

## CHAPTER II

### BIOGRAPHY

THE conceptions of philosophers have not always been accorded biographical interpretation. Thought, unlike the more overt action, has often been treated as something a little removed from the exactitudes of circumstance, as something that has sprung full-armed from the philosopher's head, and that can stand in its own right quite without need for explanatory support. Perhaps, in a sense, this is correct, and it may be that pure thought can be more suggestively and impartially appreciated when it is considered as if it were really a pure and incorruptible essence. Whatever may be the advantages, however, of an approach to philosophy without regard for biographical detail, such a policy cannot be followed in discussing a figure like Henry George, whose thought was determined by the same factors that moulded the very character of the man. His concepts were a living integral part of his being, and they could not possibly be completely understood were they divorced from the peculiar surroundings in which they originated and functioned. The singular uniqueness of George's life and training, strange and bizarre as compared with the biographies of other thinkers, must be grasped by any one interested in his ideas. It is certainly quite unusual and perhaps not just the thing for a philosopher to have been a sailor and a printer, a journalist, tramp, and political candidate powerful enough to have worried Tammany Hall. The story of his life, so removed from the commonplace of both the academic and the every-day worlds, is interesting in itself;

it becomes significant when it is correlated with the development of his thought.

There has been only one comprehensive biography of Henry George, and that is the truly great piece of work done by his son.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all of the other biographical material about George has appeared in journalistic or essay form, either in newspapers—particularly in his obituaries and in the stories published during his two candidacies for the New York City mayoralty—or in periodicals and pamphlets.<sup>2</sup> The completeness of the *Life* would afford little excuse for the introduction of any new material were it not for the fact that a number of hitherto unpublished letters have come to light since the date of the book's appearance; and while they do not at all change the picture that the son has given us, they may bring to the foreground some of the less appreciated aspects of George's character. The large collection of letters and diaries that Henry George, Jr., had access to has been examined again, and several selections from them which are not found in the biography have been included here.<sup>3</sup>

Henry George was born in Philadelphia on the 2d of September, 1839, in a small two-story brick building<sup>4</sup> on Tenth Street, south of Pine, just a short walk from the historic State House of Revolutionary fame. In the Philadelphia of 1839 there were still traditions harking back to the days when the city was the shipping center of the new world, when its devout skippers filled the seven seas with commerce and

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Henry George*, by Henry George, Jr., 1900. (George's *Works*, Vols. IX, X.) The biographical details of George's life will be taken largely from this work of his son; other material will be specified separately.

<sup>2</sup> The greater part of this material may be found in the 28-volume collection of Henry George Scrap Books in the Economics Division of the New York Public Library. Of especial interest in this connection are Vols. 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13-16, 21, 27, and 28.

<sup>3</sup> The passages from the letters and journals have not all been placed in this chapter; some selections have been used where they may have been found helpful in a fuller appreciation of George's thoughts.

<sup>4</sup> This building has been purchased by the Henry George Foundation of America, and is to be preserved as a memorial.

religion. These traditions of piety and salt water were deeply rooted in the George family. The grandfather, Captain Richard George, a native of Yorkshire, England, had become one of the leading shipmasters of Philadelphia, and up to the days of the embargo and the second war with Great Britain his clippers were a familiar sight in the harbor. His son, Richard Samuel Henry George, born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, was more devoted to the religious side of the family tradition, and, although himself a good sailor, he gave up the idea of going to sea and also a position in the Philadelphia Custom House in order to publish Episcopal Sunday school books. He was for a time the publisher for the General Episcopal Sunday School Union, the Bible and Prayer Book Society, and the Tract Society. Later he returned to the Custom House, but remained a vestryman of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and continued to regard "high church" tendencies with horror. He married twice; his second wife, who was Catherine Pratt Vallance of Philadelphia, was Henry George's mother. She was of Scottish and English descent, and her father, John Vallance, who came from Glasgow to Philadelphia, made a reputation for himself as an engraver; his name may be seen on some of the commissions signed by George Washington. Henry George was one of ten children, the second child and the oldest son.

Young George might well have been headed along the path which perhaps would have led to the position of Episcopal bishop had the financial means of the family been at all adequate; certainly there was no lack of pious sincerity or of clerical respect. But as it was, the \$800 income of the father was little enough to feed and clothe the dozen members of the household, and consequently George's schooling never went beyond the elementary stage. At six years of age he was sent to a Mrs. Graham's private school and stayed there until he was nine; then he entered the Mount Vernon Grammar

School, and a year later the Episcopal Academy. The academy, under the direction first of Bishop Alonzo Potter and later of the Reverend Doctor Hare, had achieved a leading position among the schools of Pennsylvania and had turned out a goodly number of Episcopal bishops and college presidents. George's father, although no longer in the religious publishing business, was yet able to obtain for his son the reduced tuition available for clergymen's sons. The boy, however, looked upon this as an unmerited concession, and perhaps that accounted for his inability to get along with his fellow students. He left after a short time and prepared for high school under a private tutor, but his high school studies lasted only five months, and then, when he was not yet fourteen years old, an age at which John Stuart Mill, having mastered Greek, Latin, French, mathematics and logic, was helping his father write political economy, George left school, never to return, and went to work as an errand boy and clerk.

Compared with the training of nearly all the leading figures in English and Continental thought of the day, men who when they were no older than George at the time his formal education ended had completed their preparatory studies or were already enrolled in universities, George's schooling seems almost nonexistent. Its technical incompleteness may be appreciated by the fact that he never became familiar with mathematics, languages or science except in a popular form. Whether a formal education would have broadened George's "one-idea" philosophy to a degree that would have made it unimportant, or whether it would have buttressed his concepts with additional knowledge, must remain an idle although interesting question. It is perhaps easier to believe that the unique and varied experiences of his career, bringing him into contact not so much with the world of academic thought as with the world of perplexing situations and immediate problems, played a more compelling rôle in the for-

mulation and direction of his thinking than could have been achieved by any scholastic training.<sup>5</sup>

It must not be thought, however, that George was at all unaware of the deficiencies in his education, or that he in any way neglected the limited opportunities for instructing himself.<sup>6</sup> His search for knowledge was an eager and private one, and while he was not able to fill in the gaps left in his learning in such a manner as that, for example, employed by Herbert Spencer, yet he did seize upon every means of adding to his fund of information. Before he left school he had already formed the habit of wide if not systematic reading, and upon the foundations that he laid in these early years he later built a rich storehouse of knowledge. The acquaintance with books that is manifested throughout his writings shows a surprisingly catholic range of interest, one that could have come only from an omnivorous and unselective program of early reading.

The literature that the boy found at home was quite natu-

<sup>5</sup> Elbert Hubbard says: "Henry George was right in the class with Spencer, Huxley and Tyndall, none of whom, happily, was a college man, and therefore all were free from the handicap of dead learning and ossified opinion, and saw things as if they were new. Ignorance is a very necessary equipment in doing a great and sublime work that is to eclipse anything heretofore performed. The mind of Henry George was a flower of slow growth. At thirty-seven he was just reaching mental manhood." *Little Journeys to the Homes of Great Reformers* (East Aurora, N. Y., The Roycroft Press, 1907), Vol. XX, p. 67.

(It may be remarked that both Huxley and Tyndall did hold university degrees. The former received his medical degree at London and taught for a while at the School of Mines in Edinburgh. Tyndall studied in Germany and won his doctor's degree in physics at the University of Marburg.)

<sup>6</sup> An interesting side-light on George's educational views appears in this letter to his son Dick, December 17, 1880: "I have come to the conclusion that if you can find a place to learn to set type it will be best for you not to go back to school after Christmas. I don't like your leaving school until you have got further along, but you are getting so old now that it is important that you should learn to make a living for yourself, for that is, by far, the most important part of education. . . . Education never ceases. There is always something to learn and something to try for. . . . But try in the beginning to acquire correct habits, and above all things acquire the habit of working hard when you do work. Whatever you do, learn to do it with your might." Economic conditions being what they were, "making a living" was "the most important part of education."

rally of a religious character, and his grounding in Scripture and in the exegetical works of the Episcopal Church was almost as thorough as if he were being prepared for the ministry. In the books of his father's library<sup>7</sup> he found also strange tales of missionaries in foreign lands and rousing stories of the sea—again that mingling of the pulpit and the fore-castle, the fruitful mixture of idea and action that was to characterize George's entire career. The boy had access to the old Quaker Apprentices' Library and to the library of the Franklin Institute, and while there is no record of the precise nature of his reading at this time, we do know that, in addition to the books of fiction and travel, and works like Franklin's *Autobiography*, that he read, he also concentrated upon the study of history and was particularly influenced by Buckle, with his emphasis upon the power of law in historical development and upon the correlation of physical conditions and mental development.

Young George also attended the popular scientific lectures of the Franklin Institute, an organization that had been founded in 1824 for the "promotion and encouragement of manufactures and the mechanic and useful arts." In his diary, which he began early in 1855 and which was kept up intermittently throughout his life, there is mention of his going to the lectures<sup>8</sup> almost every evening and of his youth-

<sup>7</sup> The pietistic tradition in the George family would not permit certain books to be read in the house, and consequently the boy had to do much of his reading in his attic bedroom. Even such a romance as *Scottish Chiefs* came under the ban. The same censorship applied to the theatre, and George's mother, although an ardent reader of Shakespeare, never allowed herself to see a Shakespearian play.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding "lectures" and also the pietistic tradition in the George family, Henry George tells this story of a distinguished fellow American: "I was educated in a very strict faith. My people and the people whom I knew in my childhood, the people who went to our church and other churches of the same kind, had a notion that the theatre was a very bad place, and they would not go to one on any account. There was a celebrated fellow citizen of mine of the name of Barnum. Barnum went to Philadelphia, and he recognized that prejudice, and he saw that, although there were a number of theatres running for the ungodly, a theatre he could get the godly

ful interest in "climatology," "organic chemistry," "electricity," and "the panorama of Europe."

But now the lure of the sea put aside any further thought of lectures or reading; the boy was in his sixteenth year, and the only thing that really mattered was to ship before the mast and sail the South Pacific. An old East Indiaman, the *Hindoo*, was to leave New York harbor early in April of 1855 bound for Melbourne and Calcutta. It was captained by a friend of the family, and Henry persuaded his father—not with too much difficulty, for there was a George tradition to be carried on—to let him sign up as foremast boy. So, after Sunday school on the 1st of April, with a copy of the Bible<sup>9</sup> and *James's Anxious Enquirer* under his arm, the boy left for New York, and ten days later he was off for Australia and India, names whose very sound called up strange images of distant lands and wondrous seas. There is a journal record of the trip to Melbourne, written in a small regular hand with not too much care for the rules of spelling or punctuation, but it is largely in the form of a ship's log with notes of winds

to go to would pay extremely well. But he did not start a theatre. . . . He started a lecture room, and we had in that lecture room theatrical representations, and it was crowded every night in the week and there were two matinées." (Quoted in the *Life*, p. 11, n. 1.)

<sup>9</sup>In addition to the Scriptures the boy took with him much religious advice, and the letters that the young sailor received from home were filled with a pious spirit that was calculated to dispel any of the ungodly thoughts that might lurk in the hold of an East Indiaman. He was told that "the same God who is about you and sees all that you do," is about them, "and He hears and answers prayer, though you may be many thousands of miles away," and that "there are many trials and temptations in a sailor's life; but there are also many things in it calculated to favor serious feelings. See how David speaks of it in Psalms 107: 23-31. I have often felt as if on many accounts sailors ought to be the most religious of men." And his mother wrote him of this kind of news: "The best news just now is the religious news—a great work going on in New York and Philadelphia and all the principal cities of the Union; prayer-meetings all over the land; all denominations uniting together in solemn, earnest prayer; Jayne's Hall (you know its size) is crowded to excess, even those large galleries literally packed with men of the highest respectability—merchants, bankers, brokers, all classes. Those who have never entered a church and have hitherto scoffed at religion meet at this prayer-meeting every day to hear the word of God read and solemn prayer offered for their conversion."

and weather and the daily incidents of life on board, enlivened, however, by some passages of vivid description.

The *Hindoo* arrived at Hobson's Bay, Melbourne, on the 25th of August and left a month later for Calcutta. George visited the Australian city only once and, according to Captain Miller,<sup>10</sup> was not impressed, for instead of gold and riches in this new island continent, times seemed to be "very hard ashore, thousands with nothing to do and nothing to eat."<sup>11</sup> India proved to be a like disillusionment, and in the 80-mile trip up the Hooghly branch of the Ganges river from the sea to Calcutta, and in the visits to Barrapore and other places of interest, he found much to shatter his boyish dreams of the land of the Arabian Nights. After a short stay in India, the *Hindoo* set sail for home and arrived at New York on June 14, 1856.

After fourteen months of a sailor's life it was not easy for young George to settle down once more in the pious Philadelphia family. He "found it full of restrictions, for with all the heavy toil and hard discipline of sea life, there was during the preceding year and a quarter complete freedom of thought and of actions, too, in the hours off duty. And now to come back to conditions where the most innocent of card-playing was regarded as an evil and riding in a public conveyance on Sunday as a desecration of the Lord's Day, made the energetic, masterful boy . . . see new charms in the sea life."<sup>12</sup> Some time later he did sign as ordinary seaman for a short trip from Philadelphia to Boston on a topsail schooner laden with coal, but the life of the sailor was not to be his. The advice given him by Captain Miller of the *Hindoo*,<sup>13</sup> and the opposition of his parents, who perhaps were alarmed at the

<sup>10</sup> *Life*, p. 32.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> The captain wrote to George: "I hope you will find some agreeable and profitable employment before long. Take my advice and never go to sea. You know the troubles of a sailor's life before the mast. It never gets any better. A second mate leads proverbially a dog's life. The mate's and captain's are very little better." (Quoted in *Life*, p. 41.)



change that one trip had made in him, turned his thoughts landward; from now on he was to learn to set type. He worked for several Philadelphia printing establishments and newspapers, but his general restlessness and his growing reaction to the strict discipline at home, together with the small wages and insecure position of a typesetter, made some decisive change inevitable. That change was to come shortly, and it was to transform him from a printer's boy in Philadelphia to the "Prophet of San Francisco."

It was at this time that George and some of his young friends formed the "Lawrence Literary Society" for the purpose of discussing "poetry, economics and Mormonism." The club was patterned undoubtedly upon the "Junto" of Franklin's *Autobiography*, although it was hardly of the same character as that Junto which later was to grow into the American Philosophical Society. The Lawrence Society was by no means confined to literary endeavor, however, as a letter from one of the members, Charles Walton, to George some years later will show:

I have often thought of the time gone by when the "Lawrence" in Jerusalem Church was in its palmy days. . . . Can you or I forget the gay, refreshing and kindred spirits that formed that association and gave it a character so unenviable and noticeable as eventually to cause it to be ordered out peremptorily; its sympathy with ghost stories, boxing gloves, fencing foils and deviltry; its exercises tending to promote muscular rather than literary ability; and its test of merit and standard of membership—to drink Red Eye, sing good songs and smoke lots of cigars?<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Some letters from his best friend, Joseph Jeffreys, written to George later when he was in California, also indicate that, as the biography states (p. 50), "the fact of knowing anything whatever about liquor or of card playing was significant of the breakdown of the old home influences." Here is a paragraph from a letter of May 6, 1858: "I would have given anything to have you there this evening, my dear fellow, for we are going to kick Hell up again to-night. We have got plenty of the very best imported brandy and port wine, for we have a first rate fellow in our room who is in a wholesale drug house on Market Street and he brings all the liquors home with him, so that they don't cost us anything, and his employers are very willing that

There are still in existence two of George's essays which he prepared for the society, one a quite devastating attack upon "Mormon Polygamy," and the other on the "Poetry of Life," a flowery piece of boyish rhetoric ending with the "Psalm of Life." The youthful introspection of these adolescent years also caused George to conduct a "phrenological examination of head by self," and it is with surprising accuracy that the chart, which may still be seen among his papers, delineates some of the characteristics that the youth discovered in himself. Among the general remarks which follow the detailed degrees of Amativeness, Philoprogenitiveness and the rest, are found these paragraphs:

Will be more likely to make a general than a critical scholar. May have bold and original ideas upon a variety of subjects, yet will not without effort or excitement have a train of connected thoughts upon any; . . . generally takes sides on every contested question. . . . Desires money more as a means than as an end, more for its uses than to lay up; and pays too little attention to small sums. . . . Is inclined to enter largely into business and to push his projects with so much energy and zeal as to appear rash and nearly destitute of caution . . .

The opportunity now presented itself to George to leave Philadelphia and to break away from the home ties which were becoming a little too binding upon one who, according

he should have them at his room for the purpose, as they suppose, of trying experiments, though they little imagine what kind of experiments they are used for. You would have had a splendid time if you had been there." And here is some youthful advice given with the awful seriousness of the teens (May 19): "But Harry, I am truly sorry to hear from yourself that you have been dissipating so much of your time, so much of your money, in pleasures which are not only evanescent but entail sickness upon the frame, injure the fairest and most promising prospects, blight the loftiest ideals of lofty minds, and paralyze the intellectual powers of God's noblest creatures. You have enjoyed yourself—that is right. You have endeavored to repay yourself for restraint and confinement by indulgences which fire the brain and madden the soul, and in the wild excitement you have perhaps forgotten your aims, your hopes, your ambition, and here you have been wrong. Look around you, Harry, and learn from the bitter experience of those who have gone before you, that fame if wanted must be strived for and that perfect success is only to be acquired by slow and steady progress."

to his own phrenological investigations, was "extremely fond of traveling and has an insatiable desire to roam about and see the world and afterward to settle down." Some neighbors had gone out to the Oregon Territory, where their nephew, George Curry, was acting governor, and they had invited Henry George to emigrate to the new West. The magic of the coast, where the gold rush was not yet a memory but a living drama of riches and power, needed no hard times in Philadelphia, nor low printers' wages, nor youthful wanderlust, to add to its magnetic charm, and so George made the traditional nineteenth century American decision of going West. His sailing experience solved the transportation question, which was still a problem in those pre-Civil War days when the Conestoga wagon and not the train was the commonplace. He secured a position as steward or storekeeper on the United States Lighthouse steamer *Shubrick*,<sup>15</sup> which sailed from the Philadelphia Navy Yard for San Francisco on December 22, 1857. The long trip down the Atlantic coast, through the Strait of Magellan, and up the Pacific to the Golden Gate was finally completed in May of the following year, and George found himself in that strange new city of the West, the city of adventure and strength and youth, where a nation was staking out its last frontier. Except for a few occasional visits he was not again to return to Philadelphia and his home.

No satisfactory news arrived from Oregon, and there followed for George a period of feverish and restless drifting. He did not remain long in San Francisco, especially since in June of '58 there came the siren call of gold from Canada. A strike had been made on the Fraser River in the British possessions

<sup>15</sup> The *Shubrick* was the first steam tender in the government lighthouse service, and, in addition to its regular duties, "she was intended to give protection to government property along the seashore of Oregon and Washington from the depredations of Indian tribes and was armed with six brass guns and a novel contrivance for squirting scalding water on the redskins when at close quarters." (*Life*, pp. 56-57; for details of the trip see *ibid.* and pp. 63-67.)

just north of the American line, and George worked his passage up to Victoria on a schooner; but the gold had given out and he soon was back in California. For a time he held a position as printer and lodged in the "What Cheer House," a temperance hotel in San Francisco that boasted a small library of several hundred volumes, including a copy of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Here George again began to cultivate his reading, although there is no evidence that in these early days he became acquainted with the work of Smith.<sup>16</sup> His letters home and his diary notes, especially those of April, 1859, which contain what is apparently an outline of English and American history, indicate that for a time at least he followed a definite plan of study; but that was again interrupted by the charmed call of the mines. Once more he set out for the gold fields, this time in northern California, and he made his way as a farm hand, as a weigher in a rice mill, and finally was reduced, to use his own words,<sup>17</sup> to "sleeping in barns and leading the life of a tramp." He never reached the mines; in fact, it was only after the severest of physical hardships that he was able to make his return to San Francisco. Here again his thoughts turned to the sea, but another printing offer kept him ashore and perhaps determined his career.

Some idea of the crudeness of his own writing at the time, and also a glimpse of the circles of the "intelligentsia" of the 1860 Pacific coast, may be had from his letters to his sister Jennie. This is from a letter of April 18, 1859:

I don't read much now except the newspapers and you are getting far ahead of me in that line. It takes pretty much all my spare time to keep posted on the current topics of the day. What

<sup>16</sup> See *Life*, p. 86.

<sup>17</sup> An account of this trip is included in some autobiographical material that George, shortly before his death in 1897, related to Ralph Meeker, a newspaper friend. These "Meeker Notes" may be found scattered throughout the *Life*.

a time we live in, when great events follow one another so quickly that we have not space for wonder. We are driving at a killing pace somewhere—Emerson says to heaven and Carlyle says to the other place, but however much they differ, go we surely do.

I am invited out to-morrow evening to join a reading circle and if it don't rain will make my début in polite society on this coast. Would you like to see me make my bow, or hear me break down when I come to some hard word? But I will do no such thing, I ain't as bashful as I used to be. I am simply "Henry George, at your service, no more, no less, if you don't like him, stand to one side, and let him pass."

You do some pretty heavy reading for a young girl. I wouldn't be so afraid of novels. A good one is always instructive and your taste is sufficiently cultivated to allow you to like no other. I never read them, but then it is solely because I have not time, and am obliged to take my mental food in as condensed a form as possible.

The advice he received from home shows no let-down in religious interest, and even his own letters manifest some concern with church affairs, although he himself had rejected formal religion. He wrote home (Jan. 4, 1859):

The only Episcopalian clergyman that I have heard out here was formerly an actor and is now a tip-top high churchman, keeps all the saints' days and feasts and fasts of the church, and preaches that if you get baptized when eight days old you are all right; at least that was the substance of a sermon I heard, and I didn't go there to hear another. California is sadly in want of missionaries and I think that it would be a good notion for the Sunday school to send a few out, provided they were gold-fever proof.

And again (April 18):

I went last evening to hear a sermon preached to young men by Doctor Cutler of the First Unitarian Church, subject: "Idleness." It was the best discourse I have heard since I left home. The congregation, though, was rather small. . . . In fact, the theatres here have a better attendance on Sunday evenings than the churches.

For a time George did turn to religion, and the persuasion of two of his more ardently pious friends led him to join the

Methodist Church. It was not the effect of any revival—the San Francisco of 1860 was hardly a fruitful field for wholesale conversion—that made him a church member, but rather the realization of how completely he had broken away from his home influences, a momentary reaction to his own lack of religious faith. His membership was quite casual and certainly did not merit the ecstatic joy of his family, especially since his parents were as yet unaware that it was the Methodist and not the Episcopal Church that he had espoused.

When the Civil War broke out George was setting type for the *Evening Journal*, in which he had bought a small interest. The war did not mean to California what it did to the East, although the slavery question had been burned into the State in the bloody election of 1859. The effects of the war west of the Rocky Mountains, however, were indirect and the significance of the struggle could hardly have been thoroughly appreciated. George, who had been opposed to slavery since boyhood,<sup>18</sup> and who had but recently come from the East, perhaps better realized the meaning of the war than was the case with the average Californian. The letters from home, particularly the news of the enlistment of his boyhood friends, could not help but make the war real to him. His father wrote (June 10, 1860):

You cannot feel it as we do. All around us is warlike, and young men are crowding into the ranks of the forces being raised. Nothing now but the sound of the drum and the march of troops South. . . . But, my dear boy, this is what I think I predicted to you long ago. We are now approaching times and scenes such as never have been seen in these United States; and we old men have come to the conclusion that it is best that it should now be declared whether we are a National Government or not, that our children may know the truth, and what they are to depend upon.

<sup>18</sup> See *Life*, pp. 43-44.

In George's own letters there is some mention of the war,<sup>19</sup> but at this time his thoughts were far more concerned with a growing personal realization of the depressing results of poverty. His writing during these months reveals a decided conviction as to the effects of material wants, a conviction, moreover, that had not been reached vicariously. It was the product of an experience that, already bitter, was soon to become desperate. Here in embryonic stage was the thought that later was to dominate his entire approach to the concepts of economics and ethics; here was an attitude that was to create for him a characteristic and singular interpretation of some of the most fundamental problems of moral theory. He writes: <sup>20</sup>

What a constant reaching this life is, a constant stretching forth, and longing after something . . . and so it will be until we reach the perfect. . . . If civil war should pass over the country leaving nothing but devastation behind it, I think my faith in the ultimate good would remain unchanged. . . . On great events and movements we can philosophize, but when it comes down to ourselves, to our homes, to those we love, then we can only feel—our philosophy goes to the dogs, and we can but look prayerfully to Him who hath more care for us than for all the sparrows . . .

I do not get time to read now; in fact, I have read very little for eighteen months—hardly more than the newspapers. . . . How I long for the Golden Age, for the promised Millennium, when each one will be free to follow his best and noblest impulses, unfettered by the restrictions and necessities which our present state of so-

<sup>19</sup> "Am glad Bill Horner and Jim Stanley have gone to the wars. I should like to see them. If I were home, and situated as they are, I would go, too. Not that I like the idea of fighting my countrymen—not that I think it is the best or pleasantest avocation, or that the fun of soldiering is anything to speak of; but in this life or death struggle I should like to have a hand. If they die, they will die in a good cause; and if they live, they will always feel prouder and better when this time is mentioned than if they had remained safely at home while others faced the danger and did the work. I have felt a great deal like enlisting, even here, and probably would have done so, had I not felt that my duty to you all required me to remain." (Letter to sister Jennie, Sept. 15, 1861.)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

ciety imposes upon him; when the poorest and the meanest will have a chance to use all his God-given faculties and not be forced to drudge away the best part of his time in order to supply wants but little above those of the animal . . .

Is it any wonder that men lust for gold and are willing to give almost anything for it, when it covers everything—the purest and holiest desires of their hearts, the exercise of their noblest powers! What a pity we can't be contented! Is it? Who knows? Sometimes I feel sick of the fierce struggle of our highly civilized life, and think I would like to get away from cities and business, with their jostlings and strainings and cares, altogether, and find some place on one of the hill-sides which look so dim and blue in the distance, where I could gather those I love, and live content with what Nature and our own resources would furnish; but alas, money, money is wanted even for that. It is our fate—we must struggle, and so here's for the strife! . . .

And again:

I am not one of those who love work for its own sake, but feeling what it brings I love it, and am happiest when hard at it. It is no wonder that wealth is sought by all means, good or bad; for it expresses almost everything. With it, it seems to me I should be supremely happy . . . it is but the want of a few dollars that keeps us separate, that forces one to struggle on so painfully, that crushes down all the noblest yearnings of the heart and mind . . .<sup>21</sup>

In November, 1861, George lost what little money he had saved, and yet, two weeks later, with a defiant and characteristic recklessness, he was married. The *Journal*, in which he had invested his savings, became unable to compete with papers holding the press association franchises after the completion of the transcontinental telegraph, and George was left with but a single coin to his name. In fact he showed this coin to the young lady when he proposed and gravely declared that it comprised all his property—and still he was accepted. His wife was Annie Corsina Fox; she was only

<sup>21</sup> Letter of June 5, 1862.



eighteen at the time of the marriage, while George was twenty-two. Mrs. George had been born in Sydney, Australia, but had come to California and was living in San Francisco; she was of the Roman Catholic faith, of English and Irish descent, and had been educated in a convent at Los Angeles, then a Mexican town. The marriage was an elopement, since the bride's guardians—she was an orphan and lived with her two uncles—were not greatly impressed with the financial condition of the groom. After several days George and his young wife went to Sacramento, where he secured some printing work on the *Union*, a daily morning newspaper.

The next few years were to find poverty and despair hanging grimly over George. His printing work was irregular, he lost his savings again, in some mining stock, and finally, after peddling clothes-wringers for a time, he returned to San Francisco. The first child, Henry George, Jr., was born November 3, 1862, and the second, who was named Richard Fox, on January 27, 1865. The diary notes of these years are mute testimony of the fight that the young father was making against destitution. Most of the items are lists of debts and notices of small sums that he was able to earn at printing. On Christmas Day of 1864 there is this note in the diary:

Struck by something read in library; determined to live more methodically and energetically. Saw landlady and told her I was not able to pay rent . . .

Two days later there was this entry:

Very blue—seem to have got down to bedrock.

Determined to keep a regular journal and to cultivate habits of determination, energy and industry. Feel that I am in a bad situation, and must use my utmost effort to keep afloat and go ahead. Will try to follow the following general rules for one week:

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- 1—In every case to determine rationally what is best to be done.
- 2—To do everything determined upon immediately or as soon as an opportunity presents.
- 3—To write down what I shall determine upon doing for succeeding days.

This was followed by his own poem on "The Cross," and a list of debts.

The Meeker Notes reveal his pitiful condition: <sup>22</sup>

I came near starving to death, and at one time I was so close to it that I think I should have done so but for the job of printing a few cards which enabled us to buy a little corn meal. In this darkest time in my life my second child was born.

Mrs. George had already sold her few pieces of jewelry, the delivery of milk had been discontinued because of the expense, and on the day the baby was born there was no money in the house to buy food for the mother. What George did at this crisis of his life he related sixteen years later to a friend: <sup>23</sup>

I walked along the street and made up my mind to get money from the first man whose appearance might indicate that he had it to give. I stopped a man—a stranger—and told him I wanted \$5. He asked what I wanted it for. I told him that my wife was confined and that I had nothing to give her to eat. He gave me the money. If he had not, I think I was desperate enough to have killed him.

His diary continues:

Feb. 17, 1865. . . . I am now afloat again, with the world before me. I have commenced this little book as an experiment—to aid me in acquiring habits of regularity, punctuality and purpose. I will enter in it each evening the principal events of the day, with notes, if they occur, errors committed or the reverse, and plans for the morrow and future. I will make a practice of looking at it on rising in the morning.

I am starting out afresh, very much crippled and embarrassed, owing over \$200. I have been unsuccessful in everything. I wish

<sup>22</sup> *Life*, p. 148.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

to profit by my experience and to cultivate those qualities necessary to success in which I have been lacking. I have not saved as much as I ought and am resolved to practice a rigid economy until I have something ahead.

- 1st. To make every cent I can.
- 2nd. To spend nothing unnecessarily.
- 3rd. To put something by each week, if it is only a five-cent piece borrowed for the purpose.
- 4th. Not to run into debt if it can be avoided.

- 1st. To endeavor to make an acquaintance and friend of every one with whom I am brought in contact.
- 2nd. To stay at home less, and be more social.
- 3rd. To strive to think consecutively and decide quickly.

The journal shows that fortune began to treat him more considerately for a time, and although he did not faithfully live up to his resolutions, he was able to earn money to support his family and pay some of his debts. But a condition such as he had passed through could hardly have failed to impress a man like George, not with a sense of personal bitterness so much as with a wondering dismay at the state of affairs that could cause an honest man to contemplate violence in order to feed his wife and children. And poverty was to be his unwelcome visitor again and again.

George now definitely set out upon a career of writing, and in his diary for March, 1865, there are several notes that show he was consciously endeavoring to develop the literary ability he felt he possessed. He wrote several essays for practice and then composed a fantastic sketch, "A Plea for the Supernatural," which was published by the *Californian*, a literary weekly numbering among its contributors Mark Twain and Bret Harte. News of the assassination of Lincoln swept San Francisco a few weeks later and the boisterous city gave vent to its feelings by destroying four "copperhead" newspapers. George, after helping to hurl type and furniture and ma-

chinery out of various newspaper office windows, went home and wrote a fiery article on the murder, "Sic Semper Tyrannis." He placed it in the editor's box of the *Alta California*, the paper on which he was setting type, and it appeared as the leading editorial the next day. Another unsigned article of his on the character of Lincoln was used a few days later as the lead of the editorial page, and George, after his identity was discovered, found himself a reporter. He was first sent as the "war correspondent" of a filibustering expedition that was to invade Mexico in the cause of freedom and help Juarez overthrow Archduke Maximilian, but the overambitious Americans in their water-logged old bark were stopped by a revenue cutter before they could leave San Francisco harbor, and George's services as reporter were no longer needed.<sup>24</sup> He continued to write, however, and devoted himself to free-lance newspaper work, which consisted mainly of descriptive articles built around incidents he had experienced in his early sailing voyages, and also accounts of State politics.<sup>25</sup> His work finally won recognition and he obtained a steady position as reporter on the *San Francisco Times*; he was soon advanced to editorial writer and managing editor.

In December of 1868 George left the *Times* and joined the *San Francisco Herald*, a Democratic paper that had just been founded, and he was sent to New York in order to secure a press association franchise for the new journal. The franchise was refused and George had his first contact with the ugly effects of monopoly when he attempted to run an independent press service from Philadelphia for his California paper. To-

<sup>24</sup> Years later, when George ran for Mayor of New York City, this incident was brought up to show that, in addition to his many other bogymen characteristics, he was also somewhat of a pirate.

<sup>25</sup> He went to Sacramento again for a time and did some official State printing. In a debating society, the Sacramento Lyceum, he was converted from a protectionist to a free trader. For an account of these early tariff beliefs, see his *Protection or Free Trade*, p. 29.

gether with another member of the *Herald's* staff he opened an office on Third Street and sent news to San Francisco over the Western Union wires by means of a special code. The plan was successful for a time, so successful in fact that he "scooped" the Associated Press upon several occasions. The association protested to the telegraph company, the service was discontinued and George's paper lost its Eastern news. George appealed to the officials of the Western Union company and then drew up a news letter attacking the monopolistic features of the Associated Press. His protest was printed only by the New York *Herald*.<sup>26</sup> George returned to California poorer, since there were unpaid salary and expense accounts, but perhaps a bit more sensitive to the power of privilege.<sup>27</sup>

Before George had left San Francisco he had written an article for the *Overland Monthly* on "What the Railroad Will Bring Us." Here he first showed an appreciation of what were really to become his first principles, for previous to this his interest in industrial and economic matters, as indicated in several editorials on the labor question, had lacked analytical examination. It had been an interest largely personal in character and hardly different from what might have been expected of any intelligent American workman of the '60s who was at all conscious of labor problems. In the *Overland*

<sup>26</sup> Before the press war had started, George, in a letter to the New York *Tribune*, had delivered an attack upon some railroad and express abuses of the time, particularly the overcharges and reckless handling of the mails on the part of the Central Pacific Railroad and the Wells Fargo Express Company.

<sup>27</sup> A detailed account of the entire affair is found in a letter-press copy-book that George kept from January 11 to June 25 of 1869; it is in the New York Public Library and may be of interest to any one concerned with the early development of American journalism. Some years later, while George was editing the *Sacramento Reporter*, the official Democratic organ of the State party, he engaged in another contest with the Associated Press. The press fight resulted from the establishment of the Atlantic and Pacific telegraph system, a rival of the Western Union; this made it possible to set up a competitor of the Associated Press, but the newly formed American Press Association was destined to be short-lived.

article, however, there is expressed a definite conviction, the realization that wealth and want increase together with a disconcerting symmetry. The germ of what was to be perhaps George's most productive thought is found here, although the economic technicalities are necessarily of the crudest sort. A few passages will show the significant direction of George's mind at the time (the article was published in October, 1868):

Amid all our rejoicing and all our gratulation let us see clearly whither we are tending. Increase in population and wealth past a certain point means simply an approximation to the conditions of older countries—the Eastern States and Europe. Would the average Californian prefer to “take his chances” in New York or Massachusetts, or in California as it is and has been? Is England, with her population of twenty millions to an area of not more than one-third that of our State, and a wealth which per inhabitant is six or seven times that of California, a better country than California to live in? Probably, if one were born a duke or factory lord, or in any place among the upper ten thousand, but if one were born among the lower millions—how then?

But however this be, it is certain that the tendency of the new era—of the more dense population and more thorough development of the wealth of the State—will be to a reduction both of the rate of interest and the rate of wages, particularly the latter . . .

The truth is, that the completion of the railroad and the consequent great increase of business and population, will not be a benefit to all of us, but only to a portion. . . . Those who have, it will make wealthier; for those who have not, it will make it more difficult to get . . .

And as California becomes populous and rich, let us not forget that the character of a people counts for more than their numbers; that the distribution of wealth is even a more important matter than its production.

Another bit of writing, much less important in the development of George's ideas, but of considerable consequence in the establishing of his reputation, appeared in the *New York Tribune* of May 1, 1869. It was a demand for the restriction

of Chinese immigration, and while the attack seems anomalous when compared with the broadly sympathetic and universal scope of George's later thinking, it is readily explainable in its particular setting; indeed, a Californian of that day (or perhaps of any day) and especially one interested in popular and working class matters, could hardly have been required to preserve a detached and altogether scientific attitude toward the Asiatic problem in this period that preceded the agitation of Dennis Kearney. George, at least, was not quite able to see more than one side of the question. The *Tribune* contribution, however, came into importance some months later through the medium of a letter of commendation written to George by John Stuart Mill. Recognizing Mill's authority in political economy, George had sent him a copy of the article and had received a very gracious letter in reply. The incident caused something of a sensation in the West, where the Chinese question was the all-important one, and from a local newspaper man with but a small circle of friends, George became known throughout the State. In fact, there was some talk of sending him to the Legislature as a Democratic Assemblyman, but he was unable to pay the necessary assessment and the nomination was not forthcoming.<sup>28</sup>

It was in New York that George saw at first hand an example of the bewildering coincidence of progress and poverty that he had been vaguely conscious of in the *Overland* article. Here in that mighty city of the East—where wealth and prestige were written on every brownstone front and the very air seemed charged with power—misery and wretchedness

<sup>28</sup> Some years later George was nominated as Assemblyman from a San Francisco district in a campaign which was directed against the growing power of the Central Pacific Railroad; the campaign was unsuccessful and the Democratic party, including Governor Haight, who had become a close friend of George, was swept out of power.

were already smugly accepted and the slums were beginning to fester. The young man walked the streets and wondered and made a vow. Years later he told of that silent vow:

Because you are not only my friend, but a priest and a religious, I shall say something that I don't like to speak of—that I never before have told any one. Once, in daylight, and in a city street, there came to me a thought, a vision, a call—give it what name you please. But every nerve quivered. And there and then I made a vow. Through evil and through good, whatever I have done and whatever I have left undone, to that I have been true.<sup>29</sup>

And again:

Years ago I came to this city from the West, unknown, knowing nobody, and I saw and recognized for the first time the shocking contrast between monstrous wealth and debasing want. And here I made a vow from which I have never faltered, to seek out, and remedy, if I could, the cause that condemned little children to lead such a life as you know them to lead in the squalid districts.<sup>30</sup>

Another experience, of a similar revelational character but more directly related to economic conditions with which he was familiar, occurred shortly after his return to California. He had been riding one day through a district where the magic boom of land speculation had filled the scrubby countryside with a feverish collection of land offices and claim-jumpers. George relates:

Absorbed in my own thoughts, I had driven the horse into the hills until he panted. Stopping for breath, I asked a passing teamster, for want of something better to say, what land was worth there. He pointed to some cows grazing off so far that they looked like mice, and said: "I don't know exactly, but there is a man over there who will sell some land for a thousand dollars an acre." Like a flash it came upon me that there was the reason of advancing poverty with advancing wealth. With the growth of population,

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from a letter to the Reverend Father Thomas Dawson of Glenree, Ireland, February 1, 1883.

<sup>30</sup> From his acceptance of the New York mayoralty nomination in 1886.



land grows in value, and the men who work it must pay more for the privilege. I turned back, amidst quiet thought, to the perception that then came to me and has been with me ever since.<sup>31</sup>

In the East he had seen the problem; in the West he thought he had found the solution.

George now definitely busied himself with elaborating that solution, and in July of 1871 he published his first comprehensive piece of economic writing, his first attempt to solve the problem of "advancing poverty with advancing wealth." It was a 48-page pamphlet entitled *Our Land and Land Policy, National and State*, which he printed himself; in it he proposed the apparently simple solution for the problem that had forced itself upon him in the speculative rise in the price of Western lands, the solution of absorbing the "unearned increment," that had been recognized by Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, by means of a tax on the value of land. This proposal, which was to be later known as the "single tax,"<sup>32</sup> comprised the fifth section of the pamphlet, the others

<sup>31</sup> "Meeker Notes," *Life*, p. 210.

<sup>32</sup> The words "single tax" appeared in *Progress and Poverty*, p. 425; but it was not until 1887, at the suggestion of Thomas G. Shearman, the economist, that they were used to designate George's proposals (see *Life*, p. 496, n. 1). The phrase has never met with great favor; George himself did not regard it very highly, since its connotation was fiscal and purely methodological. The opposition to the use of "single tax" has largely centered about this failure of the name to indicate the fundamental issues and ethical scope of the land question. The national political party in this country changed its name from the Single Tax Party to the Commonwealth Land Party some years ago, and at the same time the *Single Tax Review*, the leading American periodical of the movement, became *Land and Freedom*. In Great Britain "single tax" has not been adopted generally as a title, and the land reform party has been known there as the Commonwealth Land Party.

The first use of the phrase "single tax" appears to have been in 1743 (that is, the first English use of the term, which is, of course, a literal translation of *l'impôt unique* of the Physiocrats) in a book published in that year by an Englishman, Matthew Decker, on *Serious Considerations on the Several High Duties*. The phrase was also used in 1806 in an English translation of Filangieri's *Science of Legislation* (see *infra*, p. 187), and again in Gourlay's *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*, London, 1822, Introd. p. 9. Robert Fleming Gourlay was a Scotchman who went to Canada in 1817 and proposed a "single tax" on land that was to be based on population. His work was one of those startling anticipations of George's doctrines (see *infra*, Chap. IV). For these early uses of the phrase "single tax," see in the

having dealt with a short historical sketch of the gradual exhausting of the country's public lands, especially in California, and with a statement of the dependence of labor upon land. George himself realized that the work was hasty and incomplete, and that an adequate interpretation of his ideas—perhaps he would have preferred to call them his vision—demanded a more thorough and well-grounded approach. It was eight years before such a work was to be accomplished, for George had now temporarily put aside a more comprehensive consideration of political economy to become editor of his own paper.

He had entered into a partnership with two other men, and with a very small capital they founded the San Francisco *Daily Evening Post*. Its first issue appeared on Monday, December 4, 1871, and the immediate effect was to introduce to California the one-cent piece. The *Post* was the first penny paper west of the Rocky Mountains, and as the one-cent piece was not yet in commercial use on the coast, one thousand dollars' worth of pennies had to be brought from the East. The *Post*, however, did more than merely popularize the penny. It was a vigorous reform sheet, opposed to Grant and pro-Greeley, and according to its own words was to be "the organ of no faction, clique or party." The editorial columns, written by George, emphasized at every opportunity "little Harry George's fad," the taxation of land values, and they contained relentless attacks upon that complacent acceptance of the growing coincidence of wealth and poverty. Characteristic passages such as these appeared during the first month of the paper's existence:

There are in England millions of people who are constantly hovering on the very verge of starvation—white, Christian people,

*Single Tax Year Book* (New York, 1917) the article by Samuel Milliken on the "Forerunners of Henry George," pp. 306-343; also *The Single Tax Movement in the United States*, by A. N. Young (Princeton University Press, 1916), pp. 109-111.

men, women and children, who are not fed and housed as well as the dogs which are kept at such expense for the amusement of the rich. It will not be otherwise. When some men take to themselves more than their share, others must get less than their share. . . . These are things for working men to think about; for every wrong there is a remedy. (Dec. 7.)

It [disquietude of labor] cannot be put down by cries of "communism," "socialism," "agrarianism," for it is neither the one nor the other of these, but simply an attempt to set aside the principle of competition upon which society is now based and to substitute for it a system based upon the conception of the State as in the main a family, in which the weaker brethren shall not be remorselessly pushed to the wall. It is the exaggerated individualism of our existing social system, the free scope it gives to cruel selfishness and monstrous greed, that calls aloud for its overthrow. The world that is to come out of the social crisis now being inaugurated will not be a phalanstery, nor one in which the rights of property will be disregarded. It will not be introduced by a general scramble on the part of the needy for the wealth of the prosperous; but neither will it be a world of mere remorseless, competitive effort, like a great nest of hissing and wriggling vipers, every one struggling to lift its head above the heads of the others. (Dec. 8.)

If we go back to first principles, none should own the land but those whose toil makes it productive. (Dec. 19.)

A consideration of Mill's opinions on the land question appeared in April of 1873, and a month later, when news of the great Englishman's death came from France, the *Post* paid a warm tribute to his fame and suggested that "his best monument" in America would be a memorial edition of his complete works.

This was the day of personal journalism, when, in the West at least, "personal" meant not so much the dominating influence of a vigorous and whimsically autocratic editor of the Greeley or Godkin type, nor much less the present-day intimate revelations of the columnist, but rather an ability to maintain editorial opinion in the presence of an opposition that usually was armed with something more than strong

arguments. George's aggressive tactics, especially in forcing unwelcome prosecutions of political grafters and influential murderers, drew down upon him more than once the threat and even the act of personal violence, and his experiences during these years of newspaper work would have made a stirring chapter in any saga of frontier journalism. George ended his connection with the *Post* late in 1875, when the paper was sold, and then in the Tilden-Hayes presidential campaign of 1876 he was brought into active politics and for the first time deserted the editor's desk for the platform. His success in the campaign was immediate; he "stumped" the State, made the final rallying speech, and soon became known as one of the best political speakers on the coast.<sup>83</sup> But even in a campaign such as this he did not fail to introduce the problem that would not let him rest, and while speaking for Tilden he continued to emphasize such thoughts as—

Food, raiment and lodging are essential not merely to animal existence but to mental development, to moral growth, to the life of the affections. Personal independence, the ability to get a living without trembling in fear of any man, is the basis of all manly

<sup>83</sup> In reference to these speeches he wrote to his mother (Nov. 13, 1876): "I did my best, for my heart was in it, and that is a consolation; and personally what I accomplished was very gratifying. I have shown that I could make myself felt without a newspaper, and shown that I possessed other ability than that of the pen. I have always felt that I possessed the requisites for a first class speaker, and that I could make one if I could get the practice, and I started into this campaign with the deliberate purpose of breaking myself in. It was like jumping overboard to learn to swim. But I succeeded. I think no man in the State made as much reputation as I have made. From not being known as a speaker, I have come at once to the front. I wanted to do this, not as a matter of vanity, or for the mere pleasure of the thing, but to increase my power and usefulness. Already well known as a writer, I knew this kind of reputation would aid me immensely in the future. And so it will—whether I go into politics, into the law, or into the newspaper business again. I do not intend to rest here, but to go ahead step by step. You must not be afraid, though, of politics doing me any harm. I do not propose to mix in lower politics, nor do I propose to chase after nominations. I will wait until they seek me. I propose to read and study; to write some things which will extend my reputation, and perhaps to deliver some lectures with the same view. And if I live I will make myself known, even in Philadelphia. I aim high . . ."

virtues. Ignorance is the companion of poverty; want is the parent of crime. These are the grand questions . . . yet these are the questions to which we have been paying least attention.

George's speaking ability, however, was not to be confined to politics, for in March of 1877 he was asked to deliver an address on political economy at the University of California. Indeed, there was some talk of his appointment to the unfilled chair of political economy at the university. His interest in economics was known throughout the State, and for a university that was as yet young and unpretentious, his lack of scholastic training might possibly have bowed to a forceful personality and an enviable reputation as a writer and a talker. But whatever favorable feeling the California academicians might have had for George soon vanished when they heard what the editor had to say:

For the study of political economy you need no special knowledge, no extensive library, no costly laboratory. You do not even need textbooks or teachers, if you will but think for yourselves. All that you need is care in reducing complex phenomena to their elements, in distinguishing the essential from the accidental, and in applying the simple laws of human action with which you are familiar. Take nobody's opinion for granted; "try all things; hold fast to that which is good." . . . All this array of professors, all this paraphernalia of learning cannot educate a man. They can but help him to educate himself. Here you may obtain the tools; but they will be useful only to him who can use them. A monkey with a microscope, a mule packing a library, are fit emblems of the men—and, unfortunately, they are plenty—who pass through the whole educational machinery and come out but learned fools, crammed with knowledge which they cannot use—all the more pitiable, all the more contemptible, all the more in the way of real progress, because they pass, with themselves and others, as educated men. . . . You are of the favored few, for the fact that you are here, students in a university of this character, bespeaks for you the happy accidents that fall only to the lot of the few, and you cannot yet realize . . . how the hard struggle which is

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the lot of so many may cramp and bind and distort . . . but you cannot fail to see enough want and wretchedness, even in our own country to-day, to move you to sadness and pity, to nerve you to high resolve; to arouse in you the sympathy that dares, and the indignation that burns to overthrow a wrong.<sup>34</sup>

George, of course, did touch on detailed questions of political economy, but this "monkey with a microscope," the "mule packing a library," the questioning of "educational machinery" and "learned fools" was too much. Such expressions might have been applauded as obvious had they been the opinion of a dean, but they hardly could have been appreciated as the ideas of an untutored layman. George's address was received with polite and dignified attention on the part of the faculty, and even with some enthusiasm by the students, but there was no more talk of "Professor" Henry George, which perhaps was quite fortunate for both the university and for George's later work.<sup>35</sup> He did, however, retain his circle of friends at Berkeley, including President John Le Conte, his brother, Professor Joseph Le Conte, the noted geologist, and Professor William Swinton.<sup>36</sup>

Several months later George was chosen as the Fourth of July orator of the San Francisco celebration, and in the old California Theatre he was to make what up to then was his greatest effort. The oration was perhaps to those who heard it

<sup>34</sup> Vol. VIII (*Our Land and Land Policy*) of complete works, pp. 148-150.

<sup>35</sup> Whatever else George may have been, and he did manage to become acquainted with a number of occupations, he scarcely was temperamentally fitted for a professor's position; yet he did tell his wife that the only title he ever cared to have was that of professor. If a professorship were really George's aim, then he undoubtedly made a deliberate sacrifice of his ambitions in this address, for he could not possibly have been unconscious of its effects. He was always willing, however, to sacrifice everything but his convictions.

<sup>36</sup> Professor Swinton was one of George's most intimate friends, and was to exert a great influence on his later work. He was a brother of John Swinton, the New York liberal, had been educated at Amherst and had served as a brilliant Civil War correspondent for the *New York Times*. His wide scholarship, or else the youthful character of the university, was responsible for his holding the chair of "English language and literature, history, rhetoric, and logic."

a typical Fourth of July spread-eagle affair, and one of the papers reported that the "gas measurer"<sup>37</sup> . . . kindly spoke for several hours on the Goddess of Liberty and other school-reader topics." But George's worship of freedom, his "ode to liberty," was something that his hearers certainly did not grasp; his fervent sincerity they undoubtedly appreciated, but hardly the boundless implications he was suggesting, for the liberty that George was apotheosizing was not merely the product of political democracy and it was much more than the economic equality demanded by labor. It was an almost metaphysical conception, a very *sine qua non* for all enduring and legitimate human activity, and it is only in the context of the tenth book of *Progress and Poverty*, where these lines on liberty are printed with practically no change, that the complete significance of George's thought can be recognized.<sup>38</sup>

*Progress and Poverty*, according to a note in his diary, was begun by George on September 18, 1877. For a time, however, he was unable to devote all his attention to the book. He interrupted his work first to deliver a lecture which he hoped was to open a speaking campaign that was to be a companion effort for his writing. The lecture, "Why Work Is Scarce, Wages Low and Labor Restless," was first delivered in the Metropolitan Temple of San Francisco in March of 1878, but with the exception of one other address George was unable to follow the plan that he had laid out for himself. That address, which is believed by many to have been

<sup>37</sup> George had secured something of a sinecure from Governor Irwin, whom he had helped to elect, in being appointed State Inspector of Gas-Meters, a position which with little work gave him enough money to live, and, what was more important, permitted him to devote his time to writing; it was thus instrumental in paving the way for the completion of *Progress and Poverty*.

<sup>38</sup> This "ode to liberty" has been recognized by critics as one of the most eloquent passages in American literature, and it has appeared in many anthologies, although that is faint praise for philosophic purposes. However, even a Fourth of July oration may rise above mere declamatory significance.

the most polished and fervent talk he ever delivered, was "Moses," and was first presented to the Young Men's Hebrew Association of San Francisco. His interest in politics also took his attention from his work. He had declined a nomination for a State Senatorship in 1877, but the following year he became a Democratic nominee for the position of delegate to the State constitutional convention, only to be defeated in the election. It was at this time also that he helped to found the Free Public Library of San Francisco and became the first secretary of the original Board of Trustees.<sup>39</sup> Still another interruption, his fourth child,<sup>40</sup> was to demand the major part of his interest for a time. Finally, however, after a period of intense concentration, he succeeded in completing *Progress and Poverty* in March of 1879.

George's library during these years consisted of some eight hundred volumes, chiefly standard works on political economy, history and philosophy. In working on his book he also drew upon the bibliographical resources of his university friends, and upon the four libraries of San Francisco and the State library at Sacramento. He was a wide reader and possessed the happy faculty of seizing upon the important ideas of a book, or rather the ideas that seemed useful to him; he was thus able to achieve an astonishing power of rapid reading. He did "chew and digest" some works, especially those on political economy, although, strangely enough, he confessed that they gave him the most difficulty;

<sup>39</sup> The interest in public libraries had remained with George ever since his boyhood days in Philadelphia. In one of his undated note-books there is a discussion of the value of libraries based on Carlyle's "the true university is a collection of books."

<sup>40</sup> This fourth child was Anna Angela, who later became the wife of William C. De Mille, the motion picture producer. George's first-born, Henry George, Jr., his biographer, became a writer on economic and sociological subjects and was later elected to the national House of Representatives from a New York City district. Richard, who was born in the darkest hour of George's life, became a noted sculptor, perhaps his best work being the bust of his father. The third child, Jennie, was later married to William J. Atkinson of New York.



his reading of law, to which he devoted himself for several years, he found of aid chiefly in helping to cure his infrequent insomnia.

George ended his first great task with a feeling of deep and almost holy reverence. He had felt within him the fire of the prophet, the zeal of the crusader, and his finished work had for him all the solace of religion. The burning conviction that had never let George rest since it had first forced itself upon his mind, the seeming apocalypse that here in the private ownership of land lay the root of all the social and moral problems that had perplexed mankind, that the denial of the equal opportunity to the use of the planet was the cancer that had brought on the symptom of that mysterious increase of want with the increase of wealth, had now been given to the world, and for George it was the realization of a profound religious experience. He wrote to his friend Father Dawson in Ireland some years later (February 1, 1883):

. . . When I had finished the last page, in the dead of the night, when I was entirely alone, I flung myself on my knees and wept like a child. The rest was in the Master's hands. That is a feeling that has never left; that is constantly with me. And it has led me up and up. It has made me a better and a purer man. It has been to me a religion, strong and deep though vague—a religion of which I never like to speak, or make any outward manifestation, but yet that I try to follow.

To his father in Philadelphia he sent this accurate prophecy:

It is with a deep feeling of gratitude to Our Father in Heaven that I send you a printed copy of this book. I am grateful that I have been enabled to live to write it, and that you have been enabled to live and see it. It represents a great deal of work and a good deal of sacrifice, but now it is done. It will not be recognized at first—maybe not for some time—but it will ultimately be considered a great book—will be published in both hemispheres, and be translated into different languages. This I know, though neither

of us may ever see it here. But the belief I have expressed in this book, the belief that there is yet another life for us, makes that of little moment.

While George undoubtedly believed that his work was an almost inspired revelation of truth, yet he also felt that the demonstration was as logically clear as the most valid of syllogisms; he was confident that his reasoning could be grasped in a sweeping comprehension of first principles, in a lucid deduction that was to be an almost mystic intuition; and this assurance remained with him always.<sup>41</sup> Yet despite George's confidence that his work was a logically impregnable revelation, it was not easy to convince the publishers that the book would pay. The manuscript was first sent to Appleton's in New York, but the author received only a polite card of declination, which stated:

We have read your MS. on political economy. It has the merit of being written with great clearness and force, but is very aggressive. There is very little to encourage the publication of any such work at this time and we feel we must decline it.

Harper's considered the work revolutionary, and Scribner's, after some hesitation, also refused to accept it. Finally, however, William H. Appleton, head of the publishing firm, was interviewed by some of George's friends in the East, among whom was Professor William Swinton, and the result was that he reconsidered his decision and consented to publish *Progress and Poverty*, but with the understanding that the company would not make the plates for the work. George therefore gave the manuscript to an old newspaper partner,

<sup>41</sup> He wrote to a friend from London in 1884: "I do not think the fault is in the book—it arises from its scope, and the necessary connection between the links of a logical chain. When you once grasp this connection and once see the relation of the central ideas, it will be to you like a demonstration and you will never afterward lose it." And again in 1890: "I do not think that there is any point you make that was not threshed over in my mind in writing that book. . . . If I am wrong now the wrong is in the original thinking, not in my subsequent deviation."

and the author himself began to set the type. From these plates there was first published in 1879, the Author's Edition of five hundred copies (San Francisco, William M. Hinton). The Appleton edition appeared in January of the following year.

The book attracted little attention at first. In California the newspaper reviews for the most part ridiculed the fad of their little editor and Democratic orator, and predicted that the work would remain unnoticed. Some encouraging remarks, however, did come from several distinguished figures to whom George had sent complimentary copies. Gladstone wrote from Hawarden (Nov. 11, 1879): "Accept my best thanks for the copy of your interesting work, which reached me to-day, and which I have begun to examine. There is no question which requires a more careful examination than the land question in this and other countries, and I shall set great store on whatever information you may furnish under this head." The Duke of Argyll, with whom George was later to engage in a bitter controversy, courteously acknowledged the receipt of the book, although Herbert Spencer did not. Sir George Grey, the leading Liberal in New Zealand, wrote (Auckland, N. Z., Jan. 27, 1880): "I have already read a large part of the book. I regard it as one of the ablest works on the great questions of the time which has come under my notice. It will be of great use to me. . . . It has cheered me much to find that there is so able a man working in California upon subjects on which I believe the whole future of mankind now mainly hangs."

But George was now in the grip of another period of discouragement. All the time and energy and money that had been put into the writing and printing of *Progress and Poverty* seemed for the moment to have been wasted; George also was without a position, for a change in party success in California had cost him his political sinecure, and his financial

condition was again becoming desperate. While waiting for his book to be published he had attempted to put out another newspaper, a weekly called *The State*, but after the eleventh issue it was forced to suspend.<sup>42</sup> The situation in California finally forced George to turn his thoughts East. John Russell Young, managing editor of the New York *Tribune*, and Charles Nordhoff, chief editorial writer of the New York *Herald*, whose friendships George had made during his earlier New York attempt to secure an Associated Press

<sup>42</sup>The few numbers of the paper show a combination of forceful thought and polished diction. This attack upon the complacency of an optimistic view of society's ills appeared April 19, 1879: "Without equal opportunity there can be no freedom; and all our talk and declamation is but babble in the presence of the indubitable fact that . . . there is not equal opportunity. . . . That which is in its very nature and essence unjust never has lasted and it never will last. . . . We are not alarmists. We simply give voice to that which is in the mind and heart of every thoughtful man. To suppose that the few very rich and the many very poor can forever jog along peaceably together is to suppose something that never has happened and that never will happen. It is opposed to the very nature of man—it is forbidden by the eternal laws that rule the universe. But this is not to say that such evils cure themselves. The comfortable doctrine that evils cure themselves is disproved on every page of history. . . . This world is not a fool's paradise in which all will come out right in the end; it is a world in which a people make their own conditions; it is a world in which the eternal laws punish ignorance and recklessness and injustice as remorselessly as the glacier grinds the rock. . . . Are men free when they have to strain and strive and scheme and worry to satisfy the mere animal wants of life? Are men free when, pressed by the fear of want, they are forced to starve their higher natures and to tread under foot in the fierce struggle for wealth, love, honor, justice and mercy? . . . It is the institutions of man not the edicts of God that enslave men; it is the greed and ignorance of mankind not the niggardliness of nature that show themselves in poverty and misery and want-produced vice. Yet while we prate of freedom we strangle freedom; while we thank God for liberty we load liberty with fetters."

George, it also appears, was somewhat of a pioneer in the discussion of the Nordic question: "We of the Anglo-Saxon race do not know how to enjoy ourselves; we do not know how to get the most out of this life that flies so rapidly. . . . Open Plato's 'Dialogues' or Plutarch's 'Morals' and you catch glimpses of society to which ours is as the pow-wow of naked savages or the dance of lunatics. This thirst for wealth, it is the draught of Tantalus." (April 12.) "We are by no means inclined to insist upon the natural superiority of the Caucasian." (May 10.)

Besides *The State* and the *Post* of 1872-1875, George had made one other venture into California journalism. In 1875 he had started the publication of the *Ledger*, a small daily paper with an illustrated Sunday edition, perhaps the first in American journalism. The paper was also novel in that it did not solicit advertising but waited for the advertisers to bring in their business. It is not necessary to add that it did not live very long.

franchise, advised him that there might be some newspaper work in New York, and so in August of 1880, his fare having been paid by Young, George came East unknown and almost penniless. He found himself again in the great city where he once had made a silent vow.<sup>43</sup>

George's arrival in the East seemed to launch *Progress and Poverty* into a truly phenomenal popularity. Here was a voluminous work on political economy and ethics that almost overnight had created a demand that sent its sales later into the millions of copies and made it a rival of the most successful works of fiction. Reviews appeared in all the leading newspapers and magazines, books of commentary and criticism were begun, Appleton's put out a cheap paper edition, Kegan Paul in London arranged for an English edition of the book, and the first of many translations struck off in 1881.<sup>44</sup> For a short time even the academic

The Garfield-Hancock Presidential campaign first provided an opportunity for George to make himself known. The New York Democratic leaders had heard of the California spellbinder and had persuaded him to speak for General Hancock. They soon regretted their action, however, for they found that the Westerner was one of those rare examples of the real free trade species, and held no brief for revenue tariffs or local schedules. They did not ask him to stump again. Within six years this unknown free trader was to threaten New York's powerful political machines.

<sup>44</sup>This first translation was in German and was the work of C. D. F. von Gütschow; two other German editions, one translated by F. Dobbert, appeared soon after. A French translation was made by J. L. Le Monnier. In 1886, Concordia Löfving and H. Wennerstrom translated the book into Swedish at Upsala; Jakob E. Lange made the Danish translation, and V. Ullman, the Norwegian in 1886. The Spanish translation is the work of Jaime Jepús y Roviralta and was published in Barcelona in 1893. Ludovico Eusebio translated it into Italian in 1888 and published his work at Turin. The Dutch edition, the work of J. W. Straatman, appeared in 1882; Robert Braun is the Hungarian translator, and S. D. Nikolaev the Russian. There is also a Chinese edition of *Progress and Poverty*, which was translated by Professor W. E. Macklin at the time of George's death; Dr. Sun Yat Sen assisted him in the work of translation.

There are more than a dozen editions of the book in English, with nearly as many publishers; the work also appeared in serial form in several newspapers, such as *Truth*, a New York publication, and the *Chicago Express*. It is almost impossible to estimate the exact number of copies of *Progress and Poverty* circulated. The highest figure is seven million, which is obviously too large. The lowest estimate is two million. But there can be no question that the book has had a greater circulation than any other volume on political

world, especially in England, took an active interest in the work; several students of John Stuart Mill, among whom were Dr. Montague R. Levenson and Professor William Ellis, came out in praise of *Progress and Poverty*. Émile de Laveleye, the French economist, William D. Le Seur in Canada, and Professor E. L. Youmans, the American popularizer of Herbert Spencer, were others influenced by George, and also Alfred Russel Wallace, the biologist, who later was to head the English land reformers and who stated that the book was "undoubtedly the most remarkable and important work of the present century."<sup>45</sup>

The popular interest in *Progress and Poverty* perhaps is not difficult to explain. The country was in the grip of violent labor agitation which followed the widespread industrial depression of 1873 to 1877, and which had flamed out in the riots and bloodshed of the great railroad strike of the latter year. An unmistakable labor class consciousness was now at the point of crystallizing. The first bitter strikes and wage wars of the late '60s and early '70s, the murderous activities of the "Molly Maguires," the workers' struggles of the middle '80s, were all overt indications not only of the gradual development of labor organizations but also of the intangible realization of labor's self-awareness.<sup>46</sup> It was a period of industrial upheaval, a day when labor sensed its growing importance, and George's book could not have appeared at a more favorable time for its popular reception. Its prophetic fervor and almost holy sincerity, together with the practical

economy. For complete details on this matter of translations and editions see Part IV of the complete Henry George and Single Tax bibliography of the New York Public Library. All of George's important books, especially *Protection or Free Trade*, also appeared in many editions and translations.

<sup>45</sup> See letter of George to Dr. F. R. Taylor, Sept. 7, 1881, quoted in the *Life*, pp. 353-354.

<sup>46</sup> For a discussion of this period of labor agitation, see Commons and Associates, *History of Labour in the United States* (New York, Macmillan, 1918), Vol. II, Chap. V, and bibliography, *ibid.*, pp. 573-576; or any labor history dealing with the times.

and simple suggestions that it offered, could hardly have failed to impress the working man<sup>47</sup> or the thinker interested in social reform. But while the vivid style and compelling originality of the work, together with the conditions that greeted its publication, were surety for its success, the events of George's meteor-like career carried the knowledge of his ideas still further, especially in Great Britain, where the work became even more popular than in this country.

He first entered the lecture field and traveled all over the United States and Canada speaking on the land question and attracting great crowds by the power of his oratory and the challenge of his book. Of even greater importance, however, was his connection with the Irish land movement. Michael Davitt in 1879, just a month after the completion of *Progress and Poverty*, had roused all Ireland with his attack upon the absentee English landlords, and had rallied the nation under his cry of "The land for the people." The Irish National Land League was formed to supersede the Home Rule League, and even Parnell, despite his conservative leanings, was swept into the agitation and came to the United States with the backing of the *Irish World*, a weekly paper published in New York by Patrick Ford. Later Davitt came to this country, met George, and pledged the Land League to "push *Progress and Poverty* in Great Britain."<sup>48</sup> George seized the extraordinary opportunity presented by this Irish land movement and threw himself into the fight. He lectured for the League in the campaign that had been organized in the United States, and then dashed off a pamphlet, *The Irish Land Question*, which was later changed to *The Land Question*, since George felt that the issues raised were not

<sup>47</sup> To understand George's popularity with labor it must be remembered that, unlike the present time, the 1880 connotation that was suggested by "working man" was one that implied the attributes of "American" and "skilled"; the appeal of *Progress and Poverty* could hardly have had the power that it did without the existence of that type of laborer.

<sup>48</sup> See a letter to Dr. Taylor, quoted in *Life*, p. 341.

confined to Ireland alone. The tract was published in New York, England and Canada and gained a wide circulation. George, in fact, so allied himself with the Irish cause that he was finally sent to Ireland under the auspices of the *Irish World* to lecture and to conduct the Irish correspondence of the paper. He left for Europe in October of 1881.

George's growing reputation, however, had not raised him above the ever-watchful eye of poverty. He had no steady income and was always in debt, borrowing on the strength of some expected lecture or on some future royalties; and it was a bitter experience, as his letters indicate, for him to realize that he could not remove himself from the grasp of want and yet remain faithful to his vision. Here are some extracts from his correspondence with his most intimate friend, Dr. Taylor:

I am afloat at 42 poorer than at 21. I do not complain, but there is some bitterness in it. It is at such times that a man feels the weight of a family. It is like swimming with heavy clothes on. Still, if I keep my health I do not fear. (Dec., 1880.)

One of my creditors has been after me, and I fear some of them may make an attempt to garnishee the proceeds [of the lecture] to-night. (Aug. 11, 1881.)

I have now just \$25 in the world, about half a week's living with economy; no, not that. However, this is no new experience to me. (Aug. 12, 1883.)

I want to ask you to do something for me, if you can, and that is to pay my life insurance, some \$50 or \$60, to Colonel Hawes, and I will send you the money when I get able, which will be in a few months. This sort of work straitens me. (Sept. 28, 1886.)

Immediately after finishing *The Irish Land Question*, and when his reputation was beginning to become international, he yet could write to Dr. Taylor (May 12, 1881):

Inclosed find check for \$20. . . . You do not know, and I cannot readily tell you, how much this little accommodation has been to me. It is not so much the want of money as the mental



effect it produces—the morbid condition. The man who does not understand that, does not know how it is possible for people to commit suicide. This thing has weighted me very much. Could I have felt free and been relieved of the terrible anxiety, I could have in the same time accomplished many times as much. But yet it has seemed as though a Providence helped me through. When I drew on you for this \$20 it seemed my darkest hour. I was weak and weary in mind and body.<sup>49</sup>

The Henry George that Ireland was to see was a short, stocky figure with thinning hair and a full red beard, a sandy red, however, rather than the flaming Barbarossa type. The beard and a flashing pair of deep blue eyes and a nobly shaped head with a great bulging forehead were the striking features of the man. About his appearance George was singularly careless, and he had acquired a habit of almost an academic absent-mindedness. Don Seitz believes that “in the Capitoline Museum at Rome there is a bust of Socrates that bears a most extraordinary resemblance to Henry George.”<sup>50</sup> The comparison is hardly a fit one. The Socratic connotation is undoubtedly meant to be a bit flattering, but the Socratic countenance scarcely so. George was not quite a Silenus. On the lecture platform his listeners were to see a restless, moving bundle of energy. He walked up and down, turning to the audience at critical points with arms thrown out in an appealing gesture, or, in a more characteristic pose, with one hand in his pocket, he hung over the speaker’s table and by the very power of his sincerity burned his thought into the crowd below. His voice was characteristically persuasive rather than bellowing or rasping; he was an orator who talked directly to his hearers, trying to take each one of them by the coat lapels and convince him individually of the great truths he felt to be surging within him. This subdued style, how-

<sup>49</sup> For George’s own explanation of his financial condition, see also *Life*, p. 508.

<sup>50</sup> *Uncommon Americans* (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1925), p. 256.

ever, frequently gave way to great bursts of animated power, particularly when George met with opposition; a friendly and quiet audience might hear only an impressive and carefully planned address, but an antagonistic and heckling one would be greeted with a great booming voice and an inspired emotion driven home with all the favorite devices of the platform. It was the George in this mood who was ranked by the London *Times* as the oratorical peer of Cobden and Bright; it was this George about whom Thomas Beer relates the following newspaper anecdote:

Charles Dana, editor of the New York *Sun*, sent a novice to report Henry George. The boy was made imbecile and covered papers with words of which he now recalls only "lyrelike voice." This went into Dana's cell and came out with the editor's comment on its face: "You sound like Wendell Philips reporting Saint John the Baptist. I asked you to see a Mr. Henry George." . . . The rhapsodist went hurrying for sympathy to the office of *Puck* and showed Dana's cruel remark to Henry Cuyler Bunner. But the humorist was curiously cool after reading the description of Henry George, and limited his sympathy to saying: "Mr. Dana's wrong. I think it sounds like Hall Caine."<sup>51</sup>

This fervent sincerity which perhaps befuddled the cub's pen or typewriter was George's distinctive characteristic as a speaker—and as a man—and it was this unmistakable honesty that Ireland saw and admired.

The Ireland that Henry George saw was a country filled

<sup>51</sup> *The Mauve Decade* (New York, Knopf, 1926), pp. 110-111. Here is another George story that Beer relates: ". . . the parent of the single tax could conceive art only as a vehicle for 'good and noble' purposes. But George was touched by the Fair [the Chicago World's Fair of 1893]. He stood one night with Charles Nolan watching the crowds of the Midway, and dreamed aloud: The people had done all this. It was 'of the people, by the people, for the people.' The lawyer argued: 'No, most of the money was subscribed by rich men. The people had nothing to do with designing these buildings.' The economist pulled his beard and sighed. Anyhow, the people were enjoying it, and his friend Altgeld would govern Illinois. Perhaps the Kingdom of God was a little nearer. He strolled among the crowd and scandalized a waiter at the Auditorium by demanding for late supper cold stewed tomatoes, sugared, while his host drank champagne." (*Ibid.*, pp. 37-8.)

with fifteen thousand military constables and forty thousand picked British troops; five hundred political prisoners, including Parnell and John Dillon, had been jailed under the provisions of the Coercion Act, and, because of its no-rent manifesto, the Land League had been suppressed. George himself came under the strict supervision of the government authorities as soon as he landed, but he at once entered upon an active speaking campaign, starting with a lecture in Dublin that was the occasion for a great popular demonstration; he soon found himself ranked along with Parnell and Davitt, Justin McCarthy and Patrick Egan, as one of the leaders of the Irish cause. He made several trips to England and formed many friendships in the liberal circles of London; Helen Taylor, stepdaughter of John Stuart Mill and one of the leading women in the Irish movement, acted as hostess to George and his wife for several weeks, and later the Georges were guests at the homes of Henry M. Hyndman, the socialist, and Walter Wren. At the Hyndmans' George met Herbert Spencer. The affair was "a 'London crush,' the drawing-rooms thronged and many notables present, among them Tennyson, tall, careless and dreamy—in appearance every inch a poet; and Browning, on this occasion at least, smart and dapper, and, so far from appearing a great poet, looked, as Mrs. George said, 'like a prosperous merchant draper.'" <sup>52</sup> George and Spencer commenced to argue as soon as they were introduced; they differed upon the Irish question, and when Spencer declared that the imprisoned Land Leaguers "have got only what they deserve; they are inciting the people to refuse to pay to their landlords what is rightfully theirs—rent," George abruptly left him.<sup>53</sup> He wrote to Dr. Taylor (March, 1882): "Discount Herbert Spencer. He is most horribly conceited, and I don't believe really great men are. So far as I can judge his reputation here

<sup>52</sup> *Life*, p. 369.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

is on the wane." The following year he wrote to his doctor-friend: "What you say of Spencer is true. He is going the way of Comte—going insane from vanity." Upon other occasions George met Joseph Chamberlain, John Bright and Walter Besant, and in Ireland he became acquainted with Bishop Nulty, who had risked Rome's displeasure for his views on the land question.

The final split between Parnell and Davitt,<sup>54</sup> the former standing for peasant proprietorship and the latter demanding land nationalization (not under George's single tax method, however, but rather following the purchase plan of Wallace), disrupted organized work for a time, and George realized that there was a growing estrangement between himself and the Irish leaders and that his presence was proving somewhat of an embarrassment even for his friends. He left for Scotland, delivered several lectures at Glasgow, and then traveled to western Ireland in the company of James Leigh Joynes, a master at Eton, who had come to Ireland to see at first hand the condition of the peasants. At the little town of Loughree George and his companion were arrested under the Crimes Act as "suspicious strangers," and although they were soon released, the next day George was rearrested in Athenry, a village some few miles away. He was again set free after some delay and inconvenience, but the incident aroused unfavorable comment in the House of Commons. George later wrote of the affair: <sup>55</sup>

The whole thing struck me as infinitely ridiculous. There was, after all, a good deal of human nature in Artemus Ward's declaration that he was willing to sacrifice all his wife's relatives to save the Union. And in my satisfaction in seeing an Eton master lugged through the town as too suspicious a stranger to be left at large I

<sup>54</sup> George wrote to Francis G. Shaw from London in July of 1882: "The truth about Parnell is that he is really a weak, impossible man who 'funked' when he had everything to gain by holding firm. . . . Davitt is the strongest man in Ireland."

<sup>55</sup> *Life*, pp. 392-393.

lost all sense of annoyance at my own arrest. In fact, my only regret was that it was not Kegan Paul. . . . I could not feel angry . . . but the Eton master could not see the joke. To come to Ireland only to be mistaken for an emissary of sedition, a would-be assassin of landlords, or maimer of cattle, was something that had not entered into his calculations.

George left for home in October of 1882, but not before he had spoken twice in London, once at a working men's meeting in Memorial Hall presided over by Alfred Russel Wallace,<sup>56</sup> and again to a gathering of Church of England clergy.

He returned to New York with an international reputation that won for him the acclaim of the press and a complimentary dinner at Delmonico's. The dinner was attended by the usual host of notables, including Henry Ward Beecher, and George characteristically forgot the hour and arrived late and with his shoes unpolished. Of more significance than the banquet was a huge mass meeting at Cooper Union at which George was formally welcomed by the labor unions. He was now in great demand as a lecturer and a writer, made several speaking trips, and then started a comprehensive volume on the tariff question, a work that he had planned for many years. He was unable to complete the book for some time, however; the loss of more than a hundred pages of manuscript proved a setback in the early stages of the book, and later George interrupted his work to write a series of articles for *Frank Leslie's Weekly* on "Problems of the Times," which was planned as a counter-attraction to the articles of Professor Sumner of Yale which were appearing in *Harper's Weekly*. In the summer of 1883 George published these essays in book form, naming the work *Social Problems*.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> It was at this meeting that George Bernard Shaw, not much past twenty-five, heard George and became, of course, a convert—for a time. See *infra*, pp. 233-234.

<sup>57</sup> *Works*, Vol. II.

Further literary work was then put aside by George's acceptance of an offer to lecture in England under the auspices of the Land Reform Union. Public discussion in Great Britain had been profoundly affected by the land question, and particularly by the work of Henry George; <sup>58</sup> more than forty thousand copies of a sixpenny edition of *Progress and Poverty* had been sold; Professors Fawcett at Cambridge and Toynbee at Oxford had formally attempted to answer George's arguments; newspapers, debates and lectures were concentrating upon the problem of property in land; the "Liberty and Property Defence League," through Lord Bramwell, had delivered a violent attack upon the American economist; and Herbert Spencer, in a letter to the *St. James Gazette*, had made his first demurrer against having his own views on land ownership connected with those of George. With such an interest in what for George was the all-important land problem, he felt that his efforts should be directed to England. He opened his tour in London on January 9, 1884, with a great meeting in St. James's Hall <sup>59</sup> and George was at his best. The *Standard*, leader of the Tory press, described him correctly, albeit sarcastically: "He is perfectly simple and straightforward; a man with a mission; born to set right in a single generation the errors of six thousand years." He found himself next day the center of England's attention; Gladstone could hardly have had more praise or abuse heaped upon him. George wrote to his wife: "I am getting advertised to my heart's content, and I shall have crowds wherever I go. . . . I could be a social lion if I would permit it. But I won't fool with that sort of thing." He talked throughout England and Scotland, and before re-

<sup>58</sup> J. A. Hobson has said that "Henry George may be considered to have exercised a more directly formative and educative influence over English radicalism of the last fifteen years than any other man." (*Fortnightly Review*, Dec. 1, 1897.)

<sup>59</sup> John Ruskin was to have presided at the meeting, but was prevented by illness, and his place was taken by Henry Labouchere, editor of *Truth*.

turning to London lectured at Oxford and Cambridge. At Oxford, where he was the guest of Max Müller, his talk was interrupted by a hostile undergraduate demonstration, and the shouting and jeering of his audience forced him to cut short his address.<sup>60</sup> He talked once again in Dublin,<sup>61</sup> and then left for home in April of 1884.

George's next work appeared soon after his return to New York. It was a reply to an attack that the Duke of Argyll had made while George was lecturing in Scotland. In a bitter article in the *Nineteenth Century* the Duke, whose *Reign of Law* had won considerable recognition in philosophic circles, denounced this "Prophet of San Francisco," declaring that the "world has never seen such a Preacher of Unrighteousness." George's answer, "The Reduction to Iniquity," appeared in the July, 1885, issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, and the two contributions were later circulated in Scotland by the Land Restoration League in a pamphlet, *The Peer and the Prophet*; the same pamphlet was published in this country as *Property in Land*.<sup>62</sup> The crofter uprisings in Skye and the other Western Islands were at that time agitating Scotland, and the controversy with the Scotch Duke, titular chief of the great Campbell clan, made George almost as popular in Scotland as he had been in Ireland. He was again invited to speak in the British Isles and made his third trip to Europe in the fall of the year and, in addition to his tour of Scotland, lectured at Belfast, Liverpool and twice in London.<sup>63</sup> Popular enthusiasm over his campaign almost persuaded him to stand for Parliament, but he decided to

<sup>60</sup> Shortly afterward, when Michael Davitt was invited to lecture at Oxford, the students locked him in his hotel room so that he was unable to appear.

<sup>61</sup> While in England George met Cardinal Manning. Wilfred Meynell, editor of the *Weekly Register*, later described this conversation between the two: "I loved the people," said Henry George, "and that love brought me to Christ as their best friend and teacher." "And I," said the Cardinal, "loved Christ, and so learned to love the people for whom He died." (*Life*, p. 433.)

<sup>62</sup> *Works*, Vol. III.

<sup>63</sup> During this trip to England George met Lord Bryce.

return to the United States and complete his long-delayed work on the tariff.

The book had been appearing in serial form in a newspaper syndicate late in 1885, but in the summer of 1886 George finished the work and published it himself.<sup>64</sup> *Protection or Free Trade* is perhaps the best example of George's lucid and persuasive reasoning, and in the literature of free trade it remains a classic along with works such as those of Bastiat and Lieber. It is intentionally a deduction from what George accepted as basic, general principles of economics,<sup>65</sup> and its scope included more than an attack upon protectionist fallacies, for George endeavored to show that real free trade, unrestricted laissez-faire, meant not only the abolition of tariffs but of all taxes, and that it demanded the appropriation of land values.

Late in the summer of 1886, with the tariff book now finished and published, George was approached by the New York labor unions with an offer to be their candidate for Mayor in the fall election.<sup>66</sup> George had not intended to

<sup>64</sup> *Protection or Free Trade, Works*, Vol. IV. The book enjoyed a tremendous circulation, chiefly through the efforts of Tom L. Johnson, then Congressman from Cleveland and later the city's great reform mayor. In collaboration with several other Democratic Congressmen he had the entire book placed in the *Congressional Record*, under the "leave to print" privilege, and then the printed matter was franked throughout the country. The Republican members of Congress quite naturally objected to this manner of tariff debate, but the nation-wide commotion that was raised in political and economic circles served only to increase the popular demand for the book. Tom Johnson sent two hundred thousand copies into Ohio; more than one million copies were distributed in the other States; a two-cent paper edition was published later; there were earlier newspaper and cloth editions, and it is estimated that within eight years after its first publication nearly two million copies of *Protection or Free Trade* had been circulated, a figure approached by no other work in the history of political economy with the possible exception of *Progress and Poverty* itself.

<sup>65</sup> George wrote Doctor Taylor (Sept. 14, 1885): "My view of the matter is the reverse of yours. 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." Quite a characteristic utterance.

<sup>66</sup> The wage-earning classes throughout the country, had not become politically organized, and the labor unions were distinctly reticent about



enter politics; he had planned a year of literary and lecture work and had hoped to start a weekly paper in New York. Furthermore, he realized that the disappointing vote for the labor candidates the year before<sup>67</sup> had indicated a lack of organization and unity among the labor factions. He did not consider the proposed nomination for several weeks, but finally the opportunity to bring the land question before the public in an important election convinced him that his candidacy was a necessary method of propaganda. He wrote to his friend Doctor Taylor (Sept. 10): "It is by no means impossible that I shall be elected. But the one thing sure is that if I do go into the fight the campaign will bring the land question into practical politics and do more to popularize its discussion than years of writing would do. That is the only temptation to me." Again, when he was told by a New York official that "you cannot be elected, but your running will raise hell!" he replied: "You have relieved me of embarrassment. I do not want the responsibility and work of the office of the Mayor of New York, but I do want to raise hell!"<sup>68</sup> George required as a condition for his nomination a petition of thirty thousand signatures so that there would be definite assurance of a representative vote at the election; he feared that without such an indication of labor sentiment the support given the unions might be so small as to discredit the movement, as had been the case previously. The petition was secured, despite the fact that such a demand on the part

entering politics as independent parties. By 1880 the Greenback movement had been almost completely deserted by the working men, leaving the bulk of the Greenback strength in the agricultural districts, and the sporadic attempts at political organization in the East had been for the most part unsuccessful. (See, Commons and Associates, *History of Labour in the United States*, Vol. II, p. 251, and pp. 439-442.) The Central Labor Union of New York City (which had resulted from a strike and a political campaign in 1882), had, however, assumed a leading position and was now able to enter politics with a better show of organized strength than it had been able to present before, and it chose Henry George as its most suitable candidate for Mayor.

<sup>67</sup> Commons, II, p. 444.

<sup>68</sup> See *Life*, p. 463.

of a candidate was unprecedented, and at an impressive mass meeting in Cooper Union George became the candidate of the United Labor Party.

His opponents were Abram S. Hewitt, the Democratic candidate, and young Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican nominee. The campaign was bitterly abusive; and all the horrors of the French Revolution were conjured up as an example of what would happen if George and his followers, "the anarchists, socialists, communists, nihilists and theorists," were successful.<sup>69</sup> George made a spirited fight, speaking every day for a month and appearing at as many as twelve or fourteen meetings a day; and as election approached he felt confident of victory. The final results showed that he received 68,110 votes, while Hewitt had won with 90,552; Roosevelt secured 60,435 votes.<sup>70</sup> George realized that the results of the election were in no sense indicative of failure. He had not been elected, but without party support, organization, funds, political experience or newspaper backing, and fighting an admittedly corrupt and powerful political machine, he had polled a vote that would have been representative of either of the major parties. The support given him was an unmistakable crystallization of labor opinion. The New York papers paid tribute to the vote in apprehensive editorials that "viewed with alarm," while in England, where the election was watched with keen interest, the *St. James Gazette* warned "respect-

<sup>69</sup> For a full account of the election see *An Account of the George-Hewitt Campaign in the New York Municipal Election of 1886*, by Louis F. Post and Frederic C. Leubuscher, New York, J. W. Lovell Co., 1887; Commons, II, pp. 450-454, and other histories of the American labor movement; and Young's *History of the Single Tax Movement in the United States* (Princeton University Press, 1916), pp. 95-107.

<sup>70</sup> It has been the general belief among those interested in the political aspects of the campaign that George really was elected but that he was "counted out" by Tammany Hall; as much, in fact, has been admitted by police and district officers. George himself realized the prevalence of fraud (hundreds of ballot boxes were actually cast into the East River), and after the election he continued in his efforts to introduce the Australian ballot system. (For this matter of corruption, see Commons, II, p. 453.)

able Americans to forget the trumpery of party fights and political differentism and face the new danger threatening the commonwealth." The *Pall Mall Budget*, however, held that the 68,000 votes "meant an embodied protest against the kingdom of this world, which after nineteen centuries, alike under democracies and monarchies and empires, is still ruled by Mammon, 'the least erected spirit that fell from heaven.' He [George] stood as the incarnation of a demand that the world should be made a better place to live in than it is today; and his candidature was a groan of discontent with the actual, and therefore of aspiration after the ideal." George was not discouraged, and several days after the election he told a large gathering of sympathizers in Cooper Union, "It is not the end of the campaign, but the beginning. We have fought the first skirmish."

He was now in a position to carry out a project that had long interested him, the founding of a weekly newspaper in New York, and finally, after gathering a staff of trained journalists, including William T. Croasdale and Louis F. Post, he put out the first issue of the *Standard* on January 8, 1887.

The early issues of the paper were given over to a discussion of the McGlynn case,<sup>71</sup> and the popular interest in the excommunication of the eloquent priest won for the *Standard* a first issue circulation of seventy-five thousand. For a reform journal the paper enjoyed much more than average success, and it was not until the end of August, 1892, that publication was suspended. It was in the office of the *Standard*, on Ann Street, that the Anti-Poverty Society was formed, whose object was "to spread, by such peaceable and lawful means as may be found most desirable and efficient, a knowledge of the truth that God has made ample provision for the need of all men during their residence upon earth, and that involuntary poverty is the result of the human laws that

<sup>71</sup> See *infra*, Chap. VII.

allow individuals to claim as private property that which the Creator has provided for the use of all." The Society held its meetings in the old Academy of Music, and the fervent crowds gathering every Sunday evening, inspired by the pleading of orators like Father McGlynn, who lent the zeal and fire of religion to political and economic reform, were a remarkable example of the emotional strength behind the George movement.

George again entered politics the year after the mayoralty election and ran for the office of New York Secretary of State on the labor ticket, but a schism within the party, which resulted in a break with the socialistic element in the labor movement,<sup>72</sup> brought about the collapse of the organization and George received only 72,000 votes throughout the State. In 1888 he gave his support to Cleveland and free trade,<sup>73</sup> but the continued progress of his ideas in England again turned his attention there. He made a short two weeks' visit to Great Britain, and then, after some further lecture work in this country, returned in the spring of 1889 for an extended English speaking tour.<sup>74</sup> Before sailing for home, George went to Paris, where he attended an international land reform conference and had an opportunity to meet the Continental thinkers who were concerned with the same problems that had confronted him. Michael Flürscheim of Germany was one of the outstanding figures whom he met at the conference.

While still in England George was requested to make a lecture trip to Australia, where the principles of the single tax

<sup>72</sup> For an account of the rise of the socialistic political organization, and of the split with the George faction in 1887, see *infra*, pp. 240 ff.; Commons, II, pp. 269-290 and 456-461; and the various histories of American socialism.

<sup>73</sup> It was in this campaign that William Lloyd Garrison, the younger, came out in active support of George.

<sup>74</sup> During this trip George debated socialism with Henry Hyndman in St. James's Hall in London.

proposals were being incorporated into many of the dominion's acts of law. George still retained memories of his boyhood trip to Melbourne, and he now welcomed an opportunity to revisit a country which, with its secret ballot system and publicly owned utilities, had now become a pioneer in progressive legislation. Mrs. George was also anxious to return to her birthplace, Sydney. The Georges accordingly came to New York and then left for San Francisco, whence they were to sail for Australia. On the trip across the continent George spoke in several cities, and in San Francisco the former editor, gas inspector, Democratic campaigner and "faddist" was greeted, after his ten-year absence, in the boisterous manner that the still young city reserved for the welcome of its native sons. He met his old newspaper and political associates, and to them he was not a world figure but just "little Harry George."

He left for Australia on February 8, 1890, and stopped at Honolulu and at Auckland, New Zealand, where he visited the veteran Liberal leader Sir George Grey, before arriving at Sydney. For three and a half months George toured the island continent in a strenuous campaign of lectures, and everywhere he was received with an enthusiasm greater than anything he had experienced before—not even Ireland had welcomed him with such an outburst of popular acclaim. He was fêted and banqueted, and the constant round of speeches and official dinners proved later to have been too great a drain upon his strength; he spoke every evening and sometimes twice a day during his entire stay in Australia. His journey back to the United States completed a trip that had taken him almost around the world, for from Australia<sup>75</sup> the Georges sailed up past India, through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal and across the Mediterranean to Italy. Visits

<sup>75</sup> George sailed for home from Adelaide, South Australia. The province of South Australia at that time already had a State tax on land values.

were made to Brindisi, Naples, Pompeii and Herculaneum, Rome and Venice; thence they traveled through Switzerland to France, and across the Channel to England, and from there to the United States.

The years of constant activity, the unbroken stretches of speaking and traveling and writing, the bitter denunciation, and the praise that was even more exacting, and with it all the relentless struggle to make a comfortable living, finally demanded their price, and in December of 1890 George was stricken with aphasia. The attack, caused by a slight brain hemorrhage which affected his power of speech, was acute but brief, and within a month he was sufficiently recovered to go to Bermuda for a period of convalescence; and although he returned after some months apparently with renewed strength and energy, and with a determination to complete several volumes that he had already started, yet his physical condition was never afterward vigorous. He was only fifty-one years old, but the rugged body that had carried him through so many feverish years was now tired and old beyond its age.

George first began intensive work on what he thought was to be a primer of political economy, but which broadened under his hand until it assumed the scope of a complete treatise on economics, a treatise that was to relate the science to all human activity. It was a more ambitious undertaking than anything he had hitherto written, more ambitious in intention, indeed, than even the classics of Smith and Ricardo and Mill, for George was to attempt not only to weld all the material that could be grouped under the shadowy classification of political economy into a unified and comprehensive system of thought, but, of more significance, also to form this refashioned science into a foundation for still another synthetic scheme of a universal philosophy.

But, as with *Progress and Poverty* and *Protection or Free Trade*, he again was to interrupt his work in order to turn his attention to controversy, for George was always an opportunist when there was occasion to do battle. As a result, *The Science of Political Economy*, which was the name he chose for what was to be his masterpiece, was never finished; it was cut short by his death. The manuscript, however, was posthumously edited and published by his son, Henry George, Jr., and although the work is not much more than half complete, many of the chapters and book divisions still remaining in outline form, with often only a title sentence to indicate the nature of the material, yet the plan of the volume is evident.<sup>76</sup>

The first of the interruptions that delayed work on the more important treatise was an answer to the encyclical letter of Pope Leo XIII which had been sent out in the spring of 1891. The encyclical was on the "Condition of Labor," and while it did not specify any particular labor movement and hopelessly merged socialism, anarchism and land reform, it took the position of an attack upon all secular attempts to improve the position of the laborer. George's reply was in the form of an open letter to the Pope, some twenty-five thousand words long, and was published in book form<sup>77</sup> in the United States, England and Italy. The work was a polished piece of criticism, suave and subdued, and contained nothing that might have been regarded as bad taste; it was an indication that George's illness had robbed him of none of his intellectual acuteness.<sup>78</sup>

Of a different nature, however, was his next book, which incidentally demonstrated that his polemical vigor was likewise unimpaired. Herbert Spencer in his first work, *Social Statics*, published in 1850, had included a chapter on the

<sup>76</sup> See *Works*, Vols. VI and VII.

<sup>77</sup> *Works*, Vol. III.

<sup>78</sup> For an account of this controversy, see *infra*, Chap. VII.

“Right to the Use of the Earth,” which had expressed opinions so like the later proposals of George that the section had been used as propaganda, and Spencer’s name had come to be linked with that of the American land reformer. In 1892, Spencer revised this earlier edition of *Social Statics* and published it along with *The Man Versus the State*, a volume in which all mention of the inequity of property in land was omitted. George was aroused to fury by this supposed apostasy of Spencer. This, for him, was intellectual treason, and Spencer a deserter from the ranks, and in *A Perplexed Philosopher*<sup>79</sup> George loosed all the power of taunting ridicule and overt denunciation in an analysis of the great Englishman’s change of heart. The book included not only a review of Spencer’s opinions on the land question and a bitter declaration that the about-face was the result of pressure brought to bear upon him, but contained also an attack upon what George regarded as the “materialism” of the entire synthetic philosophy. This section of the work made some of George’s followers apprehensive, and although most of his sympathizers welcomed a passage at arms with the philosopher of evolution, his friend Doctor Taylor wrote: “In your own particular field I am satisfied you are invincible; but I should not feel so sure of you in metaphysics, philosophy or cosmogony. Remember that life is short, and the powers of the human mind limited, and that you have not yet produced (what you should produce) a monumental work on political economy.” *A Perplexed Philosopher* drew no reply from Spencer and the book never became as popular as George’s other works. He again devoted his attention to *The Science of Political Economy*.

In this drama of Henry George there had been moments of tragedy and a few of comedy, but the last scene was fittingly

<sup>79</sup> *Works*, Vol. V, and see also *infra*, Chap. VI.



reserved for the climax. It was a scene that once more shifted to a political stage, and the final curtain found George again playing his part as one of those who could never refuse to listen to that vague and compelling call of duty. It was in 1897. In the preceding year George had swung his support, as had all "theorists, visionaries and enemies of sound government," to Bryan, and so had kept unspoiled his record of having always been on the losing side of every important election in which he had been actively interested. Now George was asked to run again as an independent candidate for the New York mayoralty, and this time it was not only his work but his health that advised against entering politics. He had been unwell for several years and his failing vitality seemed hardly capable of withstanding a strenuous New York campaign. But there was that insistent, even Kantian, appeal of duty, an almost plaintive responsibility to serve that fleeting will-o'-the-wisp of "humanity." George was to run as the candidate of the "Party of Thomas Jefferson," and Jefferson was, if any man, his patron saint. The great vote of the liberals of all denominations in the Presidential election of 1896 had seemed to indicate that this was the time for George again to carry his message into a political campaign. It was his duty. In his speech of acceptance, which he delivered while scarcely strong enough to stand, George declared:

I believe . . . that unto the common people, the honest democracy, the democracy that believes that all men are created equal, would bring a power that would revivify not merely this imperial city, not merely the State, not merely the country, but the world. No greater honor can be given to any man than to stand for all that. No greater service can he render to his day and generation than to lay at its feet whatever he has. I would not refuse if I died for it. What counts a few years? What can a man do better or nobler than something for his country, for his nation, for his age?

This conception of an exacting duty is even more strikingly revealed in his conversations and letters. Dr. Montague R. Levenson tells of the following talk: <sup>80</sup>

Mr. George said to me:

"Tell me, if I accept, what is the worst that can happen to me?"

I answered:

"Since you ask, you have a right to be told. It will most probably prove fatal . . ."

Mr. George replied:

"Dr. Kelly says the same thing, only more positively. But I have got to die. How can I die better than serving humanity? Besides, so dying will do more for the cause than anything I am likely to be able to do in the rest of my life."

George wrote his friend Dr. Walter Mendelson in the same spirit (Sept. 30):

I thank you very much for your friendly counsel. I shall take it, unless as I can see it duty calls. In that case I must obey. After all, how little we can see of the future.

And again, the *Life* records this conversation of George with his wife: <sup>81</sup>

Annie, remember what you declared Michael Davitt should do at the time of the Phoenix Park murders in 1882—go to Dublin and be with his people, even though it should cost him his life. I told you then that I might some day ask you to remember those words. I ask you now. Will you fail to tell me to go into this campaign? The people want me; they say they have no one else upon whom they can unite. It is more than a question of good government. If I enter the field it will be a question of natural rights, even though as Mayor I might not directly be able to do a great deal for natural rights. New York will become the theatre of the world and my success will plunge our cause into world politics.

Mrs. George answered, "You should do your duty at whatever cost."

The first hectic flush of the campaign, the smell of battle, this righteous war of his, seemed to summon forth the shadow

<sup>80</sup> *Life*, p. 594.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 597.

of his former strength, and for three weeks he carried on a last desperate fight, speaking often at half a dozen meetings in an evening.<sup>82</sup> "And then came the last night, Thursday, October 28—five days before election." George had spoken four times that evening, and as the night advanced it was evident that he was becoming weaker. He returned to his hotel, the Union Square, after midnight, and before retiring complained of feeling ill. In the early hours of the morning his wife arose and found him "standing, one hand on a chair, as if to support himself. His face was white; his body rigid like a statue; his shoulders thrown back, his head up, his eyes wide open and penetrating, as if they saw something; and one word came—'Yes'—many times repeated, at first with a quiet emphasis, then with the vigor of his heart's force. . . . Mr. George was entirely unconscious when Doctor Kelly arrived. A stroke of apoplexy had fallen. The great heart had worn out the physical body, and a thread in the brain had snapped." George had died as he had wished to die—in battle.<sup>83</sup>

The election was almost forgotten in the city's grief, and as the body lay in state all of Sunday in the Grand Central Palace the world paid its homage to the power of sincerity. One hundred thousand mourners filed before his bier, while another hundred thousand, unable to gain admittance, prayed in the street outside, and the vast funeral cortège that followed the body down to City Hall and across the Brooklyn Bridge proved to be one of the deepest tributes ever paid to

<sup>82</sup> His opponents conducted a very quiet campaign. The Democratic candidate was Judge Robert Van Wyck; the Republican nominee, General Benjamin F. Tracy; Seth Low, who twice had been Mayor of Brooklyn (the election of 1897 was the first of Greater New York) and who had been president of Columbia University, ran as an independent Republican. In 1902 Low became Mayor of New York.

<sup>83</sup> After George's death, his party in a last brave gesture substituted Henry George, Jr., for his departed father, but his vote was negligible, despite the fact that had George lived there are many who believe he would have been elected. Van Wyck was the winner.

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a private citizen. George was buried in Greenwood Cemetery. On his stone were carved these words from *Progress and Poverty*:

The truth that I have tried to make clear will not find easy acceptance. If that could be, it would have been accepted long ago. If that could be, it would never have been obscured. But it will find friends—those who will toil for it; suffer for it; if need be, die for it. This is the power of Truth.