

Henry Bool

HENRY BOOL died at his old boyhood home in the little village of Montecute, Somerset, England, on March 27. Although inclined to shrink from any publicity regarding his work to promote social justice, he was widely known in this country and in England among certain groups interested in reform. I had the pleasure of his friendship for many years when he lived at Ithaca, N. Y., the home of Cornell University. For some time he was one of Ithaca's most prosperous merchants.

I first remember him, when I was a boy living in the village of Ludlowville, ten miles from Ithaca. My father was a Presbyterian minister. Mr. Bool called at our house to see if we had any pictures which we wanted framed. He traveled on foot from door to door, lugging with him quantities of specimen mouldings. Whether he took any orders or not from our house I cannot say, but in a discussion which he had with my father he left in my mind some ideas as to man's inhumanity to man which have never been forgotten.

At that time he had a small shop, over Miss Ackley's news room on North Aurora street in Ithaca, where he executed his orders for picture framing with his own hands. From this small beginning the business grew into an art store, then a furniture store, and finally into a large house-furnishing establishment occupying one of the most prominent stores in the city. Later, he also established one of the first stores in the city for the sale of flowers and plants. He bought a farm on East Hill and there erected extensive greenhouses.

And then one day he woke up to a realization of the uselessness and folly of spending any more of his time at the money-making game. As rapidly as possible he sold his business property and gave his time to the books and magazines which he loved and to his ambition to promote saner living on the part of mankind.

I well remember how in 1886 he was intensely interested in Henry George's campaign for mayor in New York City. But his aversion for politics prevented him from giving a hearty approval to the methods then employed by the Single Taxers. Chapter IX of Herbert Spencer's "Social Statics" seemed to him the best statement of what he called the doctrine, "that all mankind have equal right to the use of the earth." Mr. Bool's interest in land re-

form was shown by a gift of \$1,000 to help along Luke North's fight for "Great Adventure" in California.

Mr. Bool was deeply interested in the career of Governor Altgeld, of Illinois. When the Chicago Anarchists were tried, convicted and hung, Mr. Bool was a subscriber to *Liberty*, published by Benjamin F. Tucker. *Liberty* was one of the comparatively few American publications which protested against this illustration of "truth forever on the scaffold." Mr. Bool from time to time extended liberal assistance to Mr. Tucker in his work. Horace Traubel was another publisher in whom Mr. Bool was greatly interested.

I remember how deeply Mr. Bool was interested in Oscar Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol" and "The Soul of Man under Socialism," in Walt Whitman's poems, in all Thoreau's works, in the writings of Rousseau, in Thomas Paine, Henry D. Lloyd, Kropotkin, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Elbert Hubbard, Emma Goldman, John Galsworthy, Ernest Howard Crosby (and his Whim), Edward Bellamy, Max Eastman, Nietzsche, William Morris, and Mark Twain. The foregoing is only a fragmentary list but shows the authors he loved best.

After disposing of his business interests in Ithaca, Mr. Bool spent a year or two in Florida and then returned to England. At Montecute he was successful in getting enough land condemned to put up eight modern cottages for working people which were rented for a nominal price. He also built at Montecute a three-family apartment, one of which he occupied until the time of his death, his niece Miss Mary Bool, keeping house for him. I believe he was about 75 years of age when he died.

He was ill only ten days with bronchial pneumonia. His body was cremated according to his wishes.

Mr. Bool was warm-hearted, impetuous, generous, prompt to make decisions. He loved his fellow-men and he spent much money and a large portion of his life in efforts to promote human freedom, and the happiness that flows from it.

Madison, Wisconsin.

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