

Land and Freedom

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Comment and Reflection

THOSE who are inclined to regard with complacency, if not altogether with favor, those governmental experiments which lean to socialism are to be reminded of the dangerous road they are treading. For socialism contemplates the abolition of private property. So every one of the halting steps whether they be undertaken by Russia or the Roosevelt administration leading in this general direction, are concessions to the ultimate doctrine that private property must be destroyed.

THIS doctrine has subtle ways of injecting itself. It may manifest itself in social security acts in which private property is to be seized for an ostensibly laudable purpose. Or it may appear in lachrymose mood, though not so intimately connected with the main object in view, and shed a few tears over child labor which nobody really believes in, of course, but is an appeal sure of general approval.

POLITICAL economy is not a science of benevolence. It is not enough to bewail the poverty of the poor, nor can any legislation be found that will be kind to them. It is very fine to feel as Lord Houghton wrote:

"A sense of earnest will
To help the lowly living
And a terrible heart thrill
If you have no power of giving."

That is all very pretty and looks well on Christmas cards. But it does not answer the question as to why the poor are poor and how their poverty can be cured. And the incentive to benevolence typified most successfully in the Rooseveltian personality does not get us anywhere in particular.

THIS theory of benevolence leads us by indirect routes straight to socialism. Such sloppy phrases as "We must put human rights above property rights," is not merely indicative of an underlying fallacy, but is a perfectly meaningless injunction, for property rights are human rights and thoughtless conservatives in their careless acceptance of the fiscal stupidity that taxes should be levied in ac-

cordance with ability to pay lend themselves and such authority as they possess to the extreme of communism.

DR. THOMAS ARNOLD, Master of Rugby, and father of Matthew Arnold, tells us that he rose each morning with the conviction that everything was an unsettled question. This may not be a wholly satisfactory way of looking at life and its problems. But it is infinitely superior to the smug certainty which many modern educators regard economic problems. The only thing that is certain is not the dicta of professional theorists in the field of education, but the laws by which these theories must be tested. Those who find their principles in text books and believe that no further examination is needed are anchored in a dead sea.

THERE are vital truths in political economy. They are not the inventions of professors, nor phases of social planning, but are as immutable as the movements of the stars. Hence the folly of experimentation which does not seek for the natural laws. If, for example, capital flows into the most profitable channels it is not in the power of government to direct it; if it attempts such direction disaster is inevitable. If it is a law that men seek to satisfy their desires with the least exertion, this law must be left free to operate, for to it we owe every invention that lightens toil.

IF it is a law that every tax upon a commodity tends to lessen that commodity, every effort should be made to reduce or abolish all taxes, and if the removal of these tends in turn to increase the value of land going into idle hands, we should not only rid ourselves of taxes but transfer them to the community-produced rent of natural resources. This is to confer on society both a correlative and positive benefit.

IF there is a law of human progress that calls for "association in equality," then it follows that every man-made law that does not conform to this natural law must wreck society. You cannot overlook a social injustice done to the meanest of God's creatures, you cannot discriminate against any social class or racial group and hope that your own class will be immune from its consequences. It is of the nature of injustice to propagate itself through every vein of the body politic, selecting quite indiscriminately its victims for punishment.

HOW important then is it to realize that the laws that govern society are not the inventive machinery of statesmen and politicians but are the eternal principles that, as Hooker says, "have their seat in the bosom of the Almighty." And so there is a sense in which Dr. Arnold was right. The machinations of men are in a state of flux and are forever unsettled. Only the laws remain as the rock upon which beat the winds and waves of shifting conditions.

SPEAKING of "taxation in accordance with ability to pay," was not this a practical maxim with Dick Turpin? "From each according to his ability to each according to his needs" was the practice of this chevalier d'industrie and the group that followed his example. Acting on this principle he closed innumerable transactions on the highway and rode gayly on his way. He was something of a gallant figure but came to an inglorious end. So, too, will governments that imitate him.

The McGlynn Monument

THE greatest supporter of Henry George in his independent candidacy for mayor of the City of New York in 1886, was Father Edward McGlynn, pastor of St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church, one of the largest churches in New York, with over 25,000 parishioners.

When Henry George was to address a political campaign meeting at Chickering Hall, Dr. McGlynn was also invited to address it, but he was warned by the Archbishop that if he did so he would be excommunicated from the church, as the Archbishop held that the teachings of Henry George were in violation of the principles of the Catholic Church. Dr. McGlynn disagreed with the Archbishop and said there was nothing in the teachings of Henry George contrary to the tenets of Catholicism. Father McGlynn made an eloquent address, and was excommunicated. Rev. Dr. R. L. Burtzell, a Catholic priest, and an intimate friend of Dr. McGlynn, took up the defence of Dr. McGlynn with the Vatican at Rome. The Pope sent his Papal ablegate, Monsignor Francis Satolli, to the United States to investigate the case. In December, 1892, after a few years' investigation, he laid the facts before four Catholic professors of the Catholic University of Washington, D. C., and they declared that Dr. McGlynn did not violate the tenets of the Catholic Church by advocating the principles of Henry George. The Pope then restored Dr. McGlynn to the Church.

After Dr. McGlynn died, the Rev. Sylvester Malone, a Single Taxer and a friend of Dr. McGlynn, started to collect a fund to erect a statue of Father McGlynn to be placed in a public square or park in New York City. The funds were collected and the statue made by a prominent sculptor named Edward T. Quinn, but when the

authorities of New York were asked to permit the statue to be put in a public place, they failed to give their consent, and the statue was temporarily placed in Woodlawn, a non-sectarian cemetery in the upper part of Bronx County, N. Y. City, near the Jerome Avenue entrance. The body of Dr. McGlynn is buried in Calvary, a Catholic cemetery.

Many prominent clergymen and laymen eulogized Dr. McGlynn at a public meeting held at the Academy of Music after his death, among them being the Rev. Burtzell, Rev. Mgr. Jos. F. Mooney, V. G., Rev. Stephen S. Wise, Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott, Rev. Dr. Heber T. Newton, William Lloyd Garrison, et al. Poems eulogizing Dr. McGlynn were written by Joseph Dana Miller, Edward Markham, Ernest Crosby, Richard LeGallienne, et al. Rev. Sylvester Malone published the "Life of Dr. McGlynn" in 1918, which is most interesting and instructive. Tom L. Johnson, Joseph Fels, Louis F. Post and a host of other prominent Single Taxers paid glowing tributes to the great priest.

Among a few of the things Dr. Rainsford said is the following: "It is the price men are prepared to pay for the truth that should be the standard by which we honor their memory."

Father McGlynn gave up everything for what he believed to be right. Dr. Wise said, "If the world were made up of Father McGlynns, intolerance, persecution and tyranny would cease to be; toleration, justice and love would rule at last over the earth."

Among the very many thousands of Single Tax expressions Dr. McGlynn publicly made, a few are as follows:

"We have no quarrel with the payment of rent, but we have an eternal war with the payment to the wrong man."

"Our object is to have laws enacted by which the rental values of land shall be taken by the community because they are created by the community and rightfully belong to it."

"The monopoly that is the parent monopoly, the gigantic monopoly, is the monopoly of the natural bounties."

"Where a human being exists there is a brother to be loved."

Now that there seems to be a friendly Board of Estimate, it has been proposed that renewed efforts be made to have the statue placed in a public place. The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, and the Henry George School of Social Science, have been asked to appoint joint committees to obtain permission from the Board of Estimate.

The statue of Father Duffy, who was a Chaplain during the World War, is being erected in Times Square, and as Father McGlynn was a Chaplain during the Civil War, appointed by President Lincoln, then he also should have his statue erected in New York City.