and accurately translated into terms of life by the power of thought. On the metaphysical plane even a partial blindness to the truth of things or a slight obliquity of the inner vision may to that extent invalidate any reflection that may arise; while clear vision may tell a misleading tale if there is even a small defect in the power of logical interpretation. It is thus that a seemingly inevitable bias or over-emphasis in both the intellectualist and the intuitionist modes of interpreting experience has coloured the stream of thought right down through the ages; as may be seen, for example, in Solomon's declaration that "For lack of vision the people perish," and in Hosea's lament that "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

Something is needed to reconcile and bind together these antithetical methods of apprehending the world of experience, and to show them as but the obverse and reverse sides of the faculty of apperception; and the familiar word "Understanding" may perhaps serve the purpose. Recent developments in psychology have demonstrated that the process by which we fully understand anything demands much more than the action of the intellect even at its best, and must engage the entire character of the investigator including the sympathies and the hidden potentialities of the sub-conscious mind; and this new light upon the mystery of our mental make-up comes as a wholesome corrective to the logic-chopping and theory-grinding habits into which some thinkers of former generations have led us. Thoughtful men, however, in all ages have probably been conscious of the impotence on the one hand of pure reason and the inadequacy on the other of mere illumination, as a guide to right conduct or as a means towards "seeing life steadily and seeing it whole." It was probably under pressure of some such feeling that the Psalmist, in a passionate reaching-out for something more trustworthy than either reason or

emotion, exclaimed, "Give me understanding and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart."

In the sphere of Economics we may observe the same need for a coalescence of vision and intelligent reflection—of insight and logic, for the attainment of a true understanding of the social problem. The science of Political Economy, which professes to deal with the relations between men as they meet together at the physical bases of life where livings are earned, has too long been left to the jurisdiction of the logical faculties alone. Only occasionally has the human imagination broken out in rebellion and constructed Utopias or fanciful pictures of communities where the alleged economic laws of the Professors do not hold sway. Such flights of fancy have had little effect other than to confirm the logic-choppers in their allegiance to the Syllogism as the guiding principle in the art of living together. The real value, however, of the gift of visualizing or image-making as an aid or adjunct to the reasoning faculty in the study of sociology, may be seen at its best in the writings of Henry George. We may recall for example, his youthful discussion with a boy friend who accounted for the buoyancy of an iron ship by the fact that it was lined with wood; and his triumphant refutation of that erroneous argument and its replacement by the true theory of flotation, by piling logs (in imagination) into the ships holds and observing (in imagination) that instead of rising higher in the water as the ship should have done had the boy's theory been correct, it sank more deeply. Through all his heroic efforts to "understand" the constant association of Progress with Poverty, he brought his marvellous power of visualization to the assistance of his logical faculties, and this without for a moment allowing his imagination to escape control. He seems to have known instinctively what a recent writer in psychology affirms: "No intuition is true that does not admit of being expanded into a rational sequence of intelligible factors; and no argument is true that does not admit of being condensed into that rapid suggestion which is intuition." Henry George understood as few men have done, the necessity under which we lie of bringing all the parts of our complex nature to bear upon the problems of corporate life, and of using rightly that strange faculty by which, transcending logic for the moment and throwing argument out of doors, we simply *see* the problem in its fundamental simplicity; and its equally simple solution.

The origin of these flashes of insight that constitute "the master-light of all our seeing," may be psychologically inexplicable, but assuredly they form a large part of that kind of wisdom that is indicated by the word "Understanding." It is just when those gleams of light flash across the field of the inner vision and for which wise men are constantly on the watch, that we can realize how fettered our minds have been by the particulars and details and "everydayness" of ordinary life. When Judge McGuire "saw the cat" in the puzzle poster, the various details of the picture that had previously filled his eye, faded into irrelevance and "The Cat" was all in all. Whether he would ever have seen the cat had he not tried to do so on the assurance of others that the cat was really there, who can say? Here lies the eternal mystery of Vision, Insight, Understanding. It comes; or, it does not come. In the words of the Great Apostle, "By Grace are ye saved, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

The conclusion of the matter is, that a right grasp of the social problem, a true understanding of the root-cause of poverty amidst abounding wealth and the necessity for the removal of that cause, cannot be reached by ratiocination alone. Reason must be

reinforced by sympathy, moral energy, refined sensibilities and all the elements that go to make Vision. We must *see* the truth before mere argument can emancipate us from error; which may remind us of Pascal's paradox that "God is that Being whom we must first have found before we start out to search for Him." But the difficulty that the messenger of economic Truth encounters when he attempts to open closed eyes suggests that there is a prior obstacle to the achievement of clear seeing. That obstacle is a *lack of the desire to see clearly*. For it is the desires that determine the direction of the mind's movements. What a man most desires,—that represents the man at his present stage of development. Desire is the *Elan Vitale* or Cosmic Urge that moves the world. The gradual purification or refinement of the desires is what we mean by Evolution—the increasing purpose that runs through the ages. The desire to understand fully that great tragedy of human life—the economic enslavement that holds in bondage the souls of men and women both rich and poor, is one of the latest and most significant refinements of the human spirit; and it is certainly to those in whom this desire has been awakened that there is most likely to come that harmonious functioning together of all parts of the character which will work out towards that greatest of all desiderata, the seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the understanding heart.

ON THE WAY TO AUSTRALIA

Letter from Mr E. J. Craigie

After attending the International Conference in Edinburgh and carrying out a speaking campaign in a number of centres in England, Mr E. J. Craigie sailed home to Australia from London on the 24th September. In a letter posted from Colombo he has given us some interesting impressions of the voyage and of the discussions he has had with fellow passengers. He writes:

"After we leave Colombo I am to speak on the foundation of South Australia and its present economic outlook. When I had a few words to say on a previous occasion my remarks created a sensation and the parson who is in charge of a batch of boys going to Australia vowed I should not speak again during the voyage. I had upset his beautiful castles he had painted regarding the position in Australia. However, a number of the passengers are anxious to hear more about the place, so I speak next week, and hope later to have an opportunity of dealing with all the States of the Australian Commonwealth.

"We have a number of Scouts on board who are returning to Ceylon, and the Commissioner, who is a Professor, is keen on my having an interview with the Associated Press as soon as we reach Colombo. He

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