

tion remains the most important work that we can do. Teach the people the great truth which Henry George left to us, and the truth will set them free. There is no other way.

Personal Recollections of Henry George

ADDRESS OF FREDERIC CYRUS LEUBUSCHER
AT THE HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS, PITTS-
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TO one who dwells in the purely intellectual realm, the written words of an author are the only things that count. The life of the writer, his struggles, his triumphs, his defeats, his social qualities, in other words, his personality, are quite immaterial. Are his words and arguments reasonable and logical, is the only question, not the qualities of the soul that forced him to express himself. Such an intellectual feels that if he allowed himself to admire a writer's greatness of heart, he might becloud his mind with sophistry. He fears he might become a hero worshipper.

The man who desires to live in the rarified atmosphere of pure reason will find that he has lost more than half his life. He would lose the soul of that which has been written. Carlyle said that "hero worship exists, has existed and will forever exist among mankind." He also said "hero means the sincere man."

Henry George has been my hero for forty-five years. His heroism was not shown on the battle field in helping to destroy life, nor in a catastrophe in helping to preserve life. In his own life he demonstrated his heroism by fighting and vanquishing poverty and the lack of education. Above all, he was a hero to me because his ideas and words will ultimately vanquish poverty throughout the earth. Emerson said that "each man is a hero to somebody and to that person whatever he says has an enhanced value." I believe that Henry George will some day be a hero to everybody and that even his minor writings will be magnified. Three years ago, when I was in Denmark, I discovered that the Danish peasants—nine out of ten of them—give the portrait of Henry George the most conspicuous position in their humble homes.

The time allotted to me is too short to give even a hasty sketch of Henry George's career. I will merely touch upon my personal relations with the Prophet, the memory of which I cherish next to the memories of my wife. In 1884, I was a clerk in a New York law office. My employers gave me the usual two weeks' vacation. On my way to the train, I stopped at a book stall to purchase a cheap novel with which to beguile the tedium of the trip. I selected a paper covered novel, entitled "Progress and Poverty." Imagine my disgust when I found that instead of a love story, it was a treatise on political economy. However, as I had no other reading matter, I opened the

book and was soon thrilled by the beautiful style of the writer. Before my two weeks were up, I had finished reading this immortal book and had become a convert to its doctrines. I procured a portrait of the author and daily admired it. The dome-like head and full beard of Henry George at that time looked more like Socrates than anybody else. Remember that this was forty-five years ago and that I was very young and shy. So, much as I longed to see the Prophet, I did not look him up.

In 1886, he became a public character by accepting a nomination for the mayoralty of New York City. All citizens were welcomed at his political headquarters, so I called there the day after I listened to his acceptance speech in Cooper Union. I was met in the court room by a young man with a shock of black hair, who introduced himself as Louis F. Post. I told him that my services were at Mr. George's command but that, above all, I wanted to meet him. Mr. Post immediately ushered me into another room, where at a desk, sat my hero. I was over-awed but he soon put me at my ease by a few kindly words and turned me over to his son, Henry George, Jr., a young man of about my own age. Incidentally, I might say that this was the beginning of a friendship between Harry and me that lasted until he passed on. He, his sister Jennie, my sister and I became socially intimate and spent several summers together in the country. Anna George, now Mrs. deMille, was scarcely more than an infant at that time.

I did not make any speeches during that campaign of '86 but I was "a chiel amang them takken notes." My knowledge of shorthand was utilized in reporting Henry George's speeches. I never saw a more active candidate. On the same day he would address the intellectuals gathered in a large hall, then go to a labor union meeting, followed by several cart tail speakers. One day, he made fourteen speeches including one from the stairway of an elevated railroad station on his way home. It was midnight. My duty was to go with the candidate and report everything he said verbatim. I was a sort of Boswell to his Johnson, and was often obliged to put my notebook on the back of the man standing in front of me at a street meeting. His speeches were so perfect in form that they required little, if any revision. Notwithstanding this strenuous speaking tour, Mr. George found time to engage in an animated epistolary duel with his chief opponent. It was admitted by the opposition press that Mr. George's letters were masterpieces of style and eloquence, but, of course, they disputed his conclusions. Some of you may remember that a month after the close of the campaign Henry George's speeches, his and Hewitt's letters, together with other matter, were published in a book entitled "An Account of the George-Hewitt Campaign of '86," prepared by Louis F. Post and me. That is, Mr. Post did the editing, while my only contribution was a transcript of the speeches; but Post with characteristic large-heartedness insisted on coupling my name with his. On election night

of '86, after the returns showed that his opponent had been elected, not by a majority but by a plurality, Mr. George walked to the headquarters of the United Labor party (as the organization was called) and there made his speech, which rang with dauntless courage. He was really elated and not downhearted, for he had polled a vote large enough to put his ideas on the map. This was after all just what he wanted, for he did not wish to be mayor.

I recall an interesting incident of this campaign. After a strenuous speaking tour I arrived home at about 1 A. M. At 2, I was aroused by a messenger with a letter from Mr. George, entirely in his own handwriting, requesting me to go at once to his home at Pleasant Avenue. Of course, a request from him was a command. When I arrived, he informed me that he had received advance information that a morning newspaper would have a front page alleged interview with John Most, the then leader of the communist-anarchists. Most was quoted as being enthusiastically in favor of the candidacy of Henry George, when as a matter of fact he had been denouncing George as one of the bourgeoisie candidates. The intent was evident. The politicians were getting frightened by the swing of the intellectuals and small property owners to Henry George. As I had some knowledge of German (the mother tongue of Herr Most) Mr. George thought it might be a good idea for me to interview the communist and publish my genuine interview on the same day that the fake one appeared. It was good tactics but the politicians were in the way of its fulfillment. Herr Most just at that time happened to be an inmate of the penitentiary on Blackwell's Island, and it required a pass to get a passage on the ferry. Though a pass was usually given for the asking, try as I might I could not get one. This was my first and last attempt at reportorial work. It might interest you to know that I carefully preserved the letter which Mr. George wrote me that night. A few years ago, I gave it, together with the envelope, to Mr. Benj. W. Burger, and it is now in this hall together with other memorabilia collected by Mr. Burger.

The vote for our candidate was so large that we were encouraged to form a regular political organization and to serve demands on the legislature for the passage of remedial laws for the working man. I was secretary for the committee of lawyers that drew these bills. One measure was so important that Mr. George requested a hearing before the committee in charge of the bill. He and I went to Albany the night before, but all the hotels were so crowded that we were able to get only one small room with only one bed. So I was privileged to become a bed fellow of the Prophet.

In 1887 Mr. George, in furtherance of the plan to keep his ideas before the public, consented to accept the nomination of Secretary of State, a minor and largely clerical position. There happened to be no gubernatorial election that year; otherwise he would, of course, have been

nominated for that. Neither he nor the leaders had any expectation of success in his state-wide campaign and he would have been chagrined had he been elected. The campaign was as strenuous as that of 1886, but owing to the alarm amongst his former Roman Catholic supporters, caused by the excommunication of Father McGlynn, the vote in New York City was cut almost in half, while up state it was negligible. A number of us consented to be fellow-candidates for various offices, Mr. Post as District Attorney and I for a Judgeship, which, owing to my youth I would have been incompetent to fill.

The next ten years Mr. George devoted to his pen almost entirely, with the exception of speech-making tours in Europe and Australia. In 1896 he advocated the election of Bryan, not because he believed in the free coinage of silver (indeed he was a greenbacker) but because of the general liberal and radical tendency of the Democratic candidate. During that decade, I had the privilege of frequent associations with Mr. George and his delightful wife and family. His health began to fail in '96 and in '97 was quite precarious. As the first Mayor of Greater New York was to be elected that year, a movement was started to induce him to again become a candidate. His friends, of whom I was one, strongly begged him not to undertake the strain of a campaign. His physician warned him it would be fatal. He listened to us but said that as such a campaign would do more to revitalize the fight for his ideas than anything else, he considered it his duty to run, even though it meant the sacrifice of his life. That brings me back to the quotation from Carlyle I made at the beginning of this talk, "Hero means a sincere man." It was evident in all the speeches he made in that campaign that he was a very sick man. Nevertheless, he aroused great enthusiasm and the politicians were beginning to fear a repetition of the '86 campaign, with the possibility of George's election; for the voters in '97 had the Australian ballot, the lack of which, some claimed, had defeated him in '86. I heard the last speech he made in '97 (3 days before election) which was the last speech of his life. He was thoroughly worn out after a hard day. Gone was his characteristic fluency, and his erstwhile magnificent voice could hardly be heard. Returning to his hotel he partook of a light supper. Soon after he sunk into a coma and never regained consciousness.

I acted as one of the ushers at the funeral exercises in Grand Central Palace. There was an immense outpouring. Eminent men delivered addresses, including that great orator, John S. Crosby. But I was most impressed by Dr. McGlynn's paraphrase of the bible, "There was sent a man of God and his name was—Henry George." At the conclusion of the services the funeral cortege started. At least 10,000 men marched behind the hearse that cold November day to Greenwood cemetery, about five miles away. "All these men" were hero worshippers. I was one of those that followed my hero to the grave,