

## THE ARDEN ENCLAVE

Address by Frank Stephens (Arden, Del., U.S.A.)

(At the Oxford International Conference on 18th August)

I gladly avail myself of your kind invitation to speak, in connection with Mr. Fiske Warren's address on Enclaves, of the Beloved Village, Arden—of how it came to be, of what it is and why it came to be. But before telling of that new little town let me speak a word of farewell to this ancient and great city which has welcomed us so generously. We know now what our Hawthorne meant when writing of England as "our old home," he said of Oxford, "It is a despair to have seen such a place and ever to leave it." We know what William Morris, who has been the inspiration of our craft-work at Arden, meant—"There are many places in England where a man can get as good book learning as at Oxford, but no other where he will receive the education that the loveliness of the grey city used to give us."

As to how Arden came to be,—in the practice of the Art for which I was trained, sculpture, I met a gifted and famous Architect, Will Price, one of the wisest and finest of men, and had the good fortune to convert him to the religion of Henry George. We were both successful, speaking after the manner of men, in the practice of our arts, and both bitterly disappointed that the more success made that practice possible the further we were from it, being merely employers of more and more people to do what we wanted to do ourselves. We had learned Morris' truth that nothing can be done for Art till we have bridged the terrible gulf between the rich and the poor. We were so disgusted with civilization that we determined then and there to go out into the open and make a better one in which the land theory of Henry George should make the social basis for the industrial theory of Kropotkin and the art theory of William Morris. So my wife and I searched out in Northern Delaware an abandoned farm containing about 162 acres of rolling hill country, like that of Warwickshire, beautiful woodlands and the ugliest house in the United States. There the village was founded, and there my son and I sat for seven or eight years trying to coax in the farm labourers of the countryside to take the land on perpetual leases, for which was to be paid the full economic rent, reassessed yearly, from which land value tax we, as trustees holding the land as the communal property of all who should live there, would pay all taxes levied on the people by state, county and hundred, turning the balance of the land rent over to the Town Meeting to be spent for communal improvements and upkeep. All the land has been taken up there for years past, and when by Mr. Warren's help we opened up an adjoining tract, Ardentown, last winter, 70 of its 115 plots were applied for in the first ten days.

Briefly stated, our claims for the village are:—

That it has lived 23 years, which is longer than most "nut colonies," as modern Utopias are irreverently called, and without change of the lines on which it was begun;

That it has a land system which recognizes the common right of all to the use of the earth;

That it has a tax system which does not penalize industry, business or thrift, and does not give premiums for land monopoly and speculation;

That it has a special system of land value assessment unsurpassed in the world;

That it has had full woman suffrage from its foundation and, until the system was killed by State Socialists, childhood suffrage;

That it is the first community in the United States to elect its officials by Proportional Representation;

That it is the first community in the United States to establish the Raiffeisen Credit Union, by which we have lent over \$52,000 in the last twelve years on the notes of borrowers endorsed by two neighbours, without other collateral, and have never lost a dollar by default;

That it has never issued bonds or granted an exclusive privilege or monopoly;

That it is the first community in recorded history to lay down a definite principle as to the functions of government and the rights of individuals as against the government, replacing the old system of determining rights by counting votes by a system under which the government is allowed to do nothing which individuals can do without the power of government.

It has been said by the PHILADELPHIA BULLETIN that the whole spirit of the colony is one of good-fellowship, mutual helpfulness and liberality in speech and action. It has been said recently by the WILMINGTON STAR that this little village of less than 300 people has become the artistic and cultural centre of the State. It is also a centre for the study of the international language, Esperanto.

But its greatest claim to the consideration of the followers of Henry George is that Arden tries to stress as the great argument for the establishment of the Single Tax, not alone the greater wages of labour or the greater profits of business, but the opportunity to develop in simplicity, freedom and beauty that artist soul which is in every one only waiting its deliverance in that day of which it has been written:—

"Here is fulfilled each wish that soared and sought  
Beyond the bounds of thought,—  
And hero hearts by too frail flesh forsworn  
Shall here forget to mourn."

## THE TARIFF TAX CURSE

In an excellent and searching review of the Trade and Customs Returns of Australia, 1921-22, THE STANDARD (Sydney, N.S.W.) for August reveals to the man in the street, no less than to the student of politics, the exactions made on the consumer by the protected industries of the Dominions. We can only find space for a brief summary of the article, but it ought to be reproduced by the publicity department of the Cobden Club, or the Free Trade Union.

"The net customs revenue for 1921-22 was £17,329,667, compared with £21,730,581 in the previous year—a reduction of £4,400,914. There are also certain Excise taxes upon intoxicants, tobacco and starch; the net revenue for the year, after allowing for refunds, amounting to £759,199, was £10,301,284. Thus the net total Customs and Excise taxes received by the Commonwealth for the year was £27,630,951.

"But what does it cost the consumer? It is impossible to say. All that we can do is to make an estimate. Here are some of the items:—(1) The cost of a very expensive staff of officials, together with costly buildings in order to carry on the tariff tax robbery. (2) The system is so complicated that an army of officials have to be employed by importing firms to watch their interests. (3) Loss of time and expense to importers incidental to the working of the system. (4) Percentage added on account of the tax and passed on to the consumer. Tariff taxes must be paid in cash; goods are often bought on credit. The taxes increase the capital required to carry on business, upon which a return is necessary. (5) Makers of local goods get higher prices because of the tariff. This is the most serious item, and enormously increases prices. Its effect is worse than the taxes upon imported goods. How much do all these considerations add to the cost of living? Probably three or four times as much as the customs taxes. The evils of a tariff tend to accumulate. The longer it is in existence the worse it becomes. There can be no real compromise with respect to the tariff. It should be completely swept away. It is an economic cancer afflicting the body politic. It is a flagrant violation of the moral law. It is a social plague that curses humanity. It is idle to talk about seriously reducing the cost of living without drastic action with respect to the tariff upas tree."