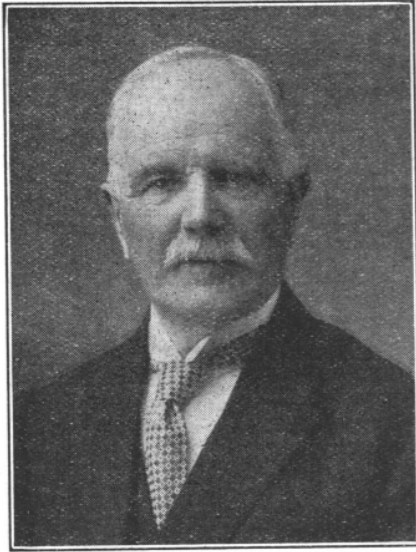


WILLIAM JAMES YOUNG



1860-1926

The movement has lost a pioneer and lifelong supporter in the passing of William James Young, who died at his home in Edinburgh on 24th September after a brief illness and six days before his sixty-sixth birthday. He had been suffering for some months from recurrent heart attacks, and the end came suddenly. His wife and daughter had helped to nurse and comfort him during the last sorrowful hours, but his two sons who are now resident in Berlin and London respectively could only arrive in time to join the mourners. To his family he was deeply attached and there was a loving companionship in all that interested each. The qualities that endeared him to his associates, within his household as well as outside it, will live long in their memory and especially in the circles where he had given of his best, in his own quiet and persistent way, to advance the Henry George cause.

His radical convictions were the development of the struggle he made as a young man to emancipate himself from the narrow Calvinism on which he had been brought up. Joining the ranks of the Rationalists he remained with them intellectually and time and again he took a courageous part in defending the freedom of the individual in matters of conscience. His senses being alive to the meaning of liberty in one of its aspects, the logic of his mind caused him readily to embrace the ideas of economic freedom when first he heard of *Progress and Poverty*. While staying in California, he received the message of Henry George at meetings addressed by William Lloyd Garrison the younger. It was not long before he had read and mastered the book and from that moment he was enrolled for life as a protagonist of its teaching. Still in his twenties he returned to his native town of Edinburgh and settled down in business as a monumental sculptor. His interest in the land question took him actively into politics and he was a well-known figure in Scottish Liberal circles, although to party labels he attached no importance. He was as eager and willing to work through the Labour Party, Trade Unions, Co-operative Guilds and other organizations existing to promote social reforms. But when Scottish Liberalism was, as the late H. W. Massingham said, "synonymous with the taxation of land values," Mr. Young was one of those who did something to make it so. In the summer of 1899 the Edinburgh Taxation of Land Values League

was formed and later he became one of its guiding spirits, acting for many years as the Hon. Treasurer. In 1919 he joined the Board of the United Committee. He never took the platform except at occasional small meetings, but found the best scope for his activities in conversation with a few, in letter writing and the dissemination of literature. He was excelled by few as a circulation agent for the journal of the movement, and was never without some pamphlet or leaflet to back up the appeals he was repeatedly making to candidates, speakers or public men generally, exhorting them to give attention to our principle and policy. His influence and example, his steadfast devotion and profound understanding of the case for land value taxation and free trade all combined to make him an ideal comrade in any campaign or enterprise that the Edinburgh League had in hand. The writer has happy recollections of the man in these activities. Besides, there was the charm of his dry humour and his sound judgment which could become stern at times, for he had no patience with timid counsels. On one occasion the crisis of the war threatened to shatter our hopes of holding a large public meeting that had been called. There was talk of cancellation and he made an angry protest. "Come with me," he said, "to the end of the street and I will show you reasons why this meeting we have arranged must take place. Come and see the ground lying waste that the proprietor despite this crisis obstinately refuses to put to any use nor will he allow anyone to have it for allotments or any purpose. Come and see the awful conditions in the Edinburgh slums while you hesitate to preach the remedy now." He insisted on telegrams being sent to all concerned, and a brilliant meeting took place. That was in March, 1918.

So he taught and persuaded and admonished, and everyone he approached, whether or not his opinions were acceptable, had for him the highest regard. He and Mrs. Young were delighted to be present at the International Conference in Copenhagen and their many friends who accompanied them there were glad of that reunion. He was designated a member of the provisional committee of the International Union. He will be sorely missed by his colleagues and co-workers in the Edinburgh League as by many others who had occasion to consult him on the affairs of the movement.

He was a student all his life, but study with him was no mere diversion. His fund of knowledge and his wide scholarship, especially in the realm of political economy, were to him mental weapons that he used with all the strength that was in him in the battle for social justice. He was laid to rest in the Portobello Cemetery and the company of his relatives and friends included members of the Edinburgh League and Mr. Wm. Reid and the writer, representing the Scottish League and the United Committee. While we mourn his loss we have consolation in the legacy he leaves of service, honour and love of truth. To his widow and his children we extend our heartfelt condolences.

A. W. M.

An area of 43 acres of land at Grove Park was purchased less than three years ago for £3,600. To-day it was required by the Lewisham Council for a housing scheme, and the owner was demanding £11,000.—*Star (London)*, 17th July.

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