

Single Taxers will then be able to contemplate with anything but satisfaction the ruin to which they have contributed by their silence and their toleration of socialistic palliatives out of motives of weakness and expediency. For little by little in recent years the Single Tax movement has grown to be more and more acquiescent in what socialists have proposed. Its decline has been coincident with the growth of this spirit. Possessing the only answer to socialism they have failed to preach it with clearness and emphasis. Losing sight of the philosophy of the natural order for which the term Single Tax is so pitifully inadequate a designation, they have linked it with socialistic remedies. We have joined the socialists in their criticisms of existing conditions; we have weakly admitted the correctness of their diagnosis, whereas it is wholly incorrect, and have said mildly that their remedy is a mistaken one, whereas it is a wholly vicious and destructive one.

The assertion of individualism by those alone competent to define its philosophy and its economic application, has been wholly wanting. Socialism as a political principle has secured expression through a political party; Single Taxers have weakly evaded their responsibility by refusing to accept the challenge to similar independent political action, being content to act with the Democratic Party. They have lent themselves to such countenance of socialistic tenets as that party, along with the Republicans, has given, which has helped to magnify the claims of socialism and minimize the opposition which millions of our citizens, inheriting the traditions of American self-reliance, must entertain for the teachings of socialism. The latter group have been politically powerless because Single Taxers have, in a measure, though unwittingly, betrayed their cause into the hands of their enemies.

The time has come to cry aloud the claims of a true individualism; to show that the Single Tax is the only answer to socialism; to call into the fold those who believe in the rights and the dignity of the individual, the beneficence of the law of free competition, the fallacy of government aid to industry, the reasonableness of the natural order of distribution when once the true factors are understood.

Socialists have taught that the individual withers and the State is more and more; that this is the trend of economic evolution. The very reverse is true. Everywhere the natural tendency is away from authority; most of the great struggles of humanity have been to divorce the individual from some form of State control, some group dictation, some collective authority, and this struggle has been an almost universal one. The record of its successful triumph is the record of the progress of true civilization.

IDEAS are more powerful when they are fresh. Enthusiasm cools, emotions die away, when the cause which evoked them grows familiar. Our hearts are like metal, malleable at high temperature, but hardening as the heat evaporates and selfishness begins to assert itself.

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE.

Natural Law in the Economic World

WHEN Newton took "his leap" from earth to celestial spheres, and announced a law of physics which moon and stars obey, he indicated a harmony of relationship which governs in other spheres. These forces that act in the physical world, and are called, therefore, "physical forces," are by that very name, to the superficial view, robbed of their deeper significance.

These forces indicate not only a harmony but a dependence and interdependence. They point to a similar analogous natural order in economic and social relationships. They indicate that the same methods of scientific investigation and generalization might reveal equally important discoveries in other departments of knowledge.

The study of economic phenomena has not been approached in this spirit. No such splendid generalizations have been attempted as Newton, Leibnitz and Spencer have given us in other fields. Facts have been studied as isolated phenomena. There has been no attempt to classify the knowledge thus obtained, such as Cuvier provided for the study of the animal world, a classification that must precede any really valuable discoveries or generalizations.

The study of economic phenomena remains in the same stage that characterized chemistry in the days of alchemy and astronomy in the era of astrology. It is the age of fable that precedes the age of science. It is characterized by an amazing amount of quackery which abounds when a great body of phenomena is not subject to scientific method by even its most enlightened students, where nothing is correlated, and where it is assumed that artificial and governmental regulations are the determining factors in economic life.

The writing of history was long pursued in the same spirit. Slowly but surely the scientific test began to be applied. Buckle, to take an example, pursued the study of history in a scientific spirit. We may disagree with him as we will, but his method is one to which we must call attention as a contrast to the lack of method in the study of economic phenomena.

Buckle laid down, as every great constructive historian must, that the movements of history, the birth, growth and decay of laws and customs, are not due to caprice. He led his readers to accept the doctrine that some influences are malign and some beneficent, and that the progress of civilization is due to the observance of certain principles, to ignore which spells disaster.

Much of history had theretofore been written, as indeed much of it continues to be written, as mere accounts of wars and battles, conquests and dynastic struggles, without consequence or connection. That anything exists like cause and effect in these tremendous movements of peoples, that given a set of conditions certain results must follow, that the possession of certain impulses shared generally by men and women will, if unaffected by impulses which modify or destroy them, mould institutions and the char-

acter of communities to certain forms and likenesses, were methods which for a long time influenced in a very slight degree the writing of history. Buckle did not hold so lightly the supreme duty of the historian.

Froude, in his brilliant fashion, has denied the possibility of a science of history, since no scientific method will enable us to foretell events with the same certainty that characterizes cause and effect in the applied sciences. Clearly there cannot be a science of history in the same sense as there is a science of chemistry. Nor can there be a science of economics in the same sense as there is a science of chemistry. We shall do well to indicate the difference. History is concerned with what is past, and prediction—or even a reasonably probable forecast—is no part of the office of the historian. And both history and political economy are concerned with men and women whose impulses are not fixed but variable, and in these impulses there must be something that defies scientific analysis.

Yet between the study of history pursued scientifically and history as written by those who were mere chroniclers, even though eloquent and gifted, there is all the difference that exists between the political economy of Adam Smith and Henry George, and all that preceded the first named, with ninety per cent. of what has been contributed since their time.

Though we may be rightfully distrustful of generalized views of history, since we know that all the modifications which history undergoes cannot be referred to any single principle, and though we do well to reject what may be termed the "hunger theory" of the socialists—the economic interpretation of history—it may be said that they alone have indicated the true line of inquiry. For it is at least an effort to refer historical phenomena to some principle—to discover some law underlying progress.

We agree to the existence of a moral law. Some sort of consensus of opinion has been reached regarding the nature of this moral law. Whether we refer it to the combined experience of the race, or to an instinct implanted by religion, we have nevertheless arrived at certain conclusions regarding its value and development. At all events, we have pursued the inquiry with some approach to scientific method. Have we done the same with economic phenomena? The answer must be that we have not.

SAYS John Spargo: "Socialism, in the modern scientific sense, is a theory of social evolution. Its hopes for the future rest . . . upon the forces of historic development."

How this will hearten the workers of the world! Of course they cannot eat, nor clothe themselves with the "forces of historic development." When they complain that wages decrease and rents increase, they will be told that the forces of historic development are still with them. Their emancipation is far in the future, so far that they may well turn despairingly to more dangerous advisers who urge that their ills may be cured by resort to violence and destruction.

We do not know which group of the "friends" of labor are more to be shunned.

Platform of the National Single Tax League

THE SINGLE TAX LIMITED AND APOLOGETIC

THE National Committee of the Single Tax League met at the residence of Bolton Hall on August 18, accepted the resignation of Daniel Kiefer, elected Prof. L. J. Johnson chairman, and H. H. Willock, treasurer, and adjourned. No public announcement has been made of the future programme. Whether the absurd and undemocratic features of the existing constitution are to be retained, along with those semi-secret meetings that have characterized the organization in the past, we do not learn. Whether the committee will continue the policy of soliciting funds to be spent as seems best to them, furnishing no really satisfactory statement of expenditures and spending large sums for office up-keep and the circularizing of "flimsies" containing bits of idle gossip, is also uncertain.

It is a little disquieting that Mr. Towne is retained as National Organizer but more reassuring that Prof. Johnson who, though a Single Taxer of the Fillebrown school, is at least a level-headed teacher and an accomplished speaker and writer, is to be the directing head. Whether one holding the views he does of the Single Tax is qualified to act as the head of an organization representing the great movement of emancipation, may well be doubted. But that consideration need not concern us for the moment.

This latest gathering of the officials of an association supposed to represent a movement whose aims are the most far-reaching in human history, was characteristic of what has gone before. The meeting occurred in the Fifth Avenue district to which no intruder would dare venture except in a limousine. (Incidentally it may be observed that car fares in New York are still five cents, though three cent car fares, that were once supposed to be the necessary preliminary first steps to the Single Tax, are further away than ever.) Here met the men whose denunciations of plutocracy have long been an interesting but quite harmless feature of these occasions. The peculiar appropriateness of the neighborhood may be conceded in the fact that the meeting itself was as exclusive as any family gathering would be in this very exclusive neighborhood.

The kind of a declaration of Single Tax principles under these circumstances is such as might have been anticipated. The Single Tax is introduced as we would introduce a poor relation in the parlors of the *haut ton*. We print it on another page. It is rambling and inconclusive—almost apologetic. In place of a ringing declaration that we have the right to demand at this time we get an essay explaining, and explaining in the language of metaphysics. We ask the reader to contrast this cold and repelling document with the Single Tax platform adopted at Albany. (See July–August REVIEW.)

Note some of the phrases in this remarkable document. "The discontent that mistakenly threatens the whole system of private ownership of land"; agriculture "a needlessly precarious occupation"; "the predacious manipulation of