

refer to the offer of these labor leaders to open all their books and records to official inspection and inquiry. They do not make this conditional, but significantly enough and fairly, too, they ask: "Will the National Manufacturers' Association, the Erectors' Association and the detective agencies extend the same privilege?"

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### When Crimes Are Not Crimes.

Instructive reading indeed have the many editorials of the past week or two been, in which labor organizations were smugly berated and advised about the wickedness of crimes like those of the McNamaras and the moral responsibility therefor of labor unions. We fail, however, to detect any such pious and patriotic moralizing in the same quarters over the burning of three Negroes by white men only two days after the McNamaras were sentenced for dynamiting. The McNamaras say we are in a war, Capital versus Labor; the white murderers say we are in a war, Race versus Race. The McNamaras defend their act as a class measure; the white men defend theirs as a race measure. One was reckless, the other brutal, and both were criminal. But while the newspapers denounce the former, they afford cover to the latter. Why?

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Once it was argued that the burning of Negroes was a Southern crime. This counted for little on the vital point, which is respect for life and obedience to law, for Southern newspapers not only covered, but shockingly defended it, and Northern newspapers were as good as silent. But that argument lost all its possible force when Negro burnings set in at the North. The whole country, not one section, is equally guilty of this worst of all murderous crimes. It was argued, too, that this crime was necessary to stop the raping of white women by black men—a queer argument in the editorials of papers that tolerate no suggestion of palliation for "Labor crimes." But that argument also fades away as Negro burnings are extended into the domain of punishment for other than inter-racial sex offenses.

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The instance mentioned above by way of example was the burning of three Negroes for competing as farmers with white men. One of the victims was a Negro woman, and no charge of rape was made against either of the other two. We quote in full the Memphis dispatch as it appeared on the 7th in the Chicago Inter Ocean:

Two Negroes and one young Negress were burned

to death by a mob of white land tenants who object to the occupancy of land by Negroes, near Savannah, Tenn., yesterday, according to meager reports received here today. The Negroes were traveling to a gin with a load of seed cotton. They were tied to the wagon load of cotton, and the mob, after building a fire beneath the wagon, stood guard until the Negroes were cremated.

Perhaps the report isn't true, but no one has denied or explained it: Perhaps it has evoked indignant comment from some of the sources that are flinging incriminations in the disguise of pious advice at labor unions, but in that case our eye has missed the comment.

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### WILLIAM MARION REEDY.

More widely known by name than by feature, William Marion Reedy is a fellow of useful wit and genial humor, a charming and thoughtful man who does his full share toward making the world better when he shall go out of it than it was when he came into it.

Whoever sat under him as Toastmaster at the Chicago dinner of the Singletax Conference last month must have enjoyed his brilliancy, and back of the sparkle must have seen somewhat of the admirable substance of the man. In St. Louis he has long been famous as a brilliant Toastmaster. He is so now in Chicago. It may well be said of him that in the Singletax movement there is only one Toastmaster, and his name is Reedy. But wholly apart from his extraordinary ability to serve pleasingly in that capacity, he has made an enviable record in his daily work. Whether he be still too much alive for a prophet with honor in his own city, he is not without that honor elsewhere, and deservedly so. The reason may appear in a bit of biography.

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It is customary now-a-days to exclude the biographical from personal "appreciations." Nominally, this is because a man is what he *is*, not what he *has been*. But, as we suspect, it is a reaction from the methods of writers who missed the great facts of a human life in their microscopic search for details. Truly, a man is what he is rather than what he has been; but if he hadn't been before, he wouldn't be now. Nobody is worth "appreciating" as an *is-er* unless he is a *has been*. It may make little difference, of course, what kind of a "has-been" his may appear to be under biographical microscopes, as compared with his kind of "is-er" in an editorial or magazine "appreciation." Yet the big facts of every man's past are as necessary to an

"appreciation" of his present, as are the big facts of Nature—the fact of land, of sunshine, of water and of air—to an understanding of economic processes and social phenomena.

Nor need any one with a past of which he has ceased to be proud, shrink from "appreciations" that recall it. The repentant criminal on the Cross might have missed Paradise if he had never been a thief. So also, reversely, of those who have cause for pride in their past. Judas might have had no reason to hang himself but for his having been one of the Twelve. William Marion Reedy falls into neither category. His past, the *big* facts of it at any rate, make it no more likely that he should go out of this world a belated repentant than a remorseful suicide. Regarding the *little* facts, he is doubtless as safe as any of us from pharisaical stone-throwing.

Anyhow, we like the old biographical custom in telling about men of worth. As William Marion Reedy was born, it is interesting, since *he* is interesting, to know when and where; as he has lived continuously ever since his birth, it is worth while, since *he* is worth while, to know where and how; and as in his later years he has preached the gospel he got from Henry George, it is important, since he preaches it well, to know something of where he got it and how he has used it.

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It happens, then, that this worthy man—this "*has-been*" and "*is-er*"—was born in the city of St. Louis in the early days of the Civil War, December 11, 1862. His father's first name was Patrick, his mother's maiden name Ann Marion.

This son of theirs, William Marion Reedy, had an academy education, on the basis of which he graduated from the St. Louis University when he was eighteen years old with the degree of "Master of Accounts"—whatever under the scholastic canopy that may happen to be. He did not marry until 1909, but on the 8th of July in that year Mrs. Margaret Chambers became Mrs. William Marion Reedy. Meanwhile Mr. Reedy had pursued his career as a newspaper man.

For thirteen years after graduating from the University as Master of Accounts he worked on the St. Louis papers—not in the counting room, but as a reporter, his Master's degree having qualified him for both places, as Tom Hood might say were that reckless punster living yet. What kind of service Mr. Reedy rendered as a newspaper man on the St. Louis papers we are unable to state. We have to depend for this part of his biography on one brief paragraph in "Who's Who in America." But as he wrote that paragraph him-

self, we may fairly infer from its complex of conciseness, discrimination and accuracy that he must have been a newspaper reporter of extraordinary fidelity and skill. There are St. Louis traditions which lend the color of truth to this inference, and Mr. Reedy's subsequent career as editor of the St. Louis Mirror raises the inference to the level of a reasonable certainty.



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St. Louis, Mo.

It was in 1893 that he became editor of the Mirror, and in 1896 that he began to add to his perplexities and the proof of his abilities by becoming also its proprietor. Since that time his perplexities may have lost some of their tangle, but the proof of his abilities has grown and strengthened.

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The St. Louis Mirror is primarily a local periodical, the best of its class in the Middle West.

It is a periodical of art, of literature, of philosophy, of satire, of "society," of broad-gauge religion and high-grade democracy. Some readers

of its "society" notes might sometimes dispute this estimate, but all the same they read those notes; and as they pay for this privilege they get the rest (which they might not be so keen to buy, although better worth the buying) without money and without price. The rest, which they get as *lanappe*, though it be less marketable than the "society dope," is as a rule a complete justification of our high estimate of the Mirror.

For William Marion Reedy is a book-lover who, knowing why he thinks some books are worth reading and others are not and why some are more or less worth it, tells his readers frankly what he thinks about them, tells it in vigorous and flowing English, often unique in diction, always with charm in the style. Of the drama, of music, of the other fine arts, he writes with like appreciation, picturesqueness and sincerity. And if the reader does not readily detect religion in the Mirror's editorials, who shall dare decide for either reader or editor which of them it is that leaves religion out?

To democracy, fundamental in respect of perception and practical in respect of application, William Marion Reedy's editorial pen in the St. Louis Mirror is as true as Thomas Jefferson's in the Declaration of Independence and Henry George's in "Progress and Poverty." This may not always have been so. We have no file of the Mirror, and "Who's Who" doesn't tell. But it has been so almost from the beginning of the present century.

About a year before the Exposition of 1904 at St. Louis, an after-dinner lecture was delivered there on the principles of the Singletax in their relation to the great Louisiana Purchase, the centennial of which was then about to be celebrated. For that occasion the late Frederick M. Crunden, founder of the St. Louis Public Library, had been engaged to preside, but the fatal illness in which this devoted man lingered until the year now closing had already begun. He was therefore obliged to remain away from the dinner, and William Marion Reedy accepted an urgent invitation to act as his substitute. Not only was Mr. Reedy not then a Singletaxer, but his attitude as editor of the Mirror had made him *persona non grata* to some who were. He presided most acceptably, however, and went away with his face earnestly turned toward a new quarter in the social heavens. He had caught glimpses of a star which had thitherto been to him invisible. The intellectual processes necessary to locate that star definitely and to apprehend its magnitude and influence, came quickly enough to him when he fell into intimate relations with John Z. White. Since that time, some half a

dozen years ago, no periodical has been more acute, sane and faithful in promoting the cause which is everywhere affectionately associated with the name and memory of Henry George, than is Reedy's St. Louis Mirror.

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Although the Mirror is a local periodical, an institution of St. Louis, it is edited in the patriotic spirit of a republic of the world, and in the religious spirit of a divine humanity—of human divinity, if you prefer the transposition. "The world is my country, to do good my religion," said Thomas Paine, whose religious qualities are now shining through the pagan shrouds that have enwrapped them so long. The same words would not be out of tune on the lips of William Marion Reedy, whose heart is a dwelling place and his editorial desk a breeding ground for the wholesome sentiment they express.

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### THE FELS FUND PLAN.\*

A few years ago the American people maintained a pride so high and a hope so strong that even mild criticism of existing conditions was received either as a jest or in anger. What a change is presented today. All manner of people, from President up to housewives, are crying out, half in fright half in wrath, at annoyance, irritation, pain and even desolation.

As before they were unreasonably vain—now they are unreasonably stupid. They cry: "Prosecute the Trusts!" "Give us an income tax!" "Let us have Federal control of corporations!" "Let us reciprocate in the matter of bird-seed with Canada!" "Give us a central bank"—under a disguising name like a drunkard's remedy for his thirst. In fact, do anything except look the matter squarely in the face in the upright and downright fashion of full-grown red-blooded men.

We are much in the position of the gilded youth who ran into a doctor's office clasping his brow and exclaiming, "Oh, Doctor, give me something for my head!" "I wouldn't take it as a gift," said the doctor.

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Can we not stop, take account of stock, and apply a bit of common sense.

In all matters of moment there is an ideal. Emotion or power is requisite; but there must also be practical method. By practical method power may be directed to the attainment of the ideal.

\*Substance of an address on "Tax Reform" delivered by the writer before the Singletax Conference at Willard Hall, Chicago, November 26, 1911.