

Amends to the Manes

THESE are two men to whose Manes I owe amends. It is not for any positive wrong I did them—for positive wrongs do not reach beyond the grave. My sin was the meaner and more injurious one of omission. Having had converse with these men, I yet lazily took the bowed and grizzled figures before me as the whole picture, indifferent to the lives of striving and achievement of which the figures were but weathered hieroglyphs. If either of these men had written a sonnet that had embedded itself in an anthology, or had painted a portrait glowering obscured in a museum corner, I should have been curious about their lives, interested in the quality of the mind still glowing through the mask of their aged faces. But they were cattle breeders. The material they worked in was the living animal, and the meat and milk that stand as its ultimate purpose. Like the good artist, they worked without thought of personal reward or recognition. Their days were full of care and their dreams bright with visions. I made nothing of them, because I was enslaved to the current fashions in values, which stupidly rate men according to the material in which they work, ascribing a high place to those who express themselves in marble, bronze, pigments and rhythmic sentences and a lowly place to those who work with materials vulgarly accounted vulgar. I might excuse myself if I could truthfully say that I accepted the social scale of values. But I do not. I recognize it for what it is, a wholly untrustworthy accretion of unfounded dogma, superstitious fears, imitative enthusiasms. I take it for a basis of judgment only in matters to which I am indifferent. Thus I stand convicted of indifference to two of the most valiant personalities I have ever encountered.

The one was a western farmer named Dibble, whom I knew when I was a boy, and esteemed chiefly because he was the father of a youth of amazing intellectual promise, which, alas, was blighted by ill health. On his rich acres Dibble maintained some seven fat cattle of a breed unlike any I had ever seen, though I lived on a thoroughfare where perhaps seventy thousand cattle, red and white, spotted, brindled, roan, long horned or crumple horned or polled, made their way to the western grass lands every spring in bellowing droves extending from horizon to horizon.

Thirty-five years have passed, and Dibble's seven fat kine have eaten up the seventy thousand many colored scrubs. The white faces and sleek red bodies of the descendants of Dibble's herd glisten on a thousand hills. Some years ago I saw a beautiful herd in Dakota, five hundred miles to the northwest; I was told that their pedigree ran back to

Dibble's famous herd. Then I recalled the man, of medium height, thick set, with wide ruddy face trimmed with a white beard, deep eyes and a formidable straight nose. He had some difficulty in manipulating his speech and was usually silent until an accumulation of emotion over political injustice or the blindness of the farmers to the possibilities of improvement overwhelmed him. Then his chest would heave and his features would work painfully, until speech came in a resistless torrent. When he had once spoken there was no more to be said.

That is all I know about Dibble. It is enough to show that he was very much of a man, and that I was a fool not to cultivate my opportunity of knowing more about him. The other man I neglected was Solomon Hoxie.

I knew Solomon Hoxie only as the father of Robert Hoxie, the brilliant economist of Chicago University, whose untimely death left American economics immeasurably poorer. Solomon Hoxie was a superb octogenarian, supple in body and mind. I used to meet him coming from his vacant lot garden with a huge basket of beans, beets and golden corn, a gift for some devitaminized flat dweller's table. He would pause for a moment to make a cheerful comment on the ways of nature, or to insert a word of propaganda for Christian socialism, to which he had recently become a convert. I knew that he had played an active part in the building up of the standards of the black and white dairy cattle that have been generally called Holstein, but should be called Friesian. I was not interested in cattle and stupidly ignored the fact that cattle may be the material of a significant life. Solomon Hoxie remained a closed book to me. I have come to know him better, since, and to value him. And now I have in my hands a biography published by his daughter, Jane Hoxie*, a modest piece of work and a competent one. I wish we had as good a biography of each one of the other ninety-nine creative Americans of Solomon Hoxie's generation. We should have the material for writing about real Americanism. It could then be proved conclusively that those who pass sweeping condemnations on America and American culture, no matter how brilliant, are dead wrong. Since we cannot have the hundred biographies, we'd better be grateful for those we do have. Of these Jane Hoxie's book is one of the best.

When next you drink a glass of milk, spill a bit of the cream as a libation to the Manes of Solomon Hoxie, for the chances are, there is some of his work in the bland white fluid you are tasting. It

* Solomon Hoxie, a Biography, by Jane Hoxie. Published by the Author.

was Solomon Hoxie, backed by a little group of farmers as impecunious as himself, who first realized that the splendid stock of Dutch cattle then struggling with other breeds for the grass lands of New York could be put into a dominant position of superior service to dairyman and city dweller alike only if the standards were rigorously maintained. The market was being flooded with good cattle, bad and indifferent, made salable by the illusion that whatever is imported must be good. Soon the public was bound to turn from the whole breed in disgust. Hoxie and his associates engaged in importing only the best and Hoxie worked out a plan of registry, first of blood alone, later of performance, which set our American dairy herds on the way of indefinite improvement. For more than thirty years Solomon Hoxie worked incessantly, inspecting, registering, editing the registry manual, writing articles, preparing speeches in support of

honest and intelligent methods of breeding. There were enemies enough to fight, men who had counterfeits to pass off, men who were too indifferent or dull witted to see what standards meant. Hoxie fought his fight without malice but without compromise, and won. The time will come when Friesia will have to resort to America for the superior breed of cattle produced from the Friesian stem by the intelligence of Solomon Hoxie.

He was not born to be a cattle breeder. His instincts were essentially those of a religious teacher. Circumstances held him back from a work where he would have succeeded brilliantly, as one could judge from the letters published in his biography, even if one had not heard his impromptu sermons and observed the mystical glow in his eye. Chance gave him the cattle pasture for a vineyard and he made it yield an hundred fold.

ALVIN JOHNSON.

The Promise of Labor Banking

FIVE years ago, to predict the rise of a movement of such magnitude and vigor as labor banking would have been rightly regarded as reckless. Except for slight traces of something akin to coöperative banking, in which members of trade unions participated, there was even so recently no evidence that the labor move-

ment contemplated a radical departure from its traditional methods and purposes. It seemed to be concerned as ever with wages and hours and jurisdictional disputes and indifferent to wider areas of interest and influence. Yet, in little more than three years the following banks have been organized:

Mt. Vernon Savings Bank
 Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Coöperative National Bank
 Amalgamated Trust & Savings Bank
 Coöperative Bank & Trust Co.
 People's Coöperative State Bank
 Producers and Consumers Bank
 Brotherhood Trust & Savings Bank
 Federated Bank & Trust Co.
 Labor National Bank of Montana
 Transportation Brotherhoods National Bank
 Telegraphers National Bank
 Amalgamated Bank of New York
 Brotherhood Savings & Trust Co.
 Federation Bank of New York
 Brotherhood of Railway Clerks National Bank
 Brotherhood Coöperative National Bank
 Fraternity Trust Co.
 Potomac Trust Co.
 International Union Bank
 Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Bank of New York

Machinists
 Locomotive Engineers
 Amalgamated Clothing Workers
 Labor Groups
 Locomotive Engineers
 Labor Groups
 Railway Brotherhoods
 Locomotive Engineers and State Federation
 Railway Brotherhoods
 Railway Brotherhoods
 Railroad Telegraphers
 Amalgamated Clothing Workers
 Railroad Unions
 Central Labor Council
 Brotherhood of Railway Clerks
 Railroad Unions
 Railroad and other unions
 Railroad Unions
 Ladies Garment and Needles Trades Unions
 Locomotive Engineers

Washington, D. C.
 Cleveland, O.
 Chicago, Ill.
 Tucson, Ariz.
 Hammond, Ind.
 Philadelphia, Pa.
 San Bernardino, Cal.
 Birmingham, Ala.
 Three Forks, Mont.
 Minneapolis, Minn.
 St. Louis, Mo.
 New York City
 Pittsburgh, Pa.
 New York City
 Cincinnati, O.
 Spokane, Wash.
 Harrisburg, Pa.
 Potomac, Va.
 New York City
 New York City

All but the last two are now open. The bank of the Ladies Garment Workers will begin business on January 5 next and that of the Locomotive Engineers early in 1924. In addition to these twenty banks, others are already being organized by the telegraphers in Boston, the Central Labor Union in Buffalo, and by various labor groups in Los

Angeles, Port Huron, Michigan, and Indianapolis. Labor banks are, however, now multiplying so rapidly in number that there is no assurance that this list is a complete one.

Explanations for the astonishing rise and development of this movement are likely to be as many as there are persons offering them. Mr.