

From an Amateur Journalist of the Past

MY acquaintance with Joseph Dana Miller dates back to 1878. He had begun the publication of *The Argosy* and soon rose to eminence in the little world of amateur journalism, as an editor, essayist and critic, but more particularly as a poet. In the exercise of that precious talent he soon outstripped all competitors and was unanimously elected Poet Laureate of the National Amateur Press Association, to which honor was added that of the Essay-Laureateship. His lyrical talent grew with the years and his poems soon found their way into professional publications and anthologies. Surveying the field of amateur journalism for the past seventy-five years, it may truly be said that he had no rival. His range rose from light "society" verse to the majestic tributes to Abraham Lincoln and William McKinley.

I had the good fortune to become his neighbor in the early eighties and found him deep in Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill and more especially in Henry George, the dissemination of whose philosophy became his life work.

He was one of the founders of "The Fossils," a unique organization which perpetuates the friendships formed in boyhood, and of "The Fossil Fellowship," a smaller and more intimate group, which meets semi-monthly for dinner and reminiscence. Here he relaxed from his strenuous life-work and was a boy again.

I treasure a presentation copy of his "Thirty Years of Verse Making," on the fly-leaf of which he wrote, "To the most loyal of friends and truest of gentlemen." Let me use these same words in describing him.

CHARLES C. HEUMAN.

Some Thoughts of Joseph Dana Miller

BY JAMES F. MORTON

THE loss of Joseph Dana Miller is so staggering a blow to all of us who have accepted the gospel according to Henry George as our unchallengeable guide through the mazes of economic and political problems, that we have not had time to catch our breath; and a careful appraisal of all the attributes of this peerless leader and many sided veteran in human service must await a later time, when many threads of his career can be gradually drawn together, with a thoughtful study of their relative significance. The utmost that can be expected from any of us at the present time is an inadequate expression of our sense of loss and such personal

tribute as we can express as the result of our first reaction.

I cannot write impersonally of Mr. Miller, or rather of the "Joe" Miller whom his friends and comrades were privileged to know. Despite the clarity of his vision and his masterly powers of intellectual analysis, it is always as a vital human being that I am compelled to think of him. He was profoundly human, with intense feelings and sympathies, and, although a master-logician, was as remote from being a "thinking-machine" as can well be conceived. It was no ice water that ran in his veins, whether in his inspiring vision of the ideals of freedom which he did so much to bring closer to actuality, his tremendous moral indignation against all forms of injustice or oppression, or his warm affection for his friends.

My relations with him extend back over a period of fifty years; and my associations with him have been extremely close in a number of different fields. We had been intimates for some score or more of years before, some thirty years ago, after long wanderings in many paths of social and economic inquiry, my eyes were at long last opened to the wonderful simplicity of the giant truth revealed by Henry George, and already for many years clearly visioned by the comrade with whom I now entered upon a new period of joint relations in common service to the cause of land freedom. We were affiliated in amateur journalism, an agency of self-expression by young writers, who published little papers without thought of profit, for pleasure and self-improvement. From this activity, many have graduated into the fields of journalism and literature; and a number have won distinction. Mr. Miller was one of the shining lights of this unique institution, and learned from it many of the lessons which guided him to later success in his chosen field. Besides being a master of exposition and discussion, he was a poet of no mean ability; and a volume of his collected poems, which was given to the public a few years ago, met with high recognition among the appreciative. Somewhat later, we were associated with the development of *The Fossils*, a body formed to perpetuate the memories and lessons of amateur journalism among its graduates of ripened years; and his interest in this movement continued among his foremost activities to the day of his death. In the field of general literature, to which from time to time he made notable contributions, we likewise had much in common, our community of interest ranging from the revival of interest in old classics and the combatting of the Baconian theory of the authorship of Shakespeare's plays to the latest phases of our time. In the severe task of warfare against the meanness of race prejudice we were also joint-laborers.

To the readers of *LAND AND FREEDOM*, Mr. Miller is best known for his matchless labors in the *Single Tax*

movement. These will undoubtedly be dealt with at length by those most competent to do so. But to him, as so profoundly to Henry George himself, the Single Tax was not an end in itself, but the mode of applying a vast and universal principle in the economic field. His lucid mind, never sidetracked by appearances, penetrated to George's prophetic vision of the whole area of democracy and liberty. It was unthinkable to him that freedom and justice should be applicable within a limited range, and not in every sphere of human existence. The value of a truth may be measured by its universality. When, at the funeral of Mr. Miller, our beloved Frederic Leuchter read the majestic passages from the last chapter of "Progress and Poverty," the hearts of all of us who listened were thrilled anew, as we were reminded of the prophetic vision which moved onward and upward from the discovery of the basic means of solving the problem of involuntary poverty in the midst of advancing wealth, to the sublime realization of the moral grandeur of the universe. For so any glimpse at one aspect of reality can never be limited to itself alone, but must proceed, link by link, until the chain is found which binds together all the realities of the universe in one supreme law under guidance which can never fail. Thus each laborer for the truth is in the end at one with the central soul of things. Our companion and leader, so long our guide and inspirer through his presence, has passed from our present ken, but not from our hearts nor from the reality to which his life bore unceasing witness. He is, by many a token, ours more fully and permanently than ever. Wherever the high spirit which is his may find its new field of action, it cannot be that any of us, who have known him and with him have known the truth to which he bore witness, should faint or fail in the continuing struggle. Like unto him, we also may all of us pass from this sphere of being before the ultimate day of economic justice shall dawn on earth; but it will be our glory to have held our faith and continued our labors to the end, and to have borne our part in preparing the foundation-stones for the temple of truth and freedom, toward which Henry George has pointed the way, and for the creation of which already a noble fellowship, no longer visible to the eye of flesh, have devoted themselves even unto the death. And as we hold fast the memory of this latest of our dear and honored comrades in the noblest crusade on earth, so in the coming day of achievement a place of high renown will be reserved for the gallant spirit known to us and to thousands of men and women as Joseph Dana Miller.

From Francis Neilson

[AM deeply grieved to hear of the death of Joseph Dana Miller, and I am very sorry indeed I could not see him before he passed away. He was a good friend. Please present my deep condolences to his relatives.

How I Knew Joseph Dana Miller

By GRACE ISABEL COLBRON

AS Comrade in the Faith, co-worker for Single Tax, naturally. But mainly as editor, as amiable and understanding editor.

The position of an editor for whom professional writers are expected to work for nothing is not an easy one. I have often wondered whether the comrades who were not writers by profession really understood just how difficult Joseph Miller's position was. And how well he carried it off.

Of course, we professionals who contributed, for no monetary returns, to his magazine, were all working, as he himself was, for the Cause in which we believed. And we realized, as perhaps the laity could not, how much Joseph Miller was giving of himself and his ability, for small recompense. He had literary talent which he might have sold, elsewhere, for greater money return. Which is why we liked to work for him, for we felt he understood, because he also knew what it was to work for nothing because of one's belief.

And it was a pleasure to work for his magazine, for he kept up its standard of literary excellence, never forgetting that standard in his devotion to the Cause for which his magazine stood. The standard never relaxed during the many years when the magazine was first known as *The Single Tax Review* and its later incarnation as LAND AND FREEDOM. The magazine stood for no particular line of Single Tax work. Its aim was to furnish an accurate chronicle of all phases of the work for Henry George's doctrines, never forgetting the ethical background of deep understanding of fundamental principles while keeping its readers in touch with activities all along the line.

It formed an excellent, valuable and necessary companion to magazines like *The Public*, for many years so valiant a fighter for justice and liberty, so actively in touch with all effort along the line of work for fundamental economics.

The *Public* was actively in the fight, the *Single Tax Review* chronicled and preserved the record of what was done. The two publications together were, during many years, indispensable to all of us who were in the thick of the fight of those active years, or studied it from the side-lines. And yet, of the two, valuable as was the *Public*, it was Joseph Miller's magazine that one kept, as a record of what happened, a record of the things worth while.

I wrote for both, and enjoyed it. The more active "hard-fisted" (as one might call it) participation of the *Public*, and the calm philosophical understanding demanded for the *Single Tax Review* kept us in balance.

Joseph Miller's comments were absolutely up-to-date