

the good it would do the cause. But let us not permit zeal to get the better of discretion. Let wisdom be the guide. If Mr. Johnson is to be a candidate, he is vitally interested in the action of the Single Taxers upon so important a proposition as their political organization, and if it is he we would aid we should not force his hand. He is a successful man of affairs, of ripe experience and wisdom, politically and otherwise. If the exigencies of his campaign should make it necessary for a Single Tax organization to be affected for political purposes, he will no doubt find a way to let us know at the proper time. But let us make no move as a body that might cause him to suffer at the hands of his friends.

If we seek the advancement of the cause alone, without reference to the incident of Mr. Johnson's possible candidacy, and ignoring the fact that expediency might dictate the placing of a great leader of our cause in the Presidential chair, I do not believe the public mind is yet imbued with the idea that the root of all our social evils lies in our land system sufficiently to make it a political issue; and if it be true that the idea is latent to the necessary extent, there is nothing at this moment to bring it forth. There may be in a year, or a month, or on the morrow, but there is not to-day. The fact that thinking people are giving their attention to proposed means of introducing juster methods into our social organization does not indicate that the time is ripe, but that it is ripening. The increase of the socialistic vote indicates the same thing. We need not fear that the socialistic movement will outstrip our own by attracting to it the radical-minded amongst those who seek better conditions. It is better that the ultra-radicals should be absorbed by them than that their ill-considered utterances should be charged against us. When the time to strike arrives, those who are capable of receiving Henry George's message will be with us, and their number depends upon our propaganda meanwhile.

The spasmodic attempts at local political action have served rather to expose our weakness than to advertise our strength, the best proof of which is the fact, not that they failed to attain their immediate object, but that they were not followed by a permanent organization for the purpose of continuing the effort once begun. Until we can command effective local organizations it is idle to dream of a national organization. To command the attention of the country our first organized movement must carry with it strength, or the political possibility will be long postponed. "Strike while the iron is hot" is a trite saying, whose truth reaches to the premature stroke as well as to that which is too late. The effort in either case will be barren of result. In due time political organization will come about as a matter of course. It will be absolutely forced upon us, whether

the epoch making event be the nomination of a Single Taxer for the Presidency, or something now not apparent to us. Let us abide that time. Meanwhile let us seek to increase our numbers by a vigorous propaganda, in order that when the necessity of political organization arises we can present the formidable front necessary to make it effective.

San Francisco, Cal.      STEPHEN POTTER.

## JOHN Z. WHITE.

(See Portrait)

John Z. White, lecturer for the Henry George Association of Chicago, has been an active worker in the Single Tax movement since the '80's, being among the earliest of the Chicago followers of George.

His father was a pioneer farmer in Illinois, near Aurora, where John was born. There he was schooled during the Winter months at the little white school house at the end of the orchard. In working as a boy on his father's farm in the Summer, he came to know the labors of the field; but following the reaper and binding grain by hand, haying in the sunshine, being "bushed," and thrashing in the harvest time had no charms for him; so he went to Chicago, where he became a printer, and there came to know the lot of the city toiler.

Mr. White's attention was first called to Henry George's teachings by a news item in a paper which he read on a train. The article was to the effect that a man named George had declared against laws for the forcible collection of debt. The idea met with White's approval, and he called the attention of a fellow traveler to it. A disagreement followed. George's proposition meeting with condemnation from his companion. In defending his position Mr. White became still more interested in the subject, and desired to know more of George. Soon afterward he read "Progress and Poverty."

Mr. White met Henry George about '86, while the latter was on a lecture tour under the management of Major Pond, the acquaintance becoming intimate, and he was assisting George in New York at the time of the economist's death.

The skirmishing stage incident to a new cause having been passed the field seems open now for a progressive educational movement in economics, and Mr. White has been secured by the Henry George Association to lead the way in a far-reaching and spirited propaganda of George's philosophy. Of the rugged type, with a Scotch rigidity, Mr. White was well fitted for the rigors of a new fight. As a debater as well as a lecturer he has long been recognized as pre-eminent. Personally unambitious, he has ever been in the cause untiring and uncompromising. With a mind keen, critical,

conservative and constructive, he is peculiarly adapted to this later phase of the work and will surely contribute many suggestions to those earnestly endeavoring to bring about advancement in the processes of civilization.

### BOOK REVIEWS.

#### ANOTHER NOVEL FOR LAND REFORM.

Mr. Richard Whiteing, author of that sterling novel, "No. 5 John Street," has given us a new work of fiction, characterized by the same keen observation of social wrongs and the same finished literary skill.\* In "No. 5 John Street" he laid bare the cancer that is eating the heart out of our social order. In that book he showed the extremes of London life; in this, his later work, the extremes that meet on the landed estate of a great English nobleman, the unearned luxury, the pampered weakness, against the penury and fruitless lives of the English peasantry. Not in this generation has there been a writer who has pictured in such vivid colors the inevitable degradation that awaits the worker divorced from his ownership in the soil. Many are the passages that might be quoted, but with a few only we shall have to be content:

"His history was that of many an English laborer of his day. He was one of the earth-men of our railway age, and he had left his lasting mark on the planet with pick and shovel. He had read nothing—for the best of all reasons—thought nothing, hoped nothing, but had just dug, fed and slept."

The ownership of land is the ownership of those who dwell upon it. In describing the Duke's estate, Richard Whiteing says: "It had all the main essentials of wealth—mines and flourishing cities, harbors and ports, endless acres of plow land and pasture, all the Duke's, with a great density of population which was *his no less in effective ownership.*"

The book derives its title from the yellow-covered wagon which conveys the agitator for land reform from place to place. From this van he holds forth. But this is only incidental to the story, though it runs through the whole of it, appearing and reappearing with its promises, warnings and injunctions, much like the Fates in the Greek tragedies.

As a story, its fabric is slight enough. There is no plot to speak of, but one will not lay it down. The author is a literary artist, and he has not made his moral too obtrusive, as less experienced writers might. He has wedded his lesson to his story. We do not feel that he has written his story merely to show that he has a lesson; but the story,

itself, the great social wrong, and the way out—the way of freedom, not the way of the socialist—are, all together, the core and the heart of it.

We quote once more:

"There is but one check to the Duke's serene satisfaction in things as they go, namely the odious self-satisfaction of one of his neighbours—Mr. Kisbye, of the Grange.

"It is true enough that you may walk for miles at Allonby without touching any land but the Duke's. Yet you must choose your path with care. There is one way of going wrong, if only one.

"Years ago, in a fatal moment when the agent happened to be looking the other way, Mr. Kisbye snapped up a bit of property that impaired the rounded integrity of the ducal domain.

"It cut right into the estate, and spoiled the amenity of it. The intruder got it by an extravagant bid to a needy owner at a time when his Grace's solicitors were opening their parallels in the usual impious way that assumes the eternal duration of the world. He wanted a country settlement, and here it was within a stone's throw of one of the greatest estates in England. So he sneaked it by purchase, much as the Duke's forefathers might have sneaked it in another way. His Grace offered to pay handsomely for his mistake through the solicitors, but Mr. Kisbye smiled derisively at every bid, and stuck as close as a horsefly with a lodgment.

"It was a speck of property—no more, of course, but it was enough to make the other less than perfect. It established this 'bounder' from town—this nondescript without a pedigree and without any means of getting a living that could be known and traced—as a country gentleman, as farmer, and even as landlord in his small way. Worst of all, it established him as a dispenser of hospitality, and brought down into the country at stated times the most fearful persons of his set."

J. D. M.

#### A WONDERFULLY CLEVER SATIRE.

No more clever satire than this account of John Wryland's "Journey to Thibet, of his Founding a Kingdom on the Island of Palti, and his War Against the Ne-ar-Bians," has appeared in many a long day.\* The style of the work is admirably suited to its purpose. It recalls the English of Cobbett or Defoe, and its humor is delightful. One in closing the book regrets that the author finished his task so soon. Satire as it is, the writer finds legal and historic precedents for almost every absurd thing that he does; and this fact is indicated in foot-notes, with the naive reminder, "This was the law in Eng-

The Yellow Van, by Richard Whiteing, 12 mo., pp. Price, \$1.50. The Century Co., N. Y.

\*The Travels of John Wryland, 12 mo., 236 pp. The Equitable Publishing Co., Allentown, Pa.