

Yes, Henry George had written a great book. A book purporting to attack the citadel of privilege in its strongest hold, a book grounded on common experience, dedicated to the service of common humanity and expressed in language which it could understand. A book destined to exert a world-wide influence on the thought of his time. The importance of the subject considered, the mastery of principles involved, power of analysis, and range of information displayed, would have done credit to any author; but coming from a man trained in the school of adversity, without titles or degree, hitherto unknown in the field of economics, it was a great achievement. The treatment of the subject was orderly, the argument clear and convincing, and the style elevated and sustained. But it was not so much confidence in the soundness of its doctrines or effectiveness of its remedy that appealed to the general reader as the evident sincerity of purpose and loftiness of motive which pervaded its pages. It was an eloquent book, pleading for equality and justice the world over, instinct with human sympathy, aflame with the ardor of conviction and abounding in passages which throbbed and palpitated with life. It stirred the brain and aroused the emotions of common men, and let the light of hope into the gloom of the hitherto dismal science. The author was hailed as an apostle of a new dispensation, and his teachings as the gospel of a better day to come.

(To be continued)

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**INDEPENDENCE DAY ORATION DELIVERED BY E. G.  
LeSTOURGEON, JUNE 30, BEFORE THE SAN ANTONIO  
ROTARY CLUB AND THE CIVILIANS' TRAINING CAMP**

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No one could be prouder than I to address you on this occasion. Although the toastmaster has introduced me as being of French descent perhaps no one here has a better right to appear before you. My great grandfather, my grandfather, my father and myself have followed that flag in the various wars that have been waged by the Republic.

Addresses delivered on the Birthday of our Nation are likely to be trite and hackneyed. There are certain things that are usually said on this occasion that I shall refrain from saying. You have heard them many times delivered in more glowing terms than I can ever hope to command and presented with graces of oratory and rhetoric that I do not possess. I shall discuss other phases of the life-history of America and certain things that have grown out of the establishing of this great Republic.

I do not mean by that to slight the glorious sacrifices made by the Fathers, but I desire to interpret their work in the light of present day conditions and in line with the ultimate desire that was in their hearts when the Declaration was signed.

I want to correct some erroneous impressions concerning the facts that surrounded the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the condition of America in the eyes of the world today. For instance, we have been taught to believe that our nation is a new nation and that our experiment in government is a strange and unique thing among the families of the earth. America is not a new nation, but one of the oldest. That flag is an older flag than many of the flags today battling on the fields of Europe. It is in the memory of men now present that the German confederation of States was organized and the present German flag adopted. It was in 1866, after the close of our Civil War, that the Italian flag as it flies today before the cohorts of Italy was first flung to the breeze. The English flag has been the outgrowth of the amalgamation into one united empire of the States of Scotland, Ireland and England. Since the Declaration of Independence was written in 1776, the armies of France have been led by no less than five separate flags and for less than forty years the tri-color flying from the fortress of Verdun today has been unfurled. The same is true of modern Russia, of Portugal, of almost all the nations of the earth. If, then, the flag of America does not today present to the world the foremost spirit of liberty and represent the freedom of all the people, it is the fault of the generation of today and the followers of the founders of this Republic, and not of them.

If the ideas and desires of the Fathers have not been carried out and realized it is your fault and mine. The signing of the Declaration and the action of the founders of this nation was the crystalization into words of the ideals that had been fermenting in the minds of men for centuries towards political liberty. The fight of mankind for political freedom was analagous to the fight for religious freedom. For four hundred years prior to the signing of the Declaration the people of the earth had struggled and the fields of Europe were empurpled by the blood of the martyrs on one side or the other of the great conflict. Catholics fought with Protestants, and Protestants fought with Catholics, but both were desirous only to give the heritage to their children of the right to think as they pleased in matters of religion, and to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience and of their own hearts. The desire for political liberty and religious liberty has been awake since feudal times. Magna Charta and the beginning of the Reformation were almost contemporary. The Declaration expressed no new idea. It was only the putting into concrete form of an ideal already accepted by mankind. In proof of this it is only necessary to remind you that in less than twelve years after the memorable meeting in Faneuil Hall, France burst into flame with the same ideal. The movement which there crystalized soon swept over all of Christendom.

A more fundamental idea was in the hearts of the signers of the Declaration of Independence than merely to secure for their children political freedom. Political freedom was necessary for the furtherance of the ideals that they

had and was the first step in the direction of industrial and economic liberty which they desired. I have recently had the pleasure of reading one of the greatest speeches delivered at the time of the agitation in furtherance of the desire of the colonies to secede from England. Samuel J. Adams stated in an impassioned address that the people of England had become merely a nation of shopkeepers and that they were exploiting their colonies for their own gain. That they were loading their ships with the fruits of the industries of their colonies and bearing it home. That they were placing around the colonies annoyances and restrictions upon their commerce that had become intolerable. In your school days, when you learned the history of that time, you were told of the Stamp Tax, the Tea Tax, and the demand that only English bottoms carry the oversea trade, and of other shackles and impediments that were thrown about the commerce and industry of the colonies. If you will recall the records you will be struck as I have been with the fact that economic and industrial freedom was the need, the ideal and the desire of America, and that the struggle for political equality and liberty was but a means to gain the end. The founders of this government had seen the vision of economic liberty and were desirous to place in the hands of their children political freedom, in order that by its use they could obtain the greater blessing that they had in view.

Economic liberty has not yet been obtained. We are still striving for it as the people of Europe had striven for four hundred years for religious and political freedom. Let us see what the Declaration of Independence itself said. I read here in the second paragraph that, "Governments are established among men to secure certain inalienable rights."

Another erroneous impression that I wish to remove is the accepted meaning of this word "secure." If one possesses a thing, then the word "secure" means to protect, to hold firm, to maintain and make permanent the possession of the thing that has been secured. But if one does not already possess a thing, "to secure" means to obtain that thing. The ideal in the hearts of the founders of the Republic was that the people of America should be permitted to secure certain rights that were enumerated. They did not then have them, they could not possess them, they could only put in the hands of their children a tool whereby they could secure them in the future and they stated in the opening paragraphs of the Declaration that it was their intention and desire that these things should be secured and that a government should be established that would secure in the future certain rights for the people of the western world.

Have these rights been secured even now? Is it true that the people of America today have the right to liberty, the right to the pursuit of happiness? What is the right to the pursuit of happiness? Is it not the right to labor, free from the fear of exploitation, and to enjoy the fruits of our labor and of our industry? Is it not true today that men face the fear of poverty;

do not women and children slave in workshop and factory; do not little children starve in this land of plenty, even in this city of San Antonio, for the barest necessities of life? Are there not shackles and annoyances today placed about industry and thrift even as they were in the time of the Revolution? Does not business and the result of industry have to bear today in taxation many times its share? Do not you as business men feel that some hidden force is behind the scenes taking from you month by month and year by year the fruits of your toil and energy? Some vicious element in our society seems to have thwarted the ideals of Jefferson, the author of this Declaration, who said, "The land belongs in usufruct to the living."

If it is true that in a land of plenty, a land with factories running overtime, with warehouses filled to bursting with the fruit of industry; if it is true that our grainaries are filled with grain, that our storehouses are filled with merchandise, and that at the same time poverty stalks abroad in the land; if the same civilization produces millionaires and the wanton expenditure of wealth, while men live in poverty and thousands of people are cooped together in tenements in our cities—then we have not fulfilled the ideals of the founders of this republic. There is still something for the minds of men to attain. The duty of this generation, your duty and my duty, is to find the way for economic freedom, to find out what it is that is hampering industry in this country, what it is that is keeping the toilers of the earth from their just reward and from the enjoyment of the fruits of their labor.

The best and most effective tool in the world today, the hardest implement on earth today, is the human brain. The human brain has been hard enough to cut diamonds, it has driven its way in tunnels through mountains, it has riven a continent in twain that a waterway may be opened to the world. The human brain is the hardest tool, the best tool, the most effective tool on earth today, and the human brain must solve this problem as it has solved others, when it shall have been presented to it and when the intelligence of man has turned its energies in that direction.

The work of mankind industrially is almost done. In the last eighty-five years there has been built on the face of the earth six hundred thousand miles of railway. Communication and channels of trade have been opened between the peoples of the earth. In electricity we have almost finished the work that can possibly be done. We have chained the lightning and put it to our use in every way. In reaping and binding machinery, in harvesting machinery there has hardly been an improvement in the last twenty-five years. The brain of man has chained all the forces of nature to facilitate manufactures and to distribute to the four corners of the earth the raw materials of nature and the fruits of labor and industry. It has done all this, but it has not found the way to remove the artificial barriers to trade that designing interest have builded about it.

The human brain cannot be idle. It must find some other field in which

to work. Industrially it has done everything to develop the possibility of creating wealth for the world, but it has not turned itself upon the idea of freeing industry from the shackles and annoyances that have been placed upon it by those who for their own interest have turned the wealth of this republic into their own coffers. It is our duty to determine why it is that in this republic we have not fulfilled the ideal of the fathers. We should go to work now to make that flag really a banner of the free; to make the flag really fly over a people not only politically and religiously free, but who have the freedom to engage in the creation of wealth and also to enjoy the wealth after they have created it. It is our duty to determine why it is that poverty and prosperity go hand in hand and to banish from our civilization the forces and influences that divert from you and me and all who labor the enjoyment of the products and fruit of our thought and industry.

If our country is one of the oldest countries on the earth today; if our own flag is no longer a new flag among the children of men, and if at the same time we have not fulfilled the ideals of the founders of this republic, if in the republic today there are reproaches staring us in the face because of the fact that we are permitting the diversion into the coffers of the few of the wealth created by the many, then it is our duty now to turn our minds into channels looking towards the correcting of these evils and make that flag really a flag of an unshackled people.

If we do that, America will again take its stand in the foremost front of the nations bearing aloft the torch of Liberty. It was only twelve years after the Declaration was signed, crystallizing for once and all the ideals that had been in the hearts of men for centuries toward political freedom, that the flames broke out in Europe and the banner of political freedom was unfurled there. It would be the same thing again if it were possible for us to lead the way. That would be the true preparedness, the preparedness of a peaceful, prosperous people. The nations of the earth again would follow the example of the great leader nation of the West, and in a very few years they would emulate our example by the establishment in their countries of the same ideals of freedom that had found birth with us.

I can see in the accomplishment of the ideals of Jefferson, of Adams, and of Madison, a fulfillment of the words of the prophet, that "Every man should be permitted to sit under his own vine and fig tree and enjoy the fruits of his labor." I can see the flag of this Republic again the emblem and gonfalon of Liberty, leading the children of the earth into the ways of prosperity and peace!

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Civilization as we see it in our time is but the opium dream of the victim of monopoly. The reality is a landscape warmed with the sunshine of God's love, green with the foliage of good works and fragrant with the ministrations of brotherhood.—JAMES BELLIANGEE.