

Charles LeBaron Goeller Recounts His Experience

THERE is a Chinese saying that "A picture is worth a million words," and there is a world of truth in that saying. Experience goes to prove it and for that reason I feel that the best method of presenting a first talk on the philosophy of Henry George is to use an illustrated lecture. Political Economy is a new and strange subject for most people and one cannot be too simple in his explanations, and here pictures take the place of the blackboard in the regular school room and for certain demonstrations in Political Economy a picture or diagram on a blackboard is as important as is a diagram in a class in geometry. A picture remains in the mind long after words are forgotten, so that even a child can understand a picture where words would be meaningless. And our four dozen lantern slides crowd into one hour's talk as much as could ordinarily be put in a dozen hours.

There is considerable reluctance about having a talk on Single Tax presented before the Economics classes in Colleges and High Schools. The class room schedules are crowded with lessons looking forward to a certain examination, and the chosen text book is adhered to no matter what its absurdities may be; as a certain professor said after I had demonstrated that land, in Political Economy, is not wealth, "Our text books teach that land is wealth." And the text book is adhered to no matter what happens. Is not the authority of the College back of the text book? At one University the Dean asked "What school are you from?" He meant, under what college professor had we studied. When informed that we were of the Henry George school, he politely, but firmly directed us to the Dean of the School of Citizenship, who had, he said, more money with which to advertise a lecture.

At another university there are a couple of dozen classes in Economics and they never have an outsider talk to the pupils. (And a student there told us there had never been a mention of Natural Law in his class on Economics.) When we called on the Dean he shut the door to his little private office and started to tell us what he thought about Single Tax, Henry George and Single Taxers in general. He seemed to be dumbfounded that any person with any brains at all should hold to Henry George's theories, and implied that Henry George was a nit-wit, and that Single Taxers were not very high grade morons. We had not gone there for any argument, but for a date to present our argument, so we told him that that was about what we thought of people who could not comprehend the simple doctrines of Henry George. It seems that this professor had studied under Prof. Seligman, of Columbia University, and held that Seligman had refuted the Single Tax idea years ago in his "Essays in Taxation."

At a very small institution the Economics teacher got really angry when we said that we proposed to give a "talk on science." That seemed like a red rag to a bull. When we said that Henry George was the Isaac Newton of Political Economy his indignation knew no bounds. "How can there be anything to Henry George's notions when not one text book in twenty so much as mentions him?" He stalked off to his room and we never saw him again.

At another institution we were treated better and some outdid themselves trying to accommodate us and arranging dates so that certain of their members might be present as well as students and outsiders. A few of these visits were a real pleasure—notably Hartwick Seminary, (Otsego County, N. Y.), Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Vassar College, at which place 200 students are to be assembled, Elmira College, and Upsala College (N. J.).

There is surely a great need for lectures on Political Economy (applied as Single Tax) in the Colleges, since the teachers are compelled to study under Professor Seligman and others like him, in order to get the degree necessary for the teacher's certificate. One prominent teacher with a Doctor's degree was frank enough to admit that he had never read a word of what Henry George wrote, and that all he knew of George or Single Tax was what Prof. Seligman had told his class. The students know nothing about our idea (except if one happened to come from a Single Tax home) and we met one young man, a college graduate who has traveled and studied in Europe who had never heard of Henry George, and, after we had explained something about Single Tax asked, "What is Henry George doing now?" We hesitated to answer that, so he hastened to say, "I neglected to look it up in 'Who's Who.'" And Henry George had shaken the world with "Progress and Poverty" and had been dead 30 years!

At one college a negro boy escorted us to the Bus line to the next town and expressed great interest in our idea, saying that he had become a socialist but would like to investigate our claims for having something vastly better than socialism. Who can dream of the possible effects of that one lecture before that economic class? At the High School at Susquehanna, because the night was stormy and the townspeople did not turn out enough to fill the hall (though all of the economics class was there) we received an invitation to give the same illustrated talk again when more would be done to advertise and fill the hall.

We found that College after College does not have any of the writings of Henry George, and the Schalkenbach Foundation is co-operating with us to place a copy of "Progress and Poverty" in every such institution. Also we have interested several professors enough to have them want to read both "Progress and Poverty" and "The Science of Political Economy." The professors get their teaching degrees (M. A.-Ph. D.) in such institutions as Columbia University, and those founts of knowledge, or rather, of degrees, have been careful, through men like

Seligman to give but little information about Henry George. Therefore the schools throughout the country are teaching what the fountain heads teach them to teach, and only a very few, like Prof. Dewey and Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown, have shown enough initiative thought to examine Henry George on his own merits and pay no attention to the fact that his "alma mater had been the fore-castle and the printing office,"—that he had no academic degrees.

Since in the nature of the case there is small likelihood of our ever talking to the same people again, as the student body of a college is new every four years, we endeavor to be as comprehensive as possible. We try to show three things: First,—What our movement is about; as Henry George put it, ours "is the most important of all questions, the great labor question;" (Speech June 30, 1888.) Second,—The meanings of the terms; Thirdly,—What the sphere of Natural Law is in the distribution of wealth and how what we term Single Tax will raise wages.

We have spoken in, or have definite engagements to speak in about four dozen institutions, so far, not counting small house gatherings where the audiences are very small and we do not care to list them as College lectures. We have for the time being limited our field to the New England states, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, so as to make the carfare expense as small as possible per institution visited. Ohio seems to be a promising field but we are foregoing that for the time being so as to concentrate our efforts.

We do not claim that ours is the only field for sowing the seed of the truth that Henry George so ably expounded, but we do know that it is a practically virgin forest of economic misinformation. It is stated by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company that out of 100 children who enter the 5th grade of Primary school, two graduate from College, and another writer says only one. So, if, each year in the neighborhood of 100,000 students should graduate from our Colleges we have here the group from which in the past have come, "Fifty-five per cent. of our Presidents; Thirty-six per cent. of our Members of Congress; Forty-seven per cent. of the Speakers of the House; Fifty-six per cent. of the Vice-Presidents; Sixty-two per cent. of the Secretaries of the State; Fifty per cent. of the Secretaries of the Treasury and Sixty-nine per cent. of the Justices of the Supreme Court." Men with College Degrees (i. e. this one or two per cent.) form a sort of Fraternal Order which elects from its own members when important positions are to be given out. How important then that this field of the Colleges should be cultivated! Which cultivation should not of course interfere in any way with world-wide evangelization—telling the whole world, rich and poor, high and low—that the "laborer is worthy of his hire"—and telling HOW TO GET IT.

—CHARLES LEBARON GOELLER.

Mr. Goeller's Later Lecture Activities

SINCE the foregoing was written Mr. Goeller has visited Binghamton, N. Y., where he secured a few lecture engagements. Later he spoke at the Endicott First M. E. Church for nearly two hours, part of the time being given to answering questions.

The Binghamton *Press* said: "Mr Goeller has the rare ability to present the Single Tax with a simplicity and clearness that hold the attention and appeal to the intelligence."

On February 9th, Mr. Goeller appeared at Elmira College and secured a notable triumph. "I had the audience more completely with me than ever before," he writes. The Professors at Elmira were distinctly friendly.

On March 6th, Mr. Goeller spoke at Keuka College on Keuka Lake, N. Y. This is a Baptist College for girls. Our lecturer had a fine reception and Prof. (Mrs.) Merson invited him to come again in the Fall.

On Monday, March 2nd, Mr. Goeller spoke at Albright College, Myerstown, Pa. He addressed the assembled chapel in the early morning, then he had a sociology hour in the forenoon, economics an hour in the afternoon, and another hour and a half in the evening. Prof. Weber invited the economics professor to be present, and this gentleman asked Mr. Goeller to give some illustrated talks to his boys the next morning if possible. Prof. Weber also secured Mr. Goeller dates for a Parent Teacher's meeting on Tuesday evening, and at Lebanon Valley College for Wednesday evening. Both colleges expect him to come back on a return tour.

Saturday night Mr. Goeller spoke at Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pa., and Sunday went with Mr. McNair to his church (Episcopal) and spoke to the Bible Class on the Land Laws of Israel.

On Monday Mr. Goeller went to the University of Pittsburgh and spoke to the classes at 10:30. It was Mr. Goeller's intention to leave for dinner with Mr. P. R. Williams, of the Henry George Foundation, but the Professor asked him if he could give the same talk again next hour. In a twinkling they had three classes (125 students) marched to a music hall, and they then asked Mr. Goeller if he would repeat the address after luncheon. This our lecturer did, and that made 175 college people in one day.

Wednesday he went to the Carnegie Polytechnic Institute. He gave an address to one class and the Professor wanted it for the next class, so he gave it twice at the Institute in consecutive hours.

On March 15th Mr. Goeller spoke before the Pittsburgh Henry George Club, his subject being, "How Civilized Man Gets His Living."

On Thursday evening Mr. Goeller appeared before the Scottdale, Pa. Y. M. C. A. at the invitation of Mr.