

## Causerie

By THOMAS N. ASHTON

### BURN THE BOOKS

BY means of the Einstein theory of relativity we comprehend that Plato was a Single Taxer—if Emerson speaks with knowledge—because only Plato was entitled to Omar's compliment to the Koran, when Omar said "Burn the libraries; for their value is in this book."

To equate Einstein, Plato, Henry George, Emerson, Omar and all literature in one sentence taxes our crude capabilities for continuity and clarity of expression. It is the utter simplicity of the theory of relativity, alone, which brings our attempt to a form of relatively clear statement.

All things and thoughts are relative. Having a common origin, they cannot be otherwise.

No matter how greatly justified Omar may have been in his evaluation of the Koran, we are yet to be convinced that it makes more clear the virtue of truth than does "Progress and Poverty." It is one thing to point to a goal; it is equally important to point to the way when helplessness prevails. The Ten Commandments set for us limitations and objectives, mainly from a negative point of view, but leave us to discover the way handicapped as we are by the man-made theory of ability-to-pay taxes. The Ten Commandments might well be reduced to one—"Thou shalt not steal." Too few people know that they are stealing, morally, when they pocket site-values created by public improvements. Too many people have fed from the bottle of "legal" honesty and precedent whereby ground-rents honestly (?) may be pocketed by title-holders to patches of the earth's surface.

If libraries are to be burned, because of sufficient truth and procedure to be found in *one* book, then our old friend in the cultured Commonwealth of Massachusetts had justification for his ultimatum to his clergyman when he said "If I am to choose between the Bible and 'Progress and Poverty' I shall retain 'Progress and Poverty.'" Never has truth been made more clear—never has correct procedure been made more specific—never has been shown a simpler way for making the Ten Commandments immediately workable—than in the pages penned by Henry George. To teach our children the Commandments, whilst teaching them the legal honesty of pocketing site-rents, is to teach them thoughts which nullify each other. When truth and error simultaneously are taught as being identical, then chaos prevails—chaos resulting in the depression of 1929-1939—chaos resulting in WPA'S, AAA's and their allied tri-letter lunacies—chaos resulting in vice, crime and disease among the illiterate victims of smug educators and perimeter politicians enmeshed in the humbug of "legal wisdom."

The Koran is held to be a discipline "in logic, arithmetic, taste, symmetry, poetry, language, rhetoric, ontology, morals or practical wisdom," all of which may be laid waste and destroyed by an iniquitous system of taxation the like of which we now suffer. The same nouns may be applied to many great works, from the Ten Commandments to modern writings, and yet avail no attainments therefrom for the establishment of justice among humans as long as other recognized works teach procedures which nullify the virtues attributed to the Koran or what-all.

No other writing—be it Bible or Platonic or Socratic—has brought to us all the names of virtues ascribed to the Koran *together* with the knowledge of *how* to attain the fruits thereof, except that done by Henry George in the pages of "Progress and Poverty." Therein lies logic unsurpassed in demonstration—therein lies a complete exposé of arithmetic's accuracy—therein lies a "taste" which never makes mockery of culture—therein lies symmetry of observation, analysis and deduction—therein lies the poetry of spirituality—therein lies language which dispels ignorance, avoids confusion and comes to the issue—therein lies rhetoric which stands as a monument to fo'c'sle fraternities, to printing-press pedagogy, to library and book-shop universities; a monument which gives hard-press to professional propriety, elegance and force. Therein lies the ontology of taxation's metaphysicians who currently lay the cause of hard-times at the door of anyone but the taxers of industry and the exploiters of site-values. Therein lies morals or wisdom never more eloquently pleaded at the bar of conscience. Therein lies truth in all its pristine purity.

What more can priest or prophet or professor promulgate?

Plato and the Koran and the Bible have pointed to the star of truth. Henry George has built the highway to its shrine.

### SINGLE TAX . . . OR ELSE . . . !

Single Taxers who have not read Mr. Garet Garrett's two articles in the March 18 and 25 (1939) issues of the *Saturday Evening Post*, should—by all means—do so. The articles present, in a well-written and interesting manner, an illuminating, detailed description of the day's struggle between employer and employee. Where Henry George sufficiently demonstrated, in a few words, the swords-points attitudes between industrialists and hired help as depicting the effect arising from the cause of private appropriation of public wealth plus the public appropriation of private wealth, Mr. Garrett employs the time and space to show in detail and in sequence the pyramiding of chaos between the so-called "capital and labor" factions of society.

While Mr. Garrett's articles forcibly bring home to the