
PRESS OPINIONS

Tom L. Johnson's Friends.

The Commoner (W. J. Bryan), March 31.—It should afford ex-Mayor Tom L. Johnson some comfort to know that a host of friends are his companions in thought and sympathy as he struggles with the serious disease that confines him to his home. They read the papers each morning for words of encouragement and pray that his life may be spared many years to continue the noble work which has given him so conspicuous a place among his fellows.

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First Wards and First Wards.

The Chicago Tribune (Rep.), March 30.—“We are free to admit that we'd like to make St. Louis county as law abiding a district as the First ward.” —St. Louis Republic. From which, dear children, we learn that there is a difference in First wards.

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Plutocracy's Gardens of Disease.

San Francisco Star (dem. Dem.), March 18.—“Clothing and goods sold across mahogany counters in Fifth avenue stores may come from any of the twelve thousand licensed tenements in the disease infected slums,” says Harper's Weekly; and following this text is description of the places that should appal Fifth avenue and all the avenues it stands for. So we see Society in its most exclusive quarters is never absolutely safe. Some poor diseased products of existing conditions may poison the air with their infected breath when and where you least expect it. There is but one way to safety—abolish “the slums.”

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Attitude of Foreign Countries Towards Chinese Constitutionalism.

Peking Daily News, February 10.—The Kung-lun Daily News discusses editorially the attitude of foreign countries towards our constitutional movement. England being the pioneer of constitutional monarchy, we have therefore much to learn from her. Her attitude will probably be that of a teacher to his pupil. America having no territorial aggrandizement in the Far East, will, no doubt, regard any reform in China with a friendly spirit. Though Russia, France and Germany have a constitutional form of government, they are open to the constant attack of socialists. Their attitude towards democracy in China will therefore be partly in sympathy with the Central Government on the one hand, and partly with the Chinese people on the other. As to Japan, however, her ulterior object in the Asiatic continent is a matter of common knowledge; and any improvement in the political, social and economic conditions of China will not be beneficial to her ambition. It is no wonder then, not only that we receive no sympathy from that quarter in our struggle for reform, but that we are the object of sarcasm, adverse criticism, abuses, malicious misrepresentations by the Japanese official circles and the Press.

RELATED THINGS

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A MAN IS PASSING.*

A Man is passing. Hail him, you
Who realize him staunch and strong and true.
He found us dollar-bound and party-blind;
He leaves a City with a Civic Mind,
Choosing her conduct with a conscious care,
Selecting one man here, another there
And scorning labels. Craft and Graft and Greed
Ran rampant in our halls and few took heed.
The Public Service and the Public Rights
Were bloody bones for wolf and jackal fights.
Now, even the Corporate Monster licks the hand
Where once he snarled his insolent demand.
Who tamed it? Answer as you will,
But truth is truth and his the credit still.

A Man is passing. Flout him, you
Who would not understand and never knew.
Tranquil in triumph, in defeat the same,
He never asked your praise nor shirked your blame.
For he, as Captain of the Common Good,
Has earned the right to be misunderstood.
Behold! he raised his hand against his class;
Aye, he forsook the Few and served the Mass.
Year upon year he bore the battle's brunt
And so, the hiss, the cackle and the grunt!
He found us, striving each his selfish part.
He leaves a City with a Civic Heart,
Which gives the fortune-fallen a new birth
And reunites him with his Mother Earth,
Which seeks to look beyond the broken law
To find the broken life, and mend its flaw.

A Man is passing. Nay, no demi-god,
But a plain man, close to the common sod
Whence springs the grass of our humanity. Strong
Is he, but human, therefore sometimes wrong,
Sometimes impatient of the slower throng,
Sometimes unmindful of the formal thong,
But ever with his feet set towards the height
To plant the banner of the Common Right;
And ever with his eye fixed on the goal,
The Vision of a City with a Soul.

And is he fallen? Aye, but mark him well,
He ever rises further than he fell.
A Man is passing. I salute him, then,
In these few words. He served his fellow-men
And he is passing. But he comes again.

EDMUND VANCE COOKE.

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TOM L. JOHNSON.

Editorial in Wm. Marion Reedy's Mirror (St. Louis)
for March 23, 1911.

As the paper goes to press the dispatches say that Tom L. Johnson of Cleveland is dying. His

*This poem, which first appeared in The Public of January 7, 1910, at the close of Tom L. Johnson's last term as Mayor of the city of Cleveland, was read by Mr. Cooke at the banquet given to Mr. Johnson in New York on May 30, 1910, and was republished in The Public of June 3, 1910.

was a life well lived. He achieved success in a material way and then there came to him a spiritual gleam from the great work of Henry George. Thenceforth all this man's abilities were devoted to the people. His sole effort was to the end of untaxing labor, of making men economically free. To that effort he brought a vast energy, a great deal of good humor and much genuine brotherly love. He bore patiently misrepresentation of his motives and all kinds of opprobrium. His patience was as fine as his courage. When his fortune was swept away after his four terms as Mayor of Cleveland, in which he had fought for his idea of a municipally owned three-cent-fare street railway, he accepted his misfortune with excellent grace, and did not quit. He was too far ahead of his time and his town in that one thing, but on foundations which he laid, his fellow-townsmen of the future will surely build to the realization of his dream. If he failed in his street railway project he did not fail in other things. He made Cleveland a model city and by this I do not mean a puritanic city. He made it a beautiful city. He made it, as to taxation, a juster city than any other in the land. He made playgrounds for the little children. He planned a police system that made the police protectors of people and property rather than persecutors of the unfortunate and makers of criminals. He stood for humane penology and for equality of opportunity. He fought all forms of privilege as the best means of minimizing poverty and facilitating progress. When his private business went to smash through his devotion to public affairs, the public came to see the cruelty of the accusation that his reforming activities were selfishly designed. When he was finally beaten for Mayor of Cleveland then truly did Clevelanders begin to see him in his true proportions, and they loved him with a wealth of feeling which more than repaid him in the last few years for all his losses.

He was the most conspicuous American whose career was actuated and motivated by the gospel of Henry George, the noblest example, after George himself, of the spiritual force inhering in what appears at the first blush to be a materialistic philosophy. The country laughed ironically when Johnson, the steel magnate, voted in Congress against the tariff on steel, but it ceased to laugh when later it was shown that the same altruism of principle governed all his actions. He gave his fortune and his life to the cause of freedom and equality. The law of privilege proved too strong a mesh for him wholly to break through, but though he did not gain what he sought in the way of a demonstration of his theory of municipal ownership, he left things better than he found them, and in every city of the United States today, the transportation situation is the better for the people because of what Tom L. Johnson did in fighting the street railway trust in Cleveland.

As mayor of a small town he became a national, even an international figure and his personality was therefore a continuous propagandist of the Georgean doctrine which won him from the purposes of a mere millionaire to that of a man of and for the people.

His life was an inspiration and his memory will be a sustainer of the hopes of all those who in the years to come shall strive for a fairer distribution to all of the fruits of toil through the destruction of privilege that saps right and strengthens wrong.

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From the Cleveland Press of March 29.

Tom L. Johnson, Cleveland's first citizen, is dying. His passing may not be a question of hours or of days, although it may be either. But at best it is a question of weeks.

The malady, or complication of maladies, from which he is suffering is beyond the relief of human power. The sick man knows this, has known it for a long time; the members of his family know it, and a few of Tom's closest friends, Newton Baker, A. B. duPont and Billy Stage, know it. The physicians, having exhausted every remedy known to the science of medicine, have had to admit reluctantly that they are powerless, and are confining their ministrations to making the dying man as comfortable as possible.

Lying in his bed at his apartments at the Whitehall, as the curtain of life is slowly lowering, Tom Johnson is waiting for the end with the same brave and unflinching spirit with which he has met every crisis of his stirring and splendid career.

No complaint against the fate which demands that he must pass untimely from the life which he has loved so well and lived so fully, has ever passed his lips.

He greets his family and the few friends who are admitted to the sick room with the ghost of that same smile which in the old days charmed the thousands of his followers and disarmed his opponents.

The great, brilliant mind is as clear as in the old days when it gave him the mastery of men and events and the leadership of the people of Cleveland in their battle against the hosts of privilege.

The same whimsical humor which has endeared Tom Johnson to those who have been privileged to be numbered among his real friends and bound them to him with bonds of steel is unfailing even in the shadow.

With Death waiting just outside the door, ready to enter and claim his own, knowing that he is there and will not be denied, Tom Johnson is the "Captain of his Soul" today as he always has been.

The fighting spirit is calmed and a great and beautiful peace seems to have settled over the dying man.

All of the old enmities and bitterness seem to have been forgotten.

He speaks kindly of everyone, even of those who in the strife and struggle of the past years maligned and if they could would have wrecked him.*

It was of such a man as this that the poet wrote:

So live,
That when thy summons comes
To join the innumerable caravan which moves to
that mysterious realm
Where each shall take his chamber in the silent
halls of death.
Thou goest not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon,
But sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust,
Approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about
him,
And lies down to pleasant dreams.

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JOHN PAUL OF GREAT BRITAIN.



No one knows the British movement for land value taxation without knowing John Paul, or of him.

*He always did. Tom L. Johnson was never bitter, no matter how great the provocation.—Editors of The Public.

He has no history back of that movement, except the history of a Scottish working man who did not allow his working to put a stop to his thinking. But with its birth in Glasgow he was born again, born of the movement and into it. Its progress and his activities have been identified ever since.

As executive of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, his weariless mind and straight-away business management—turning neither to the right nor to the left, with the goal ahead—have in the past ten years inconspicuously helped the Liberal party to make British history.

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John Paul came actively into the British movement for land value taxation in 1887, through an educational club which had sprung out of Henry George's agitation in Scotland.

George created a sensation there in 1882, and again in 1883. In 1884 he addressed a great meeting in the Glasgow City Hall, in a speech circulated still under the title of "Scotland for Scotsmen." At that meeting the Scottish Land Restoration League was formed, and under its auspices George campaigned Scotland. The Irish question overshadowed the work of the League later, and it grew obsolete. Its cause, however, had the vitality of planted seed.

In August, 1890, just before the first American single tax conference, held at Cooper Union, New York, Henry George, while on his way home from his trip around the world, fathered the organization in Glasgow of the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values, which is still vigorous. The time was ripe for it. Earlier in the same year, a member of the City Council whom George had converted and who is to this day a man of power in the movement, Peter Burt by name, had introduced into the Council a resolution on local taxation, and had thereby become chairman of an investigating committee. His report, submitted six months after the organization of the Scottish League by Mr. George, urged the cooperation of all the taxing bodies of Scotland in a petition to Parliament for authority to tax land values for local purposes. It was the same policy that Henry George and Thomas G. Shearman got under way in 1899 in New York, and which the New York Tax Reform Association, under the secretaryship at first of Robert Baker and then of Lawson Purdy, tried to impress upon the New York legislature; the same that has now been adopted under Initiative petition in Oregon.

Councilman Burt's committee report (Baillie Burt, they call him there) did not get beyond the discussion stage; but Mr. Burt was joined in the Council in 1893 by John Ferguson, one of their leaders whose memory the Henry George men of Scotland mourn. Between them, Burt and Ferguson kept the question incessantly before the Council; and in June, 1895, a large majority