

Frank Stephens Passes

THE death of Frank Stephens on June 16 takes from us one of the last surviving members of the Old Guard. A leader in the Delaware campaign, a member of the Dover Jail Club where a group of Single Taxers were arrested and imprisoned, one of the old time editors of *Justice*, prominent in the enclavial movement, active in the Committee of 48, present at nearly every one of the Henry George Congresses during successive years, and a devoted friend of Henry George whom he knew personally, his activities were co-extensive with the history of the movement for more than fifty years.

And in those years he was foremost in the war for social justice. A moving orator and personally lovable, he probably had a larger number of friends and admirers than any man in the movement. There were angles to his beliefs and convictions which were occasionally puzzling to his associates, but on the fundamentals he never wavered. He approached the great problem from the ethical angle, and he was a strong individualist and a stickler for freedom. He was, despite his questionings, a tower of strength to the movement for nearly six decades.

It was but a few weeks before his death that he dined on May 27 at the White House by invitation of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt whom he had met during her visit to Arden. There were present at this luncheon only a few but these included Mrs. Louis Howe and John Roosevelt. The subject discussed was homesteads and it is easy to imagine that Frank did not neglect the opportunity to present to the First Lady of the land the broader aspects of the question. Mrs. Roosevelt obtained first-hand information of the Single Tax enclaves where the principles of Henry George are to some extent recognized. Mr. Stephens told us before the occasion of this luncheon how much impressed he was by Mrs. Roosevelt's fine sympathies and her evident willingness to learn of anything that might conduce to social betterment.

Frank Stephens was 75 years of age. His death resulted from a sudden heart attack. He leaves a widow and two sons. He was born at Rahway in 1859 and graduated from Rutgers College. He taught sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia. He was a lecturer for the New York Board of Education, Swarthmore Chautauqua and other organizations. With the late Will Price, who was an architect and a Single Taxer, he established the well-known Single Tax colony at Arden, Del. He associated himself with Fiske Warren in the founding of Single Tax "enclaves" and these two men were warm friends.

In the earlier days of the movement he worked with such well-known Single Taxers as Sam Millikin, Arthur Stephenson, Dr. Solis Cohen, Arthur C. Pleydell, William Ryan, Harold Sudell, and others of the faithful residing

in Philadelphia. He did yeoman work as a member of this group.

Frank Stephens' body was cremated on the afternoon of June 17 according to his wishes.

From *Every Evening* of Wilmington we extract the following:

Saturday night the two sons visited their father at Gilpin's Point. He had not seen them for several weeks and was so overjoyed at their visit that he immediately organized a campfire and invited neighbors.

"The campfire was the same as that we have in Arden," said Donald today. "My father proved the life of the evening. He sang, recited and read Uncle Remus stories to us. He appeared to be in the best of health."

Early yesterday morning Mr. Stephens suffered a heart attack. Shortly before noon he appeared to be out of danger. He assured his sons there was nothing to worry about. The two sons then left by auto for Arden.

Unknown to them the father turned over on his side and closed his eyes in death just as the auto with his two sons left Gilpin's Point.

So died Frank Stephens, one of the many whom Henry George had touched with divine fire. But his work lives after him. Such a life is an inspiration. And his death is a distinct personal loss to many; the work he did and the example of his life and great service will re-act for many years to come.

From Dr. Solomon S. Cohen in a letter just received we quote the following:

We who worked with Frank Stephens, who were taught by him, and who heard him talk, on and off the platform, who were associated with him in the days of Delaware, cannot think of him as dead. His memory is a memory of vitality and vigor, of intense conviction, of earnest presentation. His was a logical philosophy, and at great sacrifice he made his life conform to it. His departure reduces yet further the small number of those who knew and worked with Henry George, and is a distinct loss of strength to the Georgian movement.

Lover of truth and freedom, brother to all mankind, loyal servant of the Idea, faithful friend, we shall miss him greatly in the few days that to us remain.

The following editorial appeared in the *Philadelphia Ledger*:

A well-known sculptor and teacher of art, Frank Stephens died last Sunday at Gilpin, Md. Monuments to his artistic abilities are some of the statues in Philadelphia City Hall. But his name was once more widely identified with the community of Arden, Del., which he founded to prove and practice his faith in the theory of Single Tax, as advocated by Henry George.

It is evidence of his executive abilities and the intensity of his convictions that he was the recognized leader of the Arden experiment for thirty-five years. It could be argued, indeed, that the community would hardly have kept its character so long without the presence of a strong and stubborn personality. Few theories in economics which contradict conventional practice and opinion can stand alone. Somebody must believe in them with abiding faith to perpetuate them against the pressure of the world about them.

There have been numerous experiments in social management and organization, under the tolerance allowed by the American system of government. Not the least interesting is the colony of Arden, now lacking the man who fought for the doctrine of Single Tax both in theory and practice.

Harold Sudell addressed the following letter to the *Philadelphia Ledger*:

On behalf of the Single Taxers of Philadelphia and its vicinity permit me to thank you for your kindly editorial on the passing of Frank Stephens of Arden. A man of brilliant mind, unusual ability and with a most loveable disposition, he gave up almost the whole of a long life to the service of his fellow-men. For half a century his main object was to bring about better social conditions through the adoption of the Henry George philosophy. No effort was too arduous and no sacrifice too great if the Single Tax cause could be helped by it.

He did not live to see the day of its coming but it is good to know that his unselfish work for the benefit of others was not unappreciated by many who knew him even if they did not see eye to eye with him as regards mankind's right to the use of the earth.

It was somewhat of a coincidence that on the day of his cremation the State Senate of Harrisburg should have defeated, by a vote of 32 to 17, the first bill ever before a Pennsylvania Legislature to give a measure of the Single Tax to the City in which Henry George, the Apostle of the Single Tax, was born. However, in view of the general lack of knowledge as to the Single Tax and its workings it is encouraging to know that 17 of our Senators would vote for such a measure. For no work had been done except on the committee which reported the bill favorably. So, if Frank Stephens were still here, he would be encouraged by the result of this vote.

A TRIBUTE FROM GRACE COLBRON

A living flame, smouldering always, then flashing out in bursts of brilliance . . . that was Frank Stephens.

As man . . . each day a new adventure for him. Nothing that had gone before could spoil his zest for each new happening.

As Thinker and Fighter . . . enlisting heart and soul for a dozen reforms but always in final clear realization of what was greatest of all; willing to sacrifice all the others for what he felt was fundamental Truth.

The sort of man to whom no one could remain indifferent. One either liked him whole-heartedly . . . or disliked him vehemently . . . sometimes both at one and the same time. That was Frank Stephens.

As speaker . . . one of the best. Standing at first with eyes half-closed, the rich voice muted, apparently neither caring for, or even aware of, his audience. Then gathering them up in growing fervor, sweeping them away in a torrent of eloquence that held them spellbound, thrilled, shaken. That was Frank Stephens.

Memory brings up one experience of Frank Stephens as speaker.

An actor friend was my guest, a man of intelligence, himself a good speaker with a fine voice which he knew how to use. We sat facing the audience. Frank was at his best that night.

Once I glanced at my friend. He was studying the audience intently. When the applause died away, I turned to get his reaction. It was enthusiastic. "I have never seen anyone, speaker or actor, hold an audience so completely in his power. He drew them up to the heights, then flung them down to the depths, almost in one breath. He played on their emotions as an organist might play on his great keyboard. It was magnificent."

Yes, even to an outsider, that was Frank Stephens. To us his comrades, and to the cause in which all his power was enlisted, his loss goes deep.

FATHER COUGHLIN denounces the tariff as a sales tax operating entirely in favor of big business. Since all taxes on industry hurt the weak more than the strong the good father tells us nothing new, but it is nevertheless encouraging to note this glimmer of light in his tax programme.

On the March With John Lawrence Munroe

FIELD DIRECTOR, THE HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCE

SPEAKING APPOINTMENTS, MAY-JUNE, 1935

(With the approximate attendance and the name of person by whom each appointment was secured.)

Indianapolis, Ind.—Public meeting in Cropsey Auditorium, Public Library; 20; William E. Barker, Chairman; May 31.

Covington, Ky.—Junior Chamber of Commerce; 60; Paul C. Williamson, Pres.; arranged by Charles H. Haase; June 3.

Dayton, O.—Annual Banquet, School of Commerce, Y. M. C. A. Junior College; 25; Dean Alan S. Wilson; June 4.

Cincinnati, O.—Conference, home of Rabbi Michael Aaronsohn, 318 Forest Avenue, 18; June 5.

Niles, O.—Exchange Club; 30; James F. Wick; June 17.

Youngstown, O.—United Labor Congress; 50; John F. Conroy; June 17. Henry George Land Restoration League; 50; W. O. Blase, Pres.; June 20.

Coshocton, O.—Rotary Club; 60; Fred Cantwell; June 18.

Painesville, O.—Public Meeting; 25; H. Bieder; June 26.

FIELD NOTES

Indianapolis, Ind.—A train boy sold Tom L. Johnson the copy of "Social Problems" that was to make him one of the great leaders in the Henry George movement. That train boy is living today in Indianapolis—Frank Brown, now a coffee merchant. Mr. Brown is proud of his convert for what he accomplished. But George J. Lindeman of Indianapolis is proud of another convert for what he is going to accomplish. Mr. Lindeman's convert is youthful O. B. Hanger. Mr. Hanger is active among the Young Republicans, is an able speaker, and is unique and persuasive in his approach to the philosophy of Henry George. He is a recent graduate of law school, and has his own successful insurance business. He is interested in the Henry George School of Social Science and will make an excellent teacher. Among others who will assure the success of Extension Classes in Indianapolis are Mr. William E. Barker, who once introduced Henry George in a campaign in Rhode Island, and his son-in-law, Russell Edwards.

Covington, Ky.—An extension course of the School will be sponsored in the fall by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. There is not a finer nor more wide awake group of young men in the country than is to be found in this organization. On June 10, following a talk by