

Land and Freedom

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Comment and Reflection

THOSE who reflect upon the trend of modern education may well be arrested by this from Everett Dean Martin's "The Meaning of a Liberal Education," page 68:

"In the library of a very up-to-date writer on sociological and economic subjects, I did not find a single book, except a few school texts, written before nineteen hundred." Then he goes on to comment: "Modern writers all seem to desire to express the movement of the day. But it is difficult to see how one's judgment of the present can be very sound, if one has no background of the cultural traditions of the race."

AS there are few works of importance dealing with political economy and social problems written since 1900 we need not be surprised at the neglect of fundamental discussion on these questions and the fact that Henry George is relegated to the top shelf in college and university libraries, or not considered at all. No wonder Nicholas Murray Butler is provoked into saying in his Annual Report for 1924:

"The costly, ineffective, and even demoralizing character of much contemporary school and college work is due to the fact that so many of those who conduct it can neither look back down the road over which mankind has come nor forward along the road over which mankind is moving."

IN his Annual Report for 1926 President Butler again says:

"Today there is a New Philistia. They are the proud discoverers and possessors of a doctrine of behavior which finds nothing to behave and no purpose in behaving. Where they have touched education—and they have touched and are touching it at many points—they are reducing it to a costly pantomime. They are the blind leading the blind, as well as no inconsequential part of the cause of those intellectual, moral, social and political ills which afflict modern man and which greatly multiply the difficulties of carrying forward a constructive and a progressive civilization."

EVERETT DEAN MARTIN in the work just quoted from says on page 89:

"One should learn to hold all one's beliefs with a half-amused lightheartedness. Most minds are loaded down with the seriousness of their convictions. Solemnity in the presence of our eternal verities is awkwardness, and

makes us always a little ridiculous, giving us the appearance of one about to shake hands with the President. Why not enjoy the humor of the situation? Our great truths may all the while be "spoofing" us. It will do no harm to give them a sly wink now and then."

Nothing (not even Single Tax) is to be taken seriously. Also p. 125: "I have heard a young man say with a note of defiance, 'Yes, sir, I'm a Single Taxer and I'm proud of it.' So involved is the ego in our dilemmas that we often require the assistance of a specialist in getting over them."

IS it any wonder that seriously minded men are beginning to distrust our educators and modern systems of education. Writing some time ago in the *New York Times Magazine* Evans Clark says:

"Five or ten years ago undergraduate dissent had a distinctly economic tinge. Radicalism in the colleges was a favorite subject for academic excursions of alarmed investigators, in and out of official position. But today it is not economic and social change that has captured the imagination of the dissentient minority. It is something far more sophisticated, far more worldlywise. Socialism has given place to Menckanism: assertion to negation, political enthusiasm to the religion of militant cynicism. As one experienced radical campaigner in the colleges put it Scott Fitzgerald is more revered than Scott Nearing in undergraduate circles of the intellectual elite. Apparently economic and political radicalism has fled from the flippant milieu of the undergraduates, to the more earnest atmosphere of the theological seminary and the Y. M. C. A."

THE election is over and there is not much to say of it.

The contest was little more important, as Will Rogers has reminded us, in the consideration of any issues that affect the well-being of the people, than the latest base ball game. The Democratic party abandoning its old traditions on the tariff sought to establish its resemblance to the Republican party so that the two might be indistinguishable. It will be hard for it to reverse itself four years from now when such reversal will be necessary. Undoubtedly thousands of free traders and low tariff men were alienated from its support in this election. Norman Thomas, as the candidate of the re-born Socialist party, made a dignified campaign, and on a number of occasions emphasized the taxation of land values, which issue he made his own. As the leader of a new liberal party Mr. Thomas may in the future loom large.