



PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS work, begun in 1891, after returning from a lecturing tour through Australia and a trip around the world, grew out of the author's long-cherished purpose to write a small text-book, which should present in brief the principles of a true political economy. This "Primer of Political Economy" was to set forth in direct, didactic form the main principles of what he conceived to be an exact and indisputable science, leaving controversy for a later and larger work.

Before proceeding far, however, the author realized the difficulty of making a simple statement of principles while there existed so much confusion as to the meaning of terms. He therefore felt impelled to change his plan, and first to present the larger work, which should recast political economy and examine and explicate terminology as well as principles; and which, beginning at the beginning, should trace the rise and partial development of the science in the hands of its founders a century ago, and then show its gradual emasculation and at last abandonment by its professed teachers—accompanying this with an account of the extension of the science outside and independently of the schools, in the philosophy of the natural order now spreading over the world under the name of the single tax.

Soon after this work had got well under way the author laid it aside to write a brochure in reply to a papal encyclical ("The Condition of Labor," 1891), and again later

to write a book exposing Mr. Herbert Spencer's recantation of principles on the land question ("A Perplexed Philosopher," 1892). Save for these interruptions, and occasional newspaper and magazine writing, and lecturing and political speaking, he devoted himself continuously to his great undertaking until he entered the mayoralty campaign, toward the close of which death came, October 29, 1897.

"The Science of Political Economy," if entirely finished as planned by the author, would have shown Book V., on Money, extended, and the nature and function of the laws of Wages, Interest and Rent fully considered in Book IV.; but the work as left was, in the opinion of its author, in its main essentials completed, the broken parts, to quote his own words a few days before his death, "indicating the direction in which my [his] thought was tending."

The author's preface is fragmentary. It bears in the manuscript a penciled date, "March 7, 1894," and is here transcribed from a condensed writing used by him in his preliminary "roughing-out" work.

Aside from the filling in of summaries in four chapter headings (indicated by foot-notes), the addition of an index, and the correction of a few obvious clerical errors, the work is here presented exactly as it was left by the author—the desire of those closest to him being that it should be given to the world untouched by any other hand.

HENRY GEORGE, JR.

NEW YORK, February 1, 1898.