

## A Great Georgist

Joseph Fels makes inordinate demands upon his biographer. His were years of ceaseless striving and perpetual activity. Yet, out of the varied threads of these crowded years, Mary Fels has constructed an extremely orderly and well-proportioned book. (*The Life of Joseph Fels*. By

Mary Fels. Doubleday, Doran and Co. \$1.50.)

The portrait is that of a brilliant, lovable and well-meaning man. "His sympathy was so big he took the world in his arms." He deplored charity, but for the destruction of poverty he worked tirelessly, and his generosity was the manna which nourished the Georgist movement in its earliest years.

We read of his childhood below the Mason-Dixon line, of his meteoric success as a manufacturer, and, later of his life in London where the whole motley texture of English social life was spread before him.

The first English Farm Colonies for the support of the poor were his offspring, and societies for the cultivation of vacant land, which fed thousands in England and in the United States, were the product of his imagination. He always sought to associate the people with the land, and the land with the people.

It must be admitted, and Mrs. Fels freely recognizes in her book, that not all of Joseph's efforts were successful. Some availed him nothing, and less than nothing, because they merely entrenched the land speculator more firmly in the position of affluence and influence he has traditionally enjoyed.

The hebetude of the British government was a constant thorn in the side of Joseph Fels. He fought it with every weapon at his command. He spoke wherever there were ears to listen, and in letters to the press he aired his views in caustic phrases.

The rehabilitation of the Jews in Palestine was a crusade of his later years. He envisioned the people of his race with a cultural center of their own, and he firmly believed that in this new Zion they would attempt, and eventually achieve, social justice. Since his death, Mrs. Fels has carried on this phase of her husband's work. Of her visit to the Holy Land in 1921 she speaks in glowing terms, and the inspiration it afforded her she describes as "deep and still abiding."

The Land Song was Joseph Fels' anthem. Many of his sixty years were devoted to freeing the earth for all men. He died in 1914, as he had lived; with hope still bright within him. Not alone in Georgist annals is he well recorded. He was, indeed, "an exceptionally generous and democratic character, a rare man of good will." —V. G. PETERSON