

HENRY GEORGE, JR.

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE MEMORIAL MEETING HELD AT THE LENOX AVENUE
UNITARIAN CHURCH, MARCH 29, 1717, BY FREDERICK CYRUS LEUBUSCHER

To forward-looking men and women throughout the world, the death of Henry George Jr. was an irreparable loss; to his intimate friends throughout the world his death was a bitter bereavement. Those who did not know him well deemed him cold; but those who had the privilege of his friendship knew that his coldness was but the expression of a shy and modest nature. Beneath the apparent reserve beat a heart that warmed to the touch of friendship. His use of the word "junior" until the end of his life was typical of the man. Though he outlived his great father nineteen years and himself attained an age but little less than his; though he stood high in the literary world and had made his mark in the national council of his country, he ever shrank from even seeming to trade on the fame of the "Prophet of San Francisco."

He keenly felt the taunt that his opponents sometimes uttered—that he was the son of his father; not because he failed to realize that his was a lesser light, but because he feared that he might shine by reflected light. He was emphatically a man who wanted to be judged by what he is and not by what his father was.

Longer than most of you did I enjoy Harry's friendship; for it was as "Harry" that Mr. George introduced his son to me. In the summer of 1884 my employer gave me a vacation; and so glad was I to escape the dry-as-dust Blackstone that I made up my mind to read nothing heavier than novels during the two weeks of rest. So at the depot I picked up a paper-covered romance entitled "Progress and Poverty." My disappointment when I discovered my error soon changed to interest and then to absorption. I returned to the city a convert to the doctrine that in the solution of the land problem lies the solution of most great problems that vex humanity. A shyness that those who know me now probably will not believe could have existed even in my salad days prevented me from seeking to meet the man who had become a god in my youthful eyes. So two years passed until the mayoralty campaign of 1886 emboldened me to go to Henry George's headquarters in the old Colonnade Hotel. As I opened the door a short, thick-set young man, with spectacles and a shock of black hair, asked my wishes. I proffered my services, but above all I wanted to meet the candidate. "Surely I will introduce you, but will first introduce myself, Louis F. Post." He then took me to an inner room where an even shorter man, but without a shock of black or much of any other kind of hair, was writing. He spoke kindly to the stammering young man and soon had him at his ease. He then took me to a corner desk and said: "This is my son, Harry, who will set you to work."

At that time Harry was not quite 24, for he was born in Sacramento, California, on November 3, 1862. He was the first of four children, the others being Richard, who became a sculptor, Jennie, afterwards Mrs. Atkinson, and Annie, now Mrs. DeMille and the only one of the family living. Like his father, Harry had but a common-school education, and even that was begun late, for he was delicate as a child. Born to poverty, he was put to work at 16, and naturally turned to his father's trade, that of type-setting. He once said to me that he would never forget that he helped set type on the first edition of "Progress and Poverty." He came to New York with Mr. George in the early eighties, and in 1881, at 19 years of age, entered the newspaper field by becoming a reporter on the *Brooklyn Eagle*. When I met him in 1886 he was his father's secretary. On learning this I suggested that possibly my knowledge of shorthand writing might be of help in the campaign. This resulted in my accompanying the candidate to his meetings and reporting his speeches. I was the proudest young man in the city when I realized that but for me some of the inspired words of the Prophet would have been lost to the world.

After the campaign, though Harry took an active part in the organization of the Anti-Poverty Society and in the United Labor Party that was formed to continue the political work begun in 1886, he was full of gaiety and fond of the society of boys and girls of his age. The political friendship we had formed soon became a personal one; and I will always cherish the memory of days spent together in city and country.

About January, 1887, Mr. George started *The Standard*, a weekly paper devoted to what was afterwards called by Thomas G. Shearman the *Single Tax*. Harry became one of the staff and insisted on my being present at the opening of the office on the first floor of an old building on the northwest corner of Ann and Nassau Streets. There he proudly introduced me to the office cat, a Persian, which he named "Poverty" because it looked so resplendent. Harry had a sense of humor. I can almost hear his chuckle now, as I saw him paste on the wall cartoons of his father and Dr. McGlynn clipped from *Puck* and other journals.

In 1889 he was made managing editor of *The Standard*, and when it was discontinued accepted an offer to become managing editor of a daily Florida newspaper, *The Citizen*. Journalism, which he entered at the early age of 19, remained his main profession throughout the rest of his life, though he found time to lecture and to take a dip into politics. A provincial newspaper could not hold him long, and we soon find him a special signed correspondent for metropolitan and syndicate newspapers, writing articles from New York City, Washington, D. C., London, England, and Tokyo, Japan. Harry was a great traveller, for he visited Great Britain five times, the other countries of Europe a number of times, Japan twice, and made one trip around the world. Two trips were made for his health, and one as secretary for his father, the others as a journalist. He was in England in 1910 to write up the great polit-

ical campaign inaugurated by the famous Lloyd George budget that introduced the land question into English politics. On his mother's side there was Irish blood in Harry's veins, and we know that an Irishman cannot see a fight without wishing to be in it. He soon threw down his pen and jumped on the platform to advocate the election of the Liberal candidates.

Upon his return to the United States in the spring of 1910, Henry George Jr. made a long and successful lecture tour of this country and of Canada. His most popular lectures were "Our Princes of Privilege," "The Wonders of New Japan," and "Tolstoy." When at the close of a five months trip he came back to his New York City home, the Democratic party offered him a nomination for Congress. For many years the representatives from the imperial city had been below mediocrity; and though New York City was one of the strongholds of the Democratic party, none of the great men of that party hailed from Manhattan. Mindful of this reproach and of the fact that the campaign would turn on the tariff question, the local leaders urged Henry George, Jr., to stand as a candidate in what had been for many years a Republican district. Politicians and newspaper men, after the lapse of half a dozen years, still remember that campaign. A gubernatorial fight was also on, but even that did not distract attention from this Congressional fight. While the campaigns in other congressional districts received scant notice from the press, the newspapers had daily accounts of the George-Bennet campaign. This was largely due to the work of a former journalist, Charles O'Conner Hennessy. He drew a series of clever advertisements that are still talked of by politicians. I was again thrown into close intimacy with Harry, for he did me the honor of allowing me to manage his campaign; and our thoughts often recurred to the stirring times 24 years before. Harry's forty-eighth birthday occurring before Election day; we spoke of the fact, that he was now the same age as his father in the campaign of 1886.

I do not think that any regular party candidate ever conducted such a frank campaign. One night a heckler asked him if he believed in free trade. The usual Democratic candidate would have shied at the sound of those words as the devil is said to shy at the sight of holy water, and would have hastily shouted, "No, no, I believe in tariff reform." Our candidate however said promptly, "Yes." "Immediately?" "The sooner the better." "Do you believe in Single Tax?" "Yes, free trade is worthless without it." Our spellbinders were as outspoken as our candidate. I see some of them here tonight. Literature so radical that the party leaders protested it would not only defeat our candidate but endanger the State ticket, was spread broadcast. Still, at Harry's request, the campaign was kept on a dignified plane. He turned down many plans that we at headquarters thought perfectly legitimate, but we sometimes put them over without his knowledge, asking his approval after they had been accomplished. For instance, we had a truck with a transparency on which was painted in large type "Bennet did not cut down the high cost

of living. Let George do it." This had been driven through the district two days before Harry noticed it. He was first annoyed, then laughed, and then ordered it discontinued.

Notwithstanding this frankly radical campaign, Henry George, Jr., ran thousands ahead of his ticket, and had a large majority in a Republican district. The moral of this is that pussy-footing is not the best policy in politics. The scene on election night again took me back twenty-four years, though in 1886 we were beaten, and in 1910 victorious. Henry George in 1910 was called on to make a speech as was Henry George in 1886; and in 1910 I reported the speech of the son as I had that of the father in 1886.

An extra session of Congress soon gave our friend opportunity for public service. As his party was in control of the House he sought and received appointments on the Public Lands and on the District of Columbia Committees. He investigated the thefts of lands from the Indians of Montana and North Dakota, and the greater theft of land values from the residents of the District of Columbia. His reports and speeches on this subject attracted national attention and resulted in reforms. The Indians' lands were returned to them, and the inequalities of taxation in the District of Columbia largely abolished.

While he did not succeed in establishing the Single Tax at the national capital, he did succeed in compelling the rich landowner to pay taxes on the same basis of valuation as was used with the homes of clerks and working men. He got little help from his associates on the committees, their motto seemingly being "Let George do it." The result was that he was overworked, and laid the basis of the disease that ultimately carried him off.

He came up for re-election in 1912. While this campaign was not as picturesque as that of 1910, he was on the stump for about a month, defending his and his party's record, and was re-elected by an increased majority. This was the year of the split in the Republican party, resulting in the election of Woodrow Wilson to the presidency and in the return of an overwhelming Democratic majority in the House of Representatives. Our friend's speech in favor of the Underwood Tariff bill was published, in whole or in part, by the press of the country, not only because of its cogent arguments but because of his advocacy of the Single Tax. Henry George, Jr. was not one of those irreconcilables who refuse to accept an inch because they cannot get a yard. Nor was he one of those alleged Single Taxers who conceal or compromise their adherence to the Single Tax.

The strain of a continuous summer session of Congress again sapped his strength, and his physician ordered a course of treatment in the baths of Germany. Here he was caught in the toils that attended the opening of the great war, and after months of hardship, returned home too late to obtain a nomination. It was just as well, for he could not have stood the strain of a campaign. For two years he lingered, but endured his sufferings with an

indomitable will and cheerful spirit until the end came on November 14th, 1916, when he had just attained the age of 54.

It was not only as a journalist, a lecturer and a statesman that Henry George, Jr. rose far above mediocrity. He wrote three books that alone would have brought him fame. "The Life of Henry George" was reviewed at length in the literary columns of newspapers generally, and after the lapse of a dozen years is still quoted. "The Menace of Privilege" put in startling concrete form what hundreds of thousands of Americans had been vaguely suspecting. It created a sensation, and is being constantly used by statesmen and lecturers. But the humanism of the man is shown in his "Romance of John Bainbridge." Harry cold and austere? I thought that I had reached an age and a state of mind when novels would no longer interest me; but when I first read it I was so entranced that I sat up nearly all night to complete it. A year ago last November, after having read it aloud to my wife, I felt an irresistible impulse to write to the author. A few days later I received an answer from Mrs. George written at Harry's dictation, stating that my letter had reached him on his birthday and had cheered him greatly. The book is dedicated:

"To my wife, to whose faith, encouragement and assistance it is in great part due."

On his trip around the world Harry visited Tolstoy. As they were parting Tolstoy said: "I am an old man and will soon see your father; have you any message for him?" "Tell him I have kept the faith." If indeed there be personal immortality, last November Harry greeted the prophet of San Francisco, and the prophet of New Russia, and assured them both with his own lips that he had kept the faith.

And so this man, in spite of the handicap of a great name and a frail physique, achieved much more than the average man. Above all, he achieved friendship. We loved him living; we love him now.

THE DUALITY OF THE SINGLE TAX

(For the Review)

By HAROLD SUDELL

An old legend tells of two knights who, riding along a road in opposite directions, met where hung a great shield. This shield was gold on the one side and silver on the other and these knights, each seeing only the side facing him, fought to the death as to whether it was a gold or silver shield they saw.

Something of this kind is now going on in the Single Tax ranks in the controversy between those who favor a "land for the people" policy and those who see in the Single Tax merely a fiscal reform.