

# 1882—1886

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After each of his three visits to the British Isles in the early '80s, Henry George came home convinced that he had started a movement of ideas and politics that would change history. He was naturally proud that *Progress and Poverty* had now broken all records as the most widely distributed and read book in economic literature, and he believed it to be the most influential one since the *Wealth of Nations*. In retrospect George thought that he had succeeded in bringing to his own point of view every lecture audience he had addressed in Britain, excepting only the two at Oxford and Cambridge. His fondest memories of public speaking overseas were the first meeting in St. James Hall, at the opening of the great tour of 1884, and the meeting at Liverpool, when he conquered the resistance that had been specifically prepared against him. As he entered and re-entered the life of opinion making in the United States of James G. Blaine and Grover Cleveland, he had the reassurance of knowing that the England of Gladstone and Joseph Chamberlain in some degree belonged to him.

His first British success, however, did not prepare him for the welcome he received when he returned to New York from Ireland in October 1882. At the moment he was two months out of the Irish 'bastille,' those few hours of detention, and a month or more past the thrilling review of *Progress and Poverty* and *The Irish Land Question* in *The Times*. Certain elements in the greeting may

fairly be attributed to a change in the climate of American opinion, to some new awareness in the country of underlying tensions and economic injustices. Perhaps there is no better symbol of this, apart from George himself, than the emerging voice of Henry Demarest Lloyd. During the summer of 1882 a famous article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 'The Political

Economy of Seventy Three Million Dollars,' advanced that lawyer a sizable step toward his powerful book of the next decade, *Wealth versus Commonwealth*. Plainly a conscience-stricken state of mind was represented by certain educated- class elements which helped celebrate Henry George's return in 1882.

The lead in celebration was taken by Irish partisans. People in the office of the *Irish World* assumed charge but were careful to include non-Irish elements. Felix Adler and one or two others from the Ethical Culture Society shared in the planning; and, in the name of all that he considered appropriate, Mr. Adler urged against extravagance. 'Why waste all that money on a banquet? Why not use it to buy a library for Mr. George?' But others wanted a splash; and Louis Post favored such an event as would make publicity for Henry George.

The group finally agreed on a banquet at Delmonico's. This proved to be the second but principal event of the welcome home. The first was managed by the Central Labor Union of New York, of which Mr. Post was the legal counselor, and which four years later would be the instrument of bringing Henry George into his greatest political campaign. On 20 October the CLU gave its own reception in Cooper Union's somewhat church-like auditorium. Banners for 'Land, the Common Property of the People,' were hung on the walls; a trades-union man spoke; and the returning hero replied that the flame had been lighted, 'the fire is burning on, and in a few months there will be a great movement all over the civilized world.'

Nothing was spared for the banquet next evening. Many prominent men signed the invitation. Besides Patrick Ford, Louis Post, and Thomas Shearman, who must have been the moving spirits, Henry Ward Beecher and Thomas Kinsella, preacher and editor, both from Brooklyn, and R. A. Pryor, then a lawyer and later a judge, were on the committee. So were Heber Newton, George van Slyck, Cameron King, and David C. Croly. The last named was

an editor and leading American Positivist, and was the husband of a better-known social radical, and the father of the later editor and writer, Herbert Croly. The invitation announced that the sponsors did not all endorse George's remedy for a social evil, but that all did wish to give testimonial to his 'personal worth,' to his sympathy for mankind, and to the intellectual vigor of his book.

As Louis Post had feared would happen, the guest of honor arrived late, nearly an hour late, and his shoes lacked polish. The guests were lined up, 170 strong, and were presented to him by Algernon Sullivan, lawyer and wit of the city. 'How did you get them to come?' George hissed at Louis Post, when opportunity offered. When at last the company was seated they were rewarded with twenty-eight items of food and drink, according to the menu card in French. It was a Delmonico's party done in the style of that day, and the charge was \$10 a person.

Stories are told of the evening's cross-purposes and confusions. 'What part of Ireland does this man George come from?' one guest was heard to inquire. Mr. Post himself believed that of the several speakers only a minority, William Saunders over from London, and Thomas Shearman and Thomas Kinsella, had any comprehension of the man they praised. Post thought that Henry Ward Beecher did not, nor did Representative Perry Belmont, or two justices of the Supreme Court of New York state, or others.

Happily the event did not frighten George out of enjoying the situation in more ways than one. There is suspicion of irony blended with the flow of conviction in the speech in which the hero of Loughrea admonished this particular circle to consider, 'gentlemen, how this city would grow, how enormously wealth would increase, if all taxes were abolished which now bear on the production and accumulation and exchange of wealth. Consider how the vacant spaces on the island would fill up, could land not improved be improved by him who wanted to improve it, without the payment of prices now demanded.'

It was 'a good deal like going to sleep and waking up famous,' George wrote Dr. Taylor about the double-headed reception. He felt greatly reassured for the future. He expected to pay his debts and live well, he confessed to this most intimate friend. He planned to settle in New York but travel much, and to keep Harry as secretary and general assistant.

George had known before leaving Ireland that the channels for distributing *Progress and Poverty*, which had opened just before he left the States, had actually carried much traffic in 1882. The New York *Truth* had made good its commitment to publish serially; and in May of that year the Chicago *Express*, with a circulation he was told of 100,000, undertook the same thing. Meanwhile, over and above Mr. Francis Shaw's first free

distribution of *Progress and Poverty* to the libraries, and beyond the subsidy he and his brother had given for English publication, the Shaws were making further contributions. Quincy Adams Shaw paid for 1382 copies of *The Irish Land Question* and for the same number of copies of *Progress and Poverty*, put into a special binding, to be sent gratis to members of the rather elite Society for Political Education.

Overseas George had demurred at first, at this last allocation. He considered the society too much a Professor Sumner and David Ames Wells kind of organization; and the only comfort he could derive was to think how 'very annoying' the gift would be to Sumner, whom George of course knew to be the one who had 'sat down on the book in an anonymous diatribe in *Scribner's*.' But in the month of Loughrea and Athenry the result proved more desirable than a professor's irritation: a Boston paper reported the quiet fact that the Shaw family was subsidizing *Progress and Poverty*.

Excellent, wrote George. 'You have kicked up a row. And of all the things we want to do, to kick up a row is first and foremost. For when the row begins those who most bitterly oppose us serve the cause the most.' He chuckled at the thought that the people at home should know that the "Socialistic seducer" of the Society for the Propagation of Sumnerian Political Economy is of the bluest Boston blood.' 'Yes,' agreed Francis Shaw at last, 'Yes, nothing could have been more fortunate than the Boston *Daily Advertiser* episode. It has set a good many people reading *Progress and Poverty*, and opened an entrance into New England much wider.'

Presently the death of Francis Shaw affected Henry George in much the same way his life had. George received a legacy of \$1000 early in 1883. It was the first such event in his life, and very timely. For, contrary to hopes that had mounted while he was in Ireland and had seemed to be encouraged by the welcome home, neither book royalties nor lecture fees amounted to much that winter. The

legacy 'puts me at ease,' George wrote Dr. Taylor, on 17 January. 'I shall use it in the way I know he intended it — to give me some leisure to do some writing — and hope that before that time is gone I shall have my feet well under me. What a curious life mine is — literally from hand to mouth; and yet always a way seems to open.' After his benefactor's death, ways kept opening for George's ideas, partly on Mr. Shaw's account. Among many letters of early 1883, none can have stirred Henry George



more deeply than one from Elizabeth Peabody, who was then nearly eighty. This associate of Channing and Parker, Emerson and Alcott, one who had had a distinguished career of her own in educational reform and thought, wrote that though she had studied political economy all her life, 'I never obtained satisfaction until I read your *Progress and Poverty* recently, incited to it by learning that Francis G. Shaw died happy because the book was in the world ... But I am almost afraid to say how it has cleared up my mind, how clear has become what has ever appeared to me a muddy science, for it seems almost too good to be true that the tremendous conundrum of poverty increasing with the progress of civilization is solved.'

While there are no other letters to compare with the historical interest of Miss Peabody's, many either had personal meaning or else indicated the spread of George's ideas on the wave fanning out from Britain and Ireland. There were several from California. James McClatchy, disregarding the fact that George still owed him money, sent \$20 with an order for as many copies of *Progress and Poverty* as that amount would buy; and an anonymous buyer ordered 100 copies sent to a certain labor leader in San Francisco. Others in his old home city wanted him to return to California for a lecture tour; but now as earlier, Dr. Taylor advised him to stick to his desk. Requests from California always stirred and tempted George, but evidently the way in which he had been rejected in that state, at the time of the constitutional convention and when *Progress and Poverty* was published, affected him permanently, for after 1881 he did not return until a decade had passed and it precisely suited his convenience to do so.

The Middle West, which had been the region of weakest response to George's book before the British missions, now showed signs of stirring interest. A Presbyterian clergyman of Toledo wrote that there were 'few earnest men' in that city who had not read *Progress*

*and Poverty*; and he was sure that the same could be said of all five states of the old Northwest — Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. From Detroit, Joseph Labadie, the philosophical anarchist, inquired whether George would come to attend some meetings and to give some speeches. From St. Louis, after George had gone there for an address, came back word that the *Post Dispatch* had called *Progress and Poverty* the most remarkable work ever published in political economy.

On the eastern side of the hemisphere, from places as widely separated as Lake Ontario and the valley of the La Plata, George received communications which stated appreciation, in the lift of the wave from Britain, and which sometimes hinted possibilities for future action. A number of congratulations came from Canada: one was from Professor Le Seuer of Ottawa, who invited a second lecture visit. And, far away, an Irish medical man, Dr. John Creagher of Buenos Aires, launched a correspondence in which he urged that *Progress and Poverty* be translated into Spanish, and said that the book would surely have a great effect in Argentina. From near home, George received greetings that told him of interest in every area of society. For example, he heard from E. T. Peters, the sympathetic economist and statistician; he had an invitation to Bridgeport from a barely literate member of the Knights of Labor; and he received a prim invitation to attend a Sunday *soiree* in Farmington and to see the sights of that lovely town.

The letter from farthest afield, from the old friend in the legation at Peking, was the one that carried the most specific — and ultimately acceptable — career advice. ‘What you want for your views is *light*,’ said John Russell Young. The *Irish World* might represent ‘a passion,’ but it was not a proper vehicle for George in the future, this adviser believed. He suggested that the author of *Progress and Poverty* start a weekly of his own. Young admitted that he could make no confident predictions. He guessed humorously that by the time of coming home in 1885 he might discover Henry George jailed or hanged as a revolutionary, or else seated in the United States Senate. He would do what he could, he promised not very hopefully, to have *Progress and Poverty* translated into Chinese.

Though in one sense Henry George’s actual position was about as wide open as it looked from China, the radical-at-home did of

course have certain attachments and certain practical things to do, which gave his life a degree of continuity. Here as in Great Britain there were always publishers in the forefront of his planning; and as of this year it would be hard to say which was more pressing, the business he had to do to keep *Progress and Poverty* moving, or the work of new writing he wanted most of all to tackle. Even before he undertook a one-week speaking tour in

December, less than two months after arrival home, he received a fresh offer for new low- cost editions.

This came from John W. Lovell, who headed the publishing house bearing his own name, and who wanted to bring out a twenty- cent *Progress and Poverty* in the paper-bound Lovell's Library. He himself sympathized with the working-class movement and was personally interested in the socialist community at Sinaloa, Mexico. His proposal would not reduce the American price quite as low as the English one; but, like the English cheap edition, it involved a simultaneous publication of *The Irish Land Question* — to which George now gave its permanent title, *The Land Question*.

There is a suggestion that George was the readier to go ahead with Lovell because he felt that Appleton was not energetic, or not successful enough, in pushing sales. The result appeared in February 1883 as number fifty-two in the Lovell series, a *Progress and Poverty* in very plain dress. Sales did prove large we are told; but there are no records of whether this edition reached the quarter- million mark Lovell predicted, and of how much the author received in the way of royalties, at the 10 per cent agreed upon.

In the spring the question of more translations of *Progress and Poverty* came up. When the editor of the New York Swedish paper, *Svenska Arbitaren*, wanted to publish as a booklet the Henry George articles he had recently run, translated from the weekly *Leslie's*, the author tried to negotiate a Swedish translation of his principal work. Perhaps these exchanges explain the edition that was actually published in Upsala in 1884. Meanwhile George's old friend and first translator urged an American German-language edition. It should be done in Roman characters, Gutschow advised, echoing Lovell, and it could be made to undersell the imported Staude edition. Gutschow argued that the election of 1880 had proved the importance of the German vote, and that George should not be discouraged that German socialists did not like him, for the socialists represented no more than a small minority of the immigrant Germans. Sound advice or unsound, the German-language edition of *Progress and Poverty* was never published in America.

The situations and developments described above may be characterized, all of them, as the passive side of Henry George's history after the tour in Ireland and England. They tell of recent events making the man: a man more recognized, more in demand, than ever before in his life in the United States. But they tell nothing of his own reaction to the reaction, or of the active intellect and strategist of social reconstruction. How was he envisaging his obligations and opportunities, now that he was world famous?

Part of the answer is to be found in the persons and groups he chose as followers, from among those who came forward to befriend him or seek his help. Another part is to be discovered in his new writing — in the ideas and policies he felt most ready and anxious to advance. Immediately, and apparently without benefit of invitation from any publisher, he set to work on the book he had long intended, an attack on industrial monopoly and a defense of free-trade policy. Three years later he would develop from this beginning a powerful manifesto, his second or third most important writing, *Protection or Free Trade*. But from first to last this effort was bedeviled by obstacles and misfortunes, and the first difficulty was the not unpleasant one of being requested to do other things. Before year's end, 1882, magazines on both sides of the Atlantic were asking for special articles. In close succession the *Contemporary Review*, the *North American Review*, and the weekly *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* all made requests.

For the *North American*, to which it will be recalled he had contributed in 1881, he did two articles. The first, which was published in March, concerned 'Money in Elections'; it broadened out, from decade-old editorials in the *San Francisco Post* and from his similar article in the *Overland Monthly*, the writer's argument that the Australian secret ballot was needed in America to help defeat the political machines. Eastern cities were the worst seats of political corruption, he now asserted, but state governments in the West were about as bad. 'Sparsely settled Nevada is notoriously a rotten borough,' observed this old associate of Senator Jones, 'and Kansas,

Nebraska, Colorado, and other new states are little better.' In respect of political ethics, old Britain was more truly democratic than America, George now believed.

The second *North American* article of 1883, 'Overproduction,' was published in December. It renewed from *Progress and Poverty* his stern criticism of those who would use that idea as the explanation — and the explaining away — of depressions, and of course renewed also his proposition of land-value taxation as the answer. The two articles together may be thought of as bridging the gap between George's first writing for this magazine and his several articles of 1885 and 1886, when the *North American* began to look surprisingly much like a regular outlet for Henry George.

While in the *North American* the reformer of 1883 seems to be a man gaining in strength and acceptability, in *Leslie's*, a more popular magazine, he appears in the role of insurgent. During the early months of the year, *Harper's Weekly*, the rival of *Leslie's*, ran a series by William Graham Sumner — connected essays on contemporary history. Immediately gathered and reprinted under the still-remembered book title, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other*, Sumner's commentary is well described by his biographer as setting forth 'with extraordinary coldness' the professor's full conception of *laissez faire*; and Professor Hofstadter characterizes Sumner's ideas at this stage as the most uncompromising example of Social Darwinism in the history of that movement.

The Yale sociologist named few books or persons whose ideas he opposed, but from first to last he condemned any and all who wanted the government to regulate social conditions; and many passages indicate that he bore *Progress and Poverty* specifically in mind. Entirely in line with the Scribner's review in 1881, Sumner's ideas on the nature of civilization differed completely from the egalitarianism and from the plea for religion as an influence toward co-operation that are voiced in *Progress and Poverty*. In quite as extreme a degree as William Mallock, though of course from the roots of a more individualistic defense of property, Professor Sumner represented the rejection of Henry George by the mind which all but officially spoke for America's prevailing current of social thought.

Henry George's invitation from *Leslie's* did not contemplate a debate with Sumner, nor did he try such a thing. He was asked simply to prepare a series of articles on general questions related to capital and labor, and to the condition of the people. A competitive venture rather than a controversy was the proposition, and naturally it appealed to him. When he learned that

Sumner was being paid \$50 apiece for his articles, George demanded and received \$100 for his own. *Leslie's* contracted for thirteen essays.

As a preliminary the magazine gave him a good announcement on 31 March and printed a striking portrait. *Leslie's* even endorsed *Progress and Poverty* to the point of saying that it had 'not merely shaken to their very foundation theories previously accepted, but it has popularized, and is popularizing, political economy as previous to its publication would not have been possible.' George's essays would be called 'Problems of the Times.' With such a send-off, the series appeared in late spring. Then, like Sumner's, the essays were published as a book, early the following winter. Belford, Clarke and Company, a Chicago house, brought it out, under the title *Social Problems*; and, as we have seen, Kegan Paul followed suit. On both sides of the water the book made money for the author.

Although a British reviewer was not wrong in observing that *Social Problems* presented again the main ideas of *Progress and Poverty*, the more important fact in the context of 1883 is that this book marked a shift in the author's emphasis which accorded with his present location in the industrial Northeast, and with his interest and connections in Great Britain. For the first time since working out his larger economic ideas in the *San Francisco Post*, he made a strong statement of his opposition to private industrial monopoly, and of his belief in public ownership. In the autobiography of Henry Hyndman, where the ultimate judgments of George are very adverse, the socialist was nevertheless pleased to claim part of the credit for George's having written *Social Problems*, and pleased to say that in this one book there exists a certain beginning of socialistic wisdom never quite fulfilled by the writer. What Hyndman did not know, of course, and what few readers of Henry George's books have known, is that, though the emphasis on the socialization of industry is light in *Progress and Poverty*, the author had actually been consistent for sixteen years in asserting that natural industrial monopolies ought to be publicly owned and operated. In that degree George had long been a state socialist; and now, as he considered private corporations becoming larger and mightier than sovereign states, he stated the possibility that 'a revolutionary uprising might be necessary to turn out the praetorians who were doing the corporations' bidding in government office.'

To his notion of California days, of what the nation-size natural monopolies actually were, the telegraph system and the railroads, he added the telephone; and, discussing the local monopolies natural in the economy of the modern city, he added electricity to the items previously specified, which were water, heat, and gas. In these areas George was as ready as anyone for socialization. Though he defended the policy by saying that government ownership involves fewer risks of corruption than private monopolism, he did not abandon his old belief that the number of public enterprises ought to be kept at a minimum. In this line of thought he urged again that lowering the tariff would reduce monopolism and increase competition — an argument which made *Social Problems* a preparation for the book already in process, *Protection or Free Trade*.

In answer to Sumner, whose ideas concerning the tariff were startlingly like his own, the writer in *Leslie's* turned irony on the Yale professor's defense of a social 'elite' in America. Though always qualified about social theory derived from Darwin, George did insert in *Social Problems* the thought — which Professor Eric Goldman calls Reform Darwinism — that biological and social evolution means eternal change; and he observed that in the present hour ancient creeds were dissolving and 'old forces of conservatism' were 'melting away.' He renewed his charge that the churches were too complacent about modern poverty. *Social Problems* was a fighting book. However critical of aggrandizers, professors, clergymen, and others, it was written with confidence that forces powerful in the world were on the author's side.

Not directly with Sumner, but tangentially with a still more imposing economist of Yale derivation, the articles in *Leslie's* stirred up controversy and took a measure of Henry George. It was the fifth essay, on 'The March of Concentration,' which challenged the authority, even the integrity, of General Francis A. Walker, who of course held as high a rank as any American economist. In *Progress and Poverty* he was the admired author of *The Wages Question*; in the academic world he had just become president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and he was president also of the American Statistical Association and would soon be first president of the American Economics Association. A large part of his distinction derived from the service he rendered as director of the United States Census; and it was on account of certain data in the Census of 1880 that the argument

between Walker and Henry George began. George did not necessarily try to provoke a fight, but he must have known that he was taking chances when he denounced certain statistics about landholding which had just appeared in the *Compendium* of the recent census.

A parallel-column statement there indicated that the average size of all farms in the United States had dropped from 153 acres in 1870 to 134 acres in 1880. In George's condemnation this piece of information was 'not only inconsistent with facts obvious all over the United States and with the tendencies of agriculture in other countries, such as Great Britain, but it is inconsistent with the returns furnished by the Census Bureau itself.' Whether he knew it or not, George was criticizing General Walker's own personal interpretation of the data, as well as the data themselves. In an article in the *Princeton Review*, which presently was to be reprinted in the census volume on the *Statistics of Agriculture*, the academic man asserted that landholding in the United States was in cold numerical fact 'highly popular,' or democratic according to Jeffersonian aspiration. In criticizing the *Compendium*, George said that it was the more blameworthy because the official averages would be interpreted as confirming popular belief that America was making progress away from land aggregation and toward the goal of the family farm. The census should be doubly careful not to misinform the people in a sensitive area of policy, the critic said.

In the columns of *Leslie's*, General Walker replied in unveiled contempt. Paying no attention to the disparities in the tables of figures to which George referred, he gave a short lesson in how averages are computed, which included the following blundering sentence: 'There has been a greater increase, on the whole, in the number of farms below 153 acres than in the number above 153 acres. And, consequently the average size has been reduced.' He said he would be 'happy to resort to a more elementary statement, illustrated with diagrams, if desired.'

George allowed himself more relish than he might have, in de

molishing the census director's careless principles of arithmetic; and then took more space still to elaborate the inconsistencies in the census figures. This reply, and Walker's rebuttal, and Henry George's final word amount to twenty-five book pages. But, half a year later, in the preface of a new census volume, General Walker, not retracting his judgments about



landholding, admitted that the earlier figures had contained disparity and error. The *Compendium* placed in parallel columns, as comparable, acreage figures for 1870 and 1880 which should not have been compared — in one instance the cultivated lands of the farms were represented, and in the other the farms' full size. Elsewhere the new volume admitted that the earlier one had not counted fully the large-acreage holdings in the West.

The controversy with Walker ended a clear success for George, but the victory did not lie in any invincible formulations of the trend of American landholding. George's best work in that field lay twelve years buried and forgotten in *Our Land and Land Policy*; and he would venture the subject again, three years later, in an article in the *North American Review*. At that time, though admitting that great holdings were being subdivided, he would insist that increases in land values were more and more favoring the owners, to the disadvantage of the community. Henry George's success in the duel in *Leslie's Magazine* was that he had at last confounded the attitude of contempt and disregard with which scholars in the United States had quite consistently treated him.

Very soon the general himself indicated the change. In May, just coincidentally with the beginning of the argument in *Leslie's*, he was lecturing at Harvard, giving the talks he soon revised into the little book, *Land and Its Rent*. In August — exactly parallel with Sir Henry Fawcett's similar article in the *Macmillan's Magazine* in England — he brought out an article, very nearly the same as a chapter in his forthcoming book, 'Henry George's Social Fallacies.' Really reviewing *Progress and Poverty* this time, General Walker described himself as 'Ricardian of Ricardians' who thought that 'under perfect competition the labourer would become the residual claimant on industry.' The worker and not the landlord. Even considering the actual economic world, where competition is less than perfect, Walker said that the radicals, George most especially because he had been too much influenced by California con

ditions, had pushed beyond reason the idea that the landholder takes a great share of the product of the economy. Also he made a critical parry against George's general proposition that technological progress raises rent. He answered that modern transport sometimes decreases rents, as when a railroad brings to city market the product of distant fields, and so reduces the value of less fertile agricultural land not so far from the city. On the

other hand, at a point where he might have been captious, he acknowledged truth in George's rejection of the wages fund, though it was stated in language much more dogmatic than his own; and he made no serious objection to George's case against Malthusian doctrine.

For the decade of the '80s, the article and chapter could be called the official American academic review of Henry George's main ideas. Not only did Walker state his own objections, but he also cumulated the overseas reviews. Quoting the condemnations of the *Quarterly Review* and the *Edinburgh*, he rejected without sympathy George's affirmation of all men's right to the economic product of land — the moral sequence of *Progress and Poverty*. Comparing recent treatments of rent, he reported a rising scale of radical protest. Leroy-Beaulieu envisaged rent 'as no more than the merest mole on the industrial body,' Walker said; Mill diagnosed 'an open sore, a real, appreciable, and considerable drain on the vitality of the state, which should be checked by stringent surgery and cautery'; while George indicated rent to be 'a cancerous evil ... with only one possible result and that in no very distant future.' By implication General Walker's own position lay between those of Leroy-Beaulieu and Mill — closer to Mill's but nevertheless far from that of *Progress and Poverty*. Seven years would pass, and the first successes of the single-tax movement be achieved, before George's ideas would again receive such close scrutiny and estimation by any American scholar.

A letter in Henry George's own papers, written by a member of the assembly of Rhode Island and a future governor of that state, suggests a personal reason why Walker changed his attitude toward George. Early in 1883 this reformer, apparently speaking as a friend, told the census director that some economist ought to give *Progress and Poverty* a serious review. So perhaps conscience, or love of controversy, or both effected the change. Dr. Garvin, the Rhode

Islander, wanted George, in turn, to reply to Walker's critique; but Henry George refused.

With so much lightning playing about him, there is no wonder that George felt he must put the *Leslie's* articles into book form without delay. During the run of the contracted series, moreover, the magazine's editorial page had turned savagely against him; and he was notified that the proprietor, Mrs. Leslie, would allow him to make no contributions to the

journal beyond the thirteen agreed upon, and that she would not permit him to publish a book under the title of the series, 'Problems of the Times.' Fortunately he was able to talk amicably with the representative of the firm who had negotiated the contract, and he escaped any danger that *Leslie's* would block publication under the other title.

To the end *Social Problems* was hard to produce, though it became profitable. The author worked until the very eve of his big lecture tour in England and Scotland to complete the revision and enlargement of the manuscript.

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The report on Henry George in the States during 1883 has indicated, so far, the signs that came to him of new recognition at home, and the ideas that came to his mind as the most important ones to express in new articles and books. As it seems fair to call *Social Problems* socialistic within certain boundaries, and fair also to discover in the free-trade manuscript an intention to educate readers into major doctrines of free enterprise, George was at this stage confirmed in his earlier character of prophet of the mixed economy. But these data fall short of formulating adequately George's own notion of where he stood, and where he thought he should go, in his developing career.

As we know, he interpreted the welcome home in October 1882 to indicate that he would have no more trouble making money to support his family. Though the small audiences he had and the low fees he collected during an immediate, short lecture tour in the Middle West were disappointing, he did not let himself be discouraged. After the \$1000 legacy from Mr. Shaw, about the year's income we know only that *Leslie's* paid him \$ 1300 and that he must have received something useful, perhaps in three figures, perhaps in

four, from royalties on *Progress and Poverty* and *The Land Question*. The fact that money received from previous writing came in, probably his principal source of income, while he was doing his fourth book, must have been encouraging to him and have lessened his regrets that work on the free-trade manuscript had to be deferred.

During the spring he made a major decision which indicates, as well as continuing optimism, an unusual degree of freedom of action. He was approached in March by Allen Thorndike Rice, of the *North American*. Would Henry George launch a new weekly, a political and economic journal? The proposition was that an investor would put up \$25,000 and hold 55 shares of stock; George would be given 45 shares and would be made editor at a salary of \$75 a week to start and \$100 as soon as the paper began to make expenses. He would be given full editorial control; and, as George himself noted, the job promised to solve his 'bread and butter question for good.'

Yet he refused the offer for reasons that seem shallow: the *Leslie's* articles had to be done, the free-trade book was on his mind, he was not ready to take charge of the new office. The refusing mood was on him. A little later the same spring he made up his mind not to try to lecture in California during the summer. And presently he refused to consider at a low salary an otherwise attractive appointment as commissioner of the new New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, which at the moment was pending before the state legislature. Whether or not he had a right to be so certain, he believed that if he were to nod Governor Grover Cleveland would nominate him. 'I could make something of the place,' he pondered, and added that at \$5000 he would have taken it. But when \$2500 was indicated he lost interest.

Why did he turn away from New York opportunities in the kinds of work that had sustained him in California — journalism and state office? If they had not quite satisfied him there, and if he had learned the perfidy of a journal's creditors in San Francisco, at least the present offers were made in terms that honored him, and a job in New York would have assured him a long season of being prominent before the nation. A very important reason for refusing doubtless was just what he said, because he was overburdened and needed freedom for thought. And another lay in his interest in

Britain, though the invitation to return there had not become compelling when he turned down Mr. Rice.

To these I add the guess that possibly the controlling reason for his not taking important jobs was that for the first time he was making promising contacts with the American labor-union movement. This was the sector of

society that was the most important of all, in his scale of values. And now labor unions, Henry George, Jr., says, urged him for the New York commissionership; and presently the veteran member of the California printers' union became a new member of the Knights of Labor in New York. Very soon he opened a correspondence with Terence Powderly, who as grand master workman was the famous international leader of that order. This proved to be the beginning of a long association between union leader and intellectual-for-labor.

Here an analogy suggests itself. George's concerning himself in 1883 with labor-union leadership and ideology, while he was finding his way into influence in the United States, is reminiscent of his situation a year earlier overseas, when his being concerned in Irish protest led directly to influence in English and Scottish affairs. Terence Powderly himself derived from Irish origins, and so also did great numbers of the Knights of Labor; and Michael Davitt had become a knight while in the United States, and had transplanted a bit of the organization to his own side of the water. Why should George not travel an Irish route to prominence in the United States as well as in Britain? If foresight had not suggested this tactic, then an event of April 1883 certainly did so. As Davitt had done, in 1882, Terence Powderly now said things which halfpromised that he would become a follower of Henry George. Delighted with a public statement the grand master workman made, which went beyond the agrarian plank in the Knights of Labor platform, George wrote congratulations: 'I need hardly say how thoroughly [your statement] accords with my own earnest belief.' George happily sent clippings to Thomas Walker in Birmingham.

To Powderly himself he sent further advice and counsel. 'I believe that the promulgation by you of those views marks an epoch in the labor movement. They will powerfully aid in bringing about, among the working classes, that discussion of fundamental principles so much needed, and without which nothing else can be accomplished.' George went on to criticize the little newspaper of the Knights of Labor; and he urged such new editorial boldness as would attract attention and build up the union. 'There is a widespread consciousness among the masses that there is something *radically* wrong in the present social organization. All that is needed to weld this feeling into a power which will at length become irresistible is concentration and enlightenment.' Very delicately George led along into the

tariff question. Identifying himself to a Pennsylvanian as a native of that state and as a one-time protectionist, but one who had been converted, he begged Powderly not to tie up with high-tariff doctrine. 'The Teat injury done by the protective theory seems to me to be that it sets workingmen to barking up the wrong tree.' George ended with assurances that the area of agreement between them far exceeded their differences, and that he had no wish to press those differences.

Powderly did his share in the *rapprochement*. He agreed that his union's journal needed improvement; and, about the tariff, he believed that their two positions were very much closer than George understood. Within a week or so of hearing from George, Powderly tried to call in New York; and failing he invited a visit at his own home in Scranton.

The connection thus begun bore most of its fruit in the later '80s rather than in 1883, but it produced certain results immediately. At midsummer George refused an invitation to speak before the now renamed Irish National League; and to Powderly he explained his reasons, at the same time sounding out the depth of their agreement. Dropping the word 'land' signified a loss of nerve among Irishmen, George believed, an accent on nationalism and a withdrawal from old ideas of economic transformation. 'I regret to say that among the Irish leaders there have been none able enough and strong enough to stand firm.'

Not nationalism but internationalism of protest was the thing, urged George — protest from all who suffer. In this direction his track of thought closely paralleled the socialist one, yet did not do so exactly. 'The only class in my opinion worth considering in any country is the class which these proposed measures [of the Irish National League] totally ignore — the laborers. Not that they are the only class worth thinking about, but until they are affected nothing general or permanent can be obtained ... While I sympathize with the Irish people in their political oppressions I have

no faith in mere political movements of any kind. When I see how much misery and degradation there is in our own country I cannot think that any mere political change would do anything to improve the condition of those classes of the Irish people who most desire our sympathy and need our aid.'

Powderly perhaps failed to answer this letter, but a couple of weeks later, in August, he and George met and talked, probably for the first time. The occasion was a Knights of Labor picnic in Baltimore, where they spoke together before a festive gathering of 3000 persons, colored and white in one audience. Powderly urged that the unions must grow; and George pleaded that working men and the women of their families must get into politics. Eight-hour and other strategy would raise the level of the unskilled worker, he said: raise the marginal worker and you raise all. How ideas do take hold was his satisfied impression after the meeting.

Incidentally the Maryland excursion included personal as well as political satisfactions. Henry and Annie George ran up to Emmitsburg to visit the sister who was located temporarily in the mother house of the Sisters of Charity. Annie had not seen her for nearly twenty-five years, and Henry had never seen her. But after this brother and sister-in-law corresponded occasionally; and he sent presents, and in due course even asked the nun's advice, when he was having his famous trouble with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

Before August had passed, Henry George, back in New York, had the opportunity to make his ideas public when a committee of the United States Senate held hearings there on labor conditions and affairs. On the day he testified, the room in the Post Office building was crowded 'with the disciples and admirers of the witness,' according to the *Tribune*; and indeed many of the questions asked him were more than respectful, almost deferential in tone. Several witnesses — Louis Post, Charles Frederic Adams, a lawyer, Robert Blissert, a tailor, and Heber Newton, and there may have been others — expressed ideas very like his own.

Asked at the beginning of his testimony whether or not labor was actually being reduced to a worse condition, he replied cautiously that it was not possible to judge. But he said that discontentment was on the increase, and that social catastrophe might come soon — a not inaccurate prophecy just three years before 1886.

When questioned what he would do to improve things if he were made 'dictator of the universe, or at least of the world,' George said that he would not do much — dictators could not go far ahead of the people. He agreed that the constitutional powers of Congress would have to be enlarged to

enact on a national scale the program he believed in; he acknowledged that a general land-value tax could not be reconciled with the circumscribed powers of Congress to enact direct taxes. But he thought the federal government would do much if it eliminated tariffs and established a government- owned telegraph as in England. He told the committee his story of fighting the Associated Press and Western Union in 1869.

Pressed rather hard on public ownership, he agreed, yes, that his ‘idea of communal ownership of land,’ as the question was phrased, was in some degree a socialistic proposition. Specifying less particularly than at other times what industries should be community- owned, he spoke perhaps more dogmatically than ever before, on that subject. ‘Practically I think the progress of events is towards the extension and enlargement of businesses that are in their nature monopolies, and that the State must add to its functions continually.’ About this hearing, the New York *Tribune* observed sourly that the federal government had no business concerning itself with such problems, and that, anyway, each senator could have a copy of *Progress and Poverty* at lower expense than a traveling investigation. But the committee members themselves accepted George’s recommendation that they hear from Mr. Heber Newton, which of course meant they would be confronted by a clergyman testifying in the same vein.

As in England during that very season — the Land Reform Union gathered in 1883 — so in America the followers of Henry George began to draw together, even on a national scale. Borrowing a name from the history of the pro-labor and anti-slavery movement thirty-five years earlier, Louis Post and others set up the American Free Soil Society. A year later the *Free Soiler*, newly started as an organ of the society, looked back to 1883 and admitted that first progress had been slow. But the members had become acquainted, and the work would catch on. ‘We aim to elevate the working poor and to save the middle class from destruction.’

However modest were the early numbers, the fellowship of the Free Soil Society involved a pleasant savor of the Bohemian, a taste

none too frequent in Henry George history after his earlier San Francisco days. A group of New Yorkers who had been gathering for dinner and talk at ‘Dirty Dick’s,’ or Pedro de Beraza’s at 29 Center Street, decided to do more. In a place which acquired its charm, according to reminiscence, from excellent spaghetti and a cobwebby appearance, and the presence of



rats, a noble document was drawn. The group pledged themselves to work 'by peaceable methods' to achieve the remedy of Henry George; and they invited new members to join the Free Soil Society without 'distinction of race, sex, nationality or creed.' Heber Newton became treasurer; Charles Frederic Adams, secretary; and A. J. Steers, George's first New York disciple and the person who had told Father McGlynn about *Progress and Poverty*, was a charter member. There were other lawyers, and members of the *Irish World* staff; and the entire George family down to Jennie Teresa, who was hardly sixteen, belonged.

The organization had some igniting power from the start. From San Francisco, where the first Henry George organization, the Land Reform League, still carried on, George's old friend, Judge Maguire, wrote that the league would reorganize into twelve ward groups of the Free Soil Society. William Hinton, John M. Days, and M. R. Levenson, names to stir George's nostalgia and loyalty, were on the move, the judge reported. By the next spring the *Free Soiler* could list eighteen vice-presidents, each from a different state, the future distinguished Judge Jackson H. Ralston of Maryland among them. George must have been referring to the Free Soil Society when he wrote 'Dear Comrade' Joseph Labadie that what was 'most needed is the propagation of ideas, and for that we want an organization which will serve as a standard and rallying point, rather than numbers. This organization will I hope serve at least as a beginning.'

Besides his principal writings and organizational activities, many incidentals of George's life in 1883 indicate the priority of his concern with labor. Somehow he learned, for instance, about Laurence Gronlund; George was told that this socialist immigrant was living on \$5 a week while earning \$10, and was saving \$3 a week toward publishing a book of social protest. This was the later important *Cooperative Commonwealth*, which actually came out in 1884. George certainly did not anticipate that Gronlund would become a severe

critic of his own work, nor was he warned against Gronlund by the uneasiness he felt concerning Hyndman. He simply spoke warmly of the man and expected that his book would be 'a rendition of German Socialism' — as indeed it was — 'a needed thing.'

From a quite different direction, that is, from the papers of Professor Richard Ely, who was still on the Johns Hopkins faculty and still at an early

stage of his famous career, we learn that at this time Gronlund was speaking just as warmly of Henry George — as a friend whom he grouped with Heber Newton and John Swinton. And Mr. Newton, who was, as we have just seen, a leading member of the Free Soil Society, was also interested in a new New York journal of a new movement, the *Christian Socialist*. These threads weave into common design. The Henry George impulse, like many if not all native American protests, interfiliated with other impulses, some of them of foreign origin. Such a cross-connecting, to be expected in any period, was never more natural than during the early stages of the ‘new immigration’ of the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Yet, as the fall of the year came on, though many admired him, and though he had made some money and refused opportunities to make more, Henry George had not yet really got his ‘feet down’ in a practical way. And then a series of distressing events occurred. He lost his parents — his father in his eighties and his mother in her sixties. Simultaneously he ran out of funds and felt terribly at loose ends for a period of weeks.

At midsummer he had taken a resort vacation, at Budd’s Lake, New Jersey. He had the best rest in years — the first vacation since the studying summer of 1877 in Sausalito. For money he meant to sell his free-trade manuscript for newspaper serializing before book publication, hoping to repeat the financial success of ‘Topics of the Times’ in *Leslie’s*. But unaccountably the manuscript disappeared when it was about half done; and all at once he found himself down to his last \$25. He regretted intensely that he had no newspaper to edit and wished from the heart that he had not refused Mr. Rice’s invitation.

Personal distress made the invitation of the Land Reform Union, to lecture in England and Scotland, seem doubly important; it meant earnings and the chance that succeeded so well, to sell *Social Problems* to a second publisher. But it also meant more than money.

It meant reputation and authority and power. In late 1883 the question with Henry George was: How great might his influence become in the world? In the United States he had hit upon the element he wished to affect first, which was organized labor. But he had by no means achieved influence equal to that which he had reached in England.

As the scheduling of the second and third visits to Britain worked out, the summer-and-autumn interval at home in 1884 proved too short for George to determine how new successes in England and Scotland had affected his standing in the United States. There can be no doubt about the longer run. The British tour of 1884 did build up George toward his spectacular entrance into politics. But the intermediate steps were by no means clear-cut; and warning signals again went up that mounting popularity overseas did not promise immediate acceptance at home.

While abroad he had been heard lecturing by one of the partners of Brooks and Dickson, the lecture agency. To George's enormous satisfaction the firm proposed a handsome contract for a six-months tour in the United States. The agency offered to bear all expenses for Mr. and Mrs. George and a secretary; and George could choose to take either \$800 a week or 60 per cent of the net receipts. The decision demanded pondering. He was elated to be offered what Ingersoll was paid — \$200 per lecture — and he admitted that he would have taken less. But he thought also that the agents must be anticipating a real 'George boom'; and he considered how miserable Annie would be, so he wrote her, should she soon discover '\$1000 a night coming in and me getting only a paltry \$200.'

So, while he was still abroad and riding the excitement of the meetings that gave birth to the Land Restoration League, he chose the option of 60 per cent. His mind rushed forward to visiting California again, to hoping that Harry would continue as his secretary. He even let himself be sad that the time had passed when he could put a carriage at the disposal of his parents and do other things to give them pleasure. At any rate Jennie could have a pony, he said.

But after a fortnight back in America such hopes were cruelly disappointed. He was welcomed home again at a working men's

meeting in Cooper Union, and once more given a dinner on the second night — this time not such an affair as the one at Delmonico's. But the opening Brooks and Dickson lecture, delivered at the New York Academy of Music on 'The Eighth Commandment,' turned out a miserable fiasco —

the first and last lecture under that marvelous contract. The audience hardly sufficed to pay the incidental costs.

George did make about ten speeches during the spring and summer, but he made only one during the fall before sailing; and this meant that he gave up lecturing, for 1884, as a method of supporting his family. By the testimony of American admirers and contemporaries — Messrs. Post, Newton, and Charles Frederic Adams — his method of extemporizing produced irregular results at this stage, sometimes ineffective and sometimes inspired. To San Francisco George wrote, immediately after the Academy of Music failure, that the tide had turned quickly against him, and that certain debts he had expected to pay would have to stand awhile longer.

George's metaphor would have been more accurate had he said that no tide had risen. His method of speaking was best adapted, and brilliantly adapted, to audiences already in emotional rapport and willing to be swayed. In this respect America was not as ready to receive Henry George and assure him success on the platform as Britain was. Much the most significant audience he addressed, during the lean summer and fall of 1884, was a congress of the Episcopal Church, in Detroit. Heber Newton, who was becoming a kind of American Stewart Headlam, invited him. There, as a man of faith addressing men of faith on the question, 'Is Our Civilisation Just to Workingmen?' Henry George succeeded well. The speech was reported in the *Churchman* and was generously received. But there were not many audiences of that kind and intensity in the United States — or if there were, George was slow to discover them.

With few opportunities to speak, the other choice must have been completely obvious, that he now return to work at his desk. Anxiety or struggle about the decision was happily removed by Thomas Walker, his British Francis Shaw, who presently advanced him money. First George finished off the reply to the Duke of Argyll and then returned to work on *Protection or Free Trade*.

By the arrangement of Mr. Walter Cranford, a new friend and follower of the Brooklyn group, the writer and his family spent the summer on a Long Island farm near Jamaica, three miles from a railway. The season served the same purpose as the summer in Sausalito. George did some reading and hard thinking. Doubtless governed by experiences in Britain, he decided that he deeply opposed Marxism, and that some day he

would have to write an answer to that brand of doctrine. But for the time being he concentrated on the manuscript. By fall it was about finished, he said, and once more he entertained hopes of serial publication and of profits in the not too distant future. For the winter he returned to Brooklyn, taking the house at 267 Macon Street. 'I wish I had a pension or some bonds,' he said.

This was the season of the Cleveland-Blaine campaign, the one that stirred the Irish immigrant element more deeply than perhaps any other election in our history. Ultimately 1884 would mean much to George, for after a quarter of a century the party of his inheritance and loyalty, once again a reform party, returned to power. But at the time he was completely bored, and completely inactive, even more remote from campaign activities than he had been in 1880. The *Irish World* went for Blaine, fully protectionist in the Irish way; and the Republican inclinations of certain of his associates may have been the principal factor that kept George quiet. But at least one friend thought he ought to seek office himself. To Nordhoff of the *Herald* on 24 October 1884, Henry George replied, 'I think I can be quite as useful outside of Congress as in and I would not now seek a nomination in any way ... But I quite as fully appreciate your kindness and esteem as though I wanted [to run].'

Though he was not to feel the same way in the campaigns of 1888 and 1892, George was not satisfied with Grover Cleveland as candidate and leader this first time. General Butler he regarded as quite an insincere leader of the Greenbackers. Not since childhood had he felt so little personal stake in the quadrennial decision. Sailing for Liverpool the day before election, he did take the trouble to pair with a Blaine man, so in a sense he voted for Cleveland; and in Britain he wrote an article saying that the Democratic victory must ultimately bring the realities of the tariff question back into politics.

But this was all. For Henry George the third trip to Britain, in

behalf of the Scottish Land Restoration League, was an escape into political reality.

About that trip we need to recall only a few points. Not at all an occasion of recession in Henry George's influence in Britain, it was nevertheless a less exciting tour than the one preceding. It was a time for consolidating gains rather than adventuring first thrusts into the world of ideas and politics; and though he did not break the connections of 1882, George was already abandoning fusion tactics with socialists and Irish nationalists. More precisely, he was inviting social protest under his own banner, that of the Land Restoration League; and, outside that movement, he now preferred to accompany rather than to combine with radicals whose philosophy or lack of philosophy he disapproved.

At home to stay in 1885, George followed the same policy as in Scotland. His being in a less class-conscious state of mind than earlier placed no obstacles on his picking up threads, again, with the Knights of Labor. But this did not lead to much before 1886, George's political year; and his first tactic was to return to the lecture platform. This time immediate results were better than in 1884, and perhaps another twelve months of the recession of the middle '80s helped account for increased interest in his ideas. But he retained the doubts which had assailed his courage in England, about whether or not public speaking would do as a way for him to earn his living.

Thanks to a little series of letters, we are able at this stage to look behind the scenes at one of Henry George's more important lecture appearances in inner America. The host who entertained him at Burlington, Iowa, in April 1885, tells us that a year earlier a sizable number of Henry George men, not of the laboring classes, were known to one another. In the group there were a judge, a lawyer, an Episcopal rector, and 'myself a lifetime student of political economy,' according to Mr. David Love. When George came to town, however, he lectured under the auspices of the Knights of Labor. Because he gave 'The Crime of Poverty,' one of his reprinted addresses, it is possible to say that he treated a small-city audience to the same kind of eloquence he used in London and Glasgow. He utilized his most telling platform devices: he illustrated low wages

from a fresh report of Michigan statistics; he mentioned child labor as he had seen it within a short distance of Burlington; he retold the story of the degradation of working men in England, and made comparison with

Crusoe's island. In the end he reflected on the 'utter absurdity of this thing of private property in land,' and invited his audience to consider what would happen in their 'little town' should land-value taxation be instituted. 'You could have a great free library; you could have an art gallery; you could get yourselves a public park.' The speaker was disappointed that only 400 people turned out, on a Saturday, at 50 cents apiece; but he was appeased to find the Congregational Church crowded, the next night, to hear the 'Moses' address.

Mr. Love himself rounds out the story of Henry George's impact on Burlington. Perhaps a dozen men were now confirmed, 'with more or less clearness,' as followers of the recent speaker; about fifty others followed at a greater distance. In widening circles among the Knights of Labor and among sympathizers with Irish protest, George was being 'constantly discussed.' A newspaper at Mt. Pleasant and a German one at Keokuk were advocating *Progress and Poverty*; and a clergyman near by had been presenting the book at the meetings of a reading society. Mr. Love said that in his own second thinking he preferred George because, unlike the socialists and unlike the churchmen, George made no effort to change men's natures but only to change the operation of the laws of economics. His own group was abandoning their Free Soil Society affiliation, he reported, and was joining with the Knights of Labor instead.

It seems fair to assume that Burlington represents the impact of Henry George in many towns. On the other hand, as he himself discovered, a growing curiosity about his ideas did not mean any such wave of interest as overseas. On this trip he would have welcomed opportunities to go to Minnesota and Michigan, but he was not invited. He did stop at Indianapolis. A not very large audience which paid 50 cents a seat raised the question whether he was charging too much; and, as he had to stay over a day, on invitation to address the state legislature, he decided to experiment. He announced a second public lecture at a 10-cent charge, but he drew in few more hearers than at the regular rate. 'I will do good even if I don't make money,' he wrote Annie at this time. But he said also, 'That will be my policy in the future in lecturing — to have big audiences and to produce an effect.' And in final judgment he added: 'This trip is conclusive to my mind. There are everywhere people who want to hear me; but they do not anywhere amount to enough to make good lecture audiences.' So he

would not go to Canada or lecture at all unless circumstances indicated big audiences. 'I will try something else. All the books sent here were sold.'

At home on Macon Street, George headed into several months of quiet work. His prior commitment was to the unfinished *Protection and Free Trade* manuscript, and by fall it was so far revised that he was able to sell parts for installment publication in newspapers. Meanwhile he had a lead article in the July issue of the *North American Review*. This was a dialogue with David Dudley Field, a lawyer and reformer of the law, who was not too opposed to George to draw out his ideas considerably. The article stated clearly Henry George's intention to create both opportunities for labor and opportunities for investment. As definitely as anything in print, it showed that his scheme of taxation was economically equivalent to the public ownership of land; and a passage included the words, 'the single tax upon land values.' This I believe to be his first use of the phrase in print, with the definite article included. Though the phrase of course lacked any of the political connotations it would gather in 1887 and 1888, its appearance in the *North American* is one of several signs that George was now particularizing his program and being careful to make clear its differences from other reforms.

Though he wished when he could to tackle a new book, on money, George did a great deal of writing for the *North American* later in 1885 and in 1886. One of the articles was a potboiler purely, on 'England and Ireland,' for which he drew on his experiences abroad. But another, printed in April 1886, seems doubly important as it indicated, over and beyond his own effort, an effort by Mr. Rice to give unusual prominence to Henry George's ideas. In each issue beginning in January, the *North American* carried articles about American landholding. The first, by Thomas P. Gill, was as severe as George. The 'landlord and tenant laws' of the states, according to the investigator, were 'implements for extracting rent as simple, terrible, and brutally candid in their design as a revolver in the hand of a peremptory road agent.' The February article listed the federal land grants which had been made to corporations since 1862, and let the figures speak; and in the March *North American* two writers replied, making an argument much like General Walker's *versus* Henry George, three years earlier. This remarkable series — four articles in January, February, and



March — gave the writer of the concluding article a splendid chance for a climax.

For the occasion George wrote ‘More about American Landlordism,’ the article mentioned above as the place where he conceded something to General Walker’s argument, that the average size of American farm holdings was falling rather than increasing. But he allowed this to be no more than a technical concession. Visualizing the process of land acquisition as a Californian who had seen New York and London, George returned to his original point that concentration and monopoly in landholding was becoming an ever more universal truth. That speculators and railroads disgorged and distributed to settlers he admitted, and those changes brought the acreage figures down. ‘But while this division is going on, the ownership of land may be in reality concentrating and landlordism increasing ... What would be a small market garden would be a very large city lot ... Where each house was once surrounded by a garden and orchard, a lot of twenty feet front now carries family upon family, living, on top of each other, in tiers ... The ownership of square feet now enables [one] to live in luxurious idleness on the toil of his fellow citizens.’

Turning from urban landlordism to rural, George made a powerful criticism, not his first but an early one, of the American theory of the agricultural ladder — the idea, more prevailing then than now, ‘that tenant-farming is, in the natural order of things, the intermediary stage through which “agricultural laborers” are enabled to pass into a condition of landowners.’ George condemned the agricultural ladder as ‘just the reverse’ of truth. Following his old thought about the South since the Civil War, the article presents farm-tenancy as a form of labor’s bondage rather than an emancipation into ownership. ‘More about American Landlordism’ was Henry George’s final piece of writing about land policy and land problems in the United States.

At about the time the article appeared, the author abandoned his desk for a short period of travel in the Middle West and in Pennsylvania. In Ohio he made several addresses, which included a debate on free trade against a labor-union man. But this was not a lecturetour of the kind which had recently baffled him, and all the speaking seems to have been incidental.

During this trip he visited a famous brownstone mansion in Cleveland for the first time, in what seems to have been a response to a call made not

long before in his own home in Brooklyn. The caller had been Tom Loftin Johnson, who had made up his mind by then to be a complete follower of Henry George. The story of his decision resembles that of many others: he had read first *Social Problems*, which was sold to him by a railway vendor, and had gone on to *Progress and Poverty*. But Johnson was no ordinary convert. Thirty-one in 1885, and entirely inexperienced in politics, he was an American industrial monopolist, in the historic age of the monopolists. He had already behind him enough of his career as inventor, entrepreneur, and owner, in street railways and steel, to have become a man of wealth and power. When he read George's books he instructed a lawyer to refute them if he could; and, when that effort failed, he decided that no refutation was possible. We are free to imagine the satisfaction the traveler had, by reason of the distinguished hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, and of the dedication and promise of Tom Johnson's commitment.

Before he moved from private life to public, in the amazing summer of 1886, George did one more notable job. It combined the activities of the field with those of the study. He was commissioned by the *North American Review* to do a series of articles on 'Labor in Pennsylvania.' Naturally the assignment suited him: a study in his home state, and in a segment of the economy where subsoil resources were monopolized, and where the labor force was drawn from remote parts of the world. Invading Pennsylvania was a little like invading the Duke of Argyll's lands, and a little like studying again California's regional economy. Going in the month of May, he was thrilled by the beauty of the countryside, and he wished that Annie were with him.

But he went to see economic realities, and he observed and talked his way through industrial parts of the state he had not seen before — through Hazelton, Pottsville, Harrisburg, Altoona, Johnstown, and Pittsburgh. The timing meant that he collected his data during the very month of the historic wave of strikes, the biggest and most spontaneous in American history, which was punctuated by the bomb burst in Chicago's Haymarket Square. But George seems notto have been much affected by the emotion of the movement; he enjoyed the assignment and reached an over all judgment that the condition of the state was bad but not at all hopeless.

His economic findings he took to Brooklyn to write up at his convenience, and the resulting articles were published during the fall and

winter. He kept to the tone of objective study and moderate recommendation. Though America's anti-radical panic after Haymarket was represented, even in the journal for which he was writing, by articles telling readers that revolution was breeding in the heavy air, Henry George reverted to the fact-finding phase of his mental operations which had governed his economic reporting on the West coast. Rather than the man with a reform, he became for the most part the student of conditions. He wrote in cold statistics about many facets of the state's economy. Drawing from publications of the state Bureau of Labor Statistics, he indicated how labor's low wages were rendered the more inadequate by unemployment in the mine fields. But he discovered few danger signals of radicalism. He reported that while working men were concerned about their situation they were not rabid, and he thought them cautious about using or approving the strike as a weapon of economic advantage.

Of course the writer's dispassion meant no abandonment of his habitual moral judgments or of his formulas. In these articles, as he had not done in *Progress and Poverty*, he incorporated figures on child labor, and he displayed pages of affidavits by miners whose real wages had either declined or not improved by having immigrated from Great Britain. He compared company-owned houses in Pennsylvania with the huts he had seen in Ireland, mine owners' mansions with Irish manor houses, and the coal and iron police with the Irish constabulary. He raised the question whether or not bringing the 'Huns' to the coalfields involved the same danger as allowing the Chinese in California, but decided not, for he noticed that Hungarian immigrants had already organized effective unions. He urged the necessity for laboring men to take the initiative and think and act with care.

Free-trade policy was his first advice this time. He castigated the state's tariff tradition as superstition, a bondage of ideas which the unions must learn to cast off. Wages were brought low, he said, not by reason of imports but by the competition of laborers for jobs.

He returned to his familiar land-monopoly diagnosis, but did so with uncommon brevity and force.

In contrast with his predecessors in the *North American*, the panicky contributors on the labor crisis in the June issue, George was analytical and restrained. In contrast with aggressive trade unionists, and in completest contrast of all with the country's fringe of Marxists, Henry George's preference in 1886 as always was for political methods, rather than non-political, to bring about changes in society.

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Meanwhile George had actually completed *Protection or Free Trade*. His negotiations of the fall of 1885 led to a fairly satisfactory result. Though some newspapers, which he hoped would serialize certain chapters, refused entirely, and others insisted on price reduction or on cutting down the size of the installments, half a dozen papers did contract to print. They stretched across the continent: the Brooklyn *Eagle*, the New York *Star*, the San Francisco *Examiner*, the Louisville *Courier*, the Charleston *News and Courier*, and the Toronto *Globe*. A little later the London *Star*, run by George's friends, carried parts of the book also.

Because, to the shame of American liberalism, there has been no strong habit in the United States of writing and working in behalf of international freedom of trade, certainly nothing to compare with the vigor of the protectionist tradition from Alexander Hamilton through the Carey school of economists, it is worth while to notice that peddling *Protection or Free Trade* brought in to George agreeable testimony of good will. In San Francisco William Hinton acted for his ex-partner; and when he had sold the rights to publish he wrote also that Judge Maguire and others of the city were busy 'propagating the faith as handed down to them from Henry George with true apostolic fervor.' From the South, Henry Watterson, accepting for the *Courier*, wrote in a friendly way; and the editor of the Charleston paper, the remarkable F. W. Dawson, asking for a price reduction, quite pleaded to have the serialization, for the good of the region. George was pleased to have about \$3000 coming from the newspapers. And of course he believed, as he did about *Progress and Poverty*, that publication would help mightily to force a great question on the political parties, and on the attention of the people.

Book publication waited on revision, however, and was delayed until about the time of George's visit to Ohio during the spring.

A new firm, Henry George and Company, was the publisher. By family and friends this organization was understood to represent a partnership between the author and his younger son, for Richard was all there was of the 'and Company.' The timing of events, and future events, suggest the possibility that Tom Johnson had some quiet role as guarantor; but perhaps George's recent take from the newspapers explains all that needs explaining about how capital was obtained. The purpose of the firm was to bring under George's own personal control all present and future questions of profits, propaganda, and the subsidization of his writings.

For the book which was the first to come out under the new auspices, the author chose the opposite of the inductive procedure he had used in the Pennsylvania labor articles. He was entirely conscious of doing this. A letter of 14 September 1884 in which he rejected a suggestion from Dr. Taylor, his old intimate, expresses the decision completely. 'My view of the matter is the reverse of yours,' wrote George. 'I do not think induction employed in such questions as the tariff is of any use. What the people want is theory: and until they get a correct theory into their heads, all citing of facts is useless.'

For the actual text, the author-publisher relied heavily on propositions, reminiscent of the San Francisco *Post*, such as protection is 'repugnant to moral perceptions and inconsistent with the simplicity and harmony which we everywhere discover in natural law.' In an autobiographical passage he alluded to his conversion to free trade, in the Sacramento lyceum meeting of 1866. As earlier — in *Progress and Poverty* and in many places — he represented free trade and land-value taxation as the two sides of one true coin of right policy. Together not separately, he said with an argument more fully developed than before, they could be used to open the resources of the world to all who would invest or work.

At first glance, the middle '80s would seem to have been an unlikely time for so doctrinaire and uncompromising a book. Not only had a quarter of a century of Republicanism built a whole series of tariff walls into the structure of national legislation, but one year of Democratic control had shown no wish to take them down. More than that, for a writer to be for labor and against protection amounted almost to a contradiction in political terms. George could have wanted no alliances with such free-trade economists as his old opponent, William Graham Sumner, if only because

the professor opposed labor unions — as an issue of freedom — from first to last. Nor was there comfort from old friends of Liberal Republican days. David Ames Wells is remembered as saying in frustration, of the work of the tariff lobbies in the '80s: 'This is the revolution. It will take another revolution to overthrow the leadership now established by business men.'

Yet in a closer view, the timing of *Protection or Free Trade*, even the dogmatism which announced for the principles of the Physiocrats as more thoroughgoing than those of the house of Adam Smith, seems not so strange after all. Though so far as the world knew in 1886, Grover Cleveland possessed no impulse to return to first Democratic principles, against the tariff, there is a possibility that George had a notion that inclinations were actually different at the White House. Not unlikely the working author learned from Thomas Shearman about an interview as early as 1883, in which Cleveland made a confidential statement of distaste for the national tariff policy. And from another direction of encouragement, though he himself was not involved, George must have known when George Haven Putnam, the publisher, called a meeting of free traders and revenue reformers in 1883. As we have already seen, though George regarded the New York Free Trade Club as not his kind, he had accepted membership when Poultney Bigelow got him in. In sum, a certain gathering of anti-tariff sentiment had occurred; and now, as in California against the land monopolizers, he was not entirely isolated in his thinking. Once again, Henry George was simply more vigorous, more articulate and doctrinaire, than others were.

When the book appeared, reviewers made just about such a comment as the one above, but they did so with an adverse twist of meaning. In the new *Political Science Quarterly*, George B. Newcomb said that George attached free trade too closely to land-value taxation, and the two were set forth as too complete a panacea for readers with intellectual tastes. Though Newcomb was not altogether unfriendly, he protested George's 'rhetorical method' and said, much as German scholars had said of *Progress and Poverty*, that a larger use of historical data would have made a more effective argument. In the *Chicago Dial*, Albert Shaw pooh-poohed the

book, but the *New York Critic*, a somewhat similar paper which had been friendly to *Progress and Poverty*, gave a favorable notice and selected for praise George's stand for the international copyright. Quite naturally the

newspapers were for the most part adverse and spoke in accordance with their editorial policies.

Yet this book, next to *Progress and Poverty*, is the one of George's writings least to be judged by immediate reactions and momentary standards. If its ideological quality offended early readers, the book showed long-run strength which seems to have drawn from that very quality. There appeared an immediate German translation, and there were later Danish and Spanish ones; and though disappointingly no early edition was published in England, Kegan Paul did bring one out in 1903, when the sands were running low on a period of Conservative government. *Protection or Free Trade* is the George book which has the unique history of being printed entire in the *Congressional Record*, and being distributed gratis by the hundreds of thousands through the United States mails. By then, when the book was six years old, some 200,000 copies had gone out from Henry George and Company.

*Protection or Free Trade* is the climax of the effort of Henry George to find a place for himself on the national stage, before he was drawn into politics. Britain had received him and considered him, and partly adopted him, as the author of *Progress and Poverty*. But his native land had required an apprenticeship longer by three or four years.

As he now emerged to real prominence, the record made the man of 1886 a man of paradoxes indeed: a radical land theorist, but one who denied the homestead farm as a safety valve for working men; a spokesman for labor, but one who protested more strongly than anyone else the national policy commonly believed to protect American working men; a local-government Jeffersonian, but one who spoke for government's playing a strong role in economic affairs, and sometimes for the federal government's doing so. His course in politics would not be easy.

Yet he was quite as ready for recognition at home now, as he had been for recognition in the British Isles a little earlier. His mind had tackled the acknowledged realities of the nation's economic life; he had been accepted in the highest places of journalism; he had forced the attention of a few ranking academic men; he had been heard a little in the forums across the land. He had established durable connections in the labor movement; and he had acquired loyal friends among the upper middle class. No one else in the United States would have filled quite the same specifications.