

"Business hasn't wanted a change," swears witness Baruch. "It hasn't cleaned up its own stables."

Well . . . have you?

Do you want anything except to return to "old times" when *you* were making money and you felt sorry for your bankrupt contemporaries, whilst being somewhat annoyed by the low-browed rabble in its raucous demands for higher wages and shorter work-days?

"If the government will only leave us alone we can restore the old times of prosperity." That's what *you* think. In what manner can you make a success of old notions and efforts—which are based upon erroneous teachings—if you are unhampered by all the busybody Mr. Fixits now toggged out in official togas and governmental gumshoes and horn-rimmed specs?

Has it ever occurred to you, Messrs. Big and Little Businessmen of these United States, that in original thought—in observation and deduction—you are not so hot? In one breath you have asked our paternalistic national government to loan you money—to fix your minimum prices—to rig your markets; in the next breath you have asked the same pater to "leave us alone."

Do you know what you *do* want. The evidence shows that, basicly, you do not know. Furthermore, you are too busy grumbling at "cruel Fate" to find out what ails yourselves. You do not know whether you have a headache or a stomachache, or a backache, and your bill of complaint indicates that your thoughts originate anywhere except in your heads.

Your organizer of a National Little Businessmen's Association opines that Big Business and Brain Trusts and individuals all have failed in showing our government the way out of the dilemma, so he and his crowd "might as well have a fling at it." Your leaders of Big Business assert that the governmental programme is "all right—all wrong—right in part—right with modifications—wrong in part." In other words it is all right but it wont work; it wont work any better than your own methods which, based upon erroneous economic teachings, have built up this nation's commerce—during three centuries—to a big let-down.

During three generations the disciples of Henry George—the disciples of taxing site-values and of untaxing industry—politely have proffered to you, positive principles found in true economic thought. These you have ignored.

We hand you, herewith, the negative approach to your problem.

THE power to reason correctly on general subjects is not to be learned in schools, nor does it come with special knowledge. It results from care in separating, from caution in combining, from the habit of asking ourselves the meaning of the words we use and making sure of one step before building another on it—and above all, from loyalty to truth.—HENRY GEORGE.

A Note on Henry George's Conception of Civilization

BY WILL LISSNER

IT is in his contribution to the general theory of civilization that Henry George has established one of his several claims to the appraisal of him by John Dewey: "One of the world's great social philosophers, certainly the greatest which this country has produced," Professor Dewey himself, of course, is among the most important contributors to our modern conception of civilization. In respect of George's conception of the general nature, origin and measurement of progress in civilization, it is most fruitful to ask, how does Dr. Dewey arrive at this evaluation of George as a social philosopher.

To estimate George's contribution, we must understand the idea of civilization dominant in his time. It was assumed then, as Professor James Harvey Robinson has pointed out, "that man was *by nature* endowed with a *mind* and with reason. These distinguished him sharply from the animals, which did wondrous things, it is true but not as a result of reason . . . (but) by instinct." Civilization, which by prejudice was confused with "urbanity," "civility," was contrasted with "rusticity," "barbarity," "savagery." It was a state, or rather stages achieved by evolutionary causation, and its achievements were transmitted by an hereditary process which, it was thought, changed the character and powers of man.

This concept, expounded by Spencer in George's time (Phil. of H. G., p. 524), was challenged by George. George did not play a lone hand in the recasting of the concept of course. Certainly, it appears that the major credit for the initial development of our present theory of civilization should go back to Darwin and E. B. Tylor. The former's "Decent of Man," and the latter's "Primitive Society," both appeared in 1871, eight years before "Progress and Poverty" made its appearance, in the year in which George formulated the essentials of his economic theory in the then little known pamphlet, "Our Land and Land Policy."

But the evidence indicates that too much importance cannot be attributed to George's work in bringing about a thorough renovation of the general idea of human progress and in forcing moral philosophy to take realistic account of social problems. Here again, there are others whose contributions must be noted. In Europe, George shares credit with his contemporary and anticipator, Karl Marx; his partial followers, the Fabians, to followers like Tolstoy; and most of all to his followers Oppenheimer and Muirhead; in America, to a lesser extent, with his contemporary, Bellamy, and to a greater extent to intellectual allies like Veblen.

The sociologists and moral philosophers were more willing than the economists of the time to discuss the

problems raised by the American economists-philosophers. It was in 1894, while George was still alive, that Benjamin Kidd, the distinguished British sociologist, wrote his widely-read book, "Social Evolution," recording the elements that were operating. Discussing the challenge to the idea of progress George had raised, he writes: "If we look round and endeavor to regard sympathetically, and yet as far as possible without bias, the remarkable social phenomena of our time in Germany, France, America and England, we shall find in the utterances of those who speak in the name of the masses of the people a meaning which cannot be mistaken." ("Social Evolution," 1895 edition, p. 72.)

Mentioning the major works of George, Marx, the Fabians and Bellamy, he continued: "It is deserving of the most careful study by the student of social phenomena; for it is here, and here only, that he is enabled to see with the eyes, and to think through the minds of those who see and reason for that large class of the population who are confronted with the sterner realities of our civilization."

Going on to consider George's crucial question, whether attempting to maintain political equality in the face of widespread and increasing economic inequality, was not like standing a pyramid upon its apex, Benjamin Kidd concludes from an honest appraisal of the facts then known that "it must leave the impression on the mind of the unprejudiced observer" that "to the great masses of the people, the so-called lower classes, in the advanced civilizations of today, the conditions under which they live and work are still without any rational sanction." That is, that "the lower classes of our population have no sanction from their reason for maintaining existing conditions." This, Kidd thinks, is an "inevitable" conclusion. (Pp. 72-3.)

Moral philosophy became so concerned with these societal problems raised into the consciousness of the masses by George from a tradition that extended back to Plato and the Greeks and Jeremiah and the Biblical Prophets that a new field of philosophy, one concerned with the validity of ideals, one concentrating upon judgments of value, became clearly defined. It took for its name one which Stuart Mill had suggested earlier, among a host of names, the science that became known as sociology under the influence of Comte. This field, under Mill's name, "social philosophy," has in recent years developed a large literature and is developing a method. And sociology found these problems involving the individual in society so fruitful of investigation that it has given to a field of science all its own, the special sociology, Social Problems, one that, together with the related special sociologies, provides the main body of materials with which the student of social philosophy must work.

George was acquainted with the work of Darwin, to some extent, at least, but the first book of "The Science of Political Economy," shows him to have reserved judg-

ment on its importance and it does not appear that he has been considerably influenced by it. (Which saved him, perhaps, from the misinterpretation current in his time.) One suspects that he had more acquaintance with the point of view of Tylor, for we see in this first division of "The Science of Political Economy" that he was aware that even in the society of so-called savages there were vestiges of civilization of a higher degree than one might find in some modern cities.

But he was predisposed by his evangelical background to an acceptance of the view that man was endowed by nature with mind and with reason, and that this distinguished man from the animals, who were guided by instinct. He frequently contrasts the civilized man with the barbarians, the savages.

His philosopher's mind led him to question these views. He perceived that man was, in origin, a wild animal, but he thought he was something more: "an animal plus a human soul." It would lead us far astray to attempt to define and to analyze what George meant by the soul, for he had an open mind on the crucial points of this problem which, to define in his time, would have dated his thought. (He was, we must remember, while an intensely religious man by the broad standards of behavioristic psychology, a freethinker in theology.) It can, however, be said that he thought man was an animal, but a unique kind of animal, one that we could say has a peculiar capacity for development, one with a peculiar capacity for moral perception, that is, appreciation of the values of behavior, and one peculiarly capable of "creating" an environment in accord with his state of general knowledge and his level of moral perception by means of which he can change himself.

His first discovery of importance is the extent to which the activities of man are purely animal activities. He remarks in "The Science of Political Economy" upon these "non-progressive activities": those by which man provides himself with food and shelter, protection from the vagaries of the rest of nature and defense from the other animals, and by which man perpetuates his kind.

But his greatest discovery was in the nature of civilization, which developed from his challenge of the notion of Spencerian evolution. Civilization, according to the modern view, consists of language, religion, beliefs, morals, arts and manifestations of the human mind and reason (Robinson), all of which are newly assimilated by each generation and are not hereditarily transmitted. For this modern theory we are indebted to George.

"Each society, small or great, necessarily weaves for itself a web of knowledge, beliefs, customs, language, tastes, institutions and laws," George writes. ("Progress and Poverty.") "Into this web, woven by each society . . . the individual is received at birth and continues until his death."

The importance of this theory of the "cultural web" can only be indicated here. How much of a contribution

this was to philosophy is best illustrated, perhaps, in Professor Dewey's classical work, "Human Nature and Conduct." Its practical importance is seen in connection with the age-old controversy of environment against heredity; today we find this controversy dominating the thought and policy of empires, with the environmentalists supreme in Soviet Russia, and the hereditarians dominant in National Socialist Germany.

In his exposition of his notion of the cultural web, George proceeds significantly; "This is the matrix in which mind unfolds and from which it takes its stamp." In this brief sentence, George emerges from the limitations of the thought of his time. He may not have been aware that his definition of man defined exactly only civilized man; he may have been unwilling to accept the view that man once had been in an uncivilized state in which he was nothing more than an animal (a view which makes assumptions as equally unfounded in our present state of knowledge as his own); but he did perceive that mind was developed, originated in and was part of the process of civilization itself.

Having seen that civilization is an accumulation, a social and traditional heritage from the development of man's intelligence made possible by an accidental or purposeful combination of physical characteristics, George was able to analyze the phenomenon—progress—whose contrast with a phenomenon of which he had anguishing first-hand experience—poverty—had led him to stray in the fertile field of economic thought. Let us consider what we mean by progress.

If we accept, for example, the evolutionary concept of Spencer or the mechanistic ideologies of more recent thinkers, we must set down human aspirations as visionary, human discontent—itsself a powerful force for social change—as futile raving. Social betterment, we must tell ourselves, will come if it is betterment by the inexorable processes of history; we can do nothing but sit back and wait, we can be confident of nothing except that we shall not see improvement in society in our own time.

But if our modern hope of progress is as Robinson defines it—"an indefinite increase of knowledge and its *application* to the improvement of man's estate—then our hope resides in man as an actor; to use the religious phraseology of our modernist debtors of anthropology and mathematical physics, our hope resides in the possibility of man acting as the cooperator with God in the creation of an unfinished world.

George saw that invention, discovery and the increase of knowledge are the stuff of which civilization is made, to borrow Robinson's phrase. He saw that civilization consisted of spiritual things, that is, things of the mind and of reason, language, religion, belief, morals, arts and similar manifestations. He continued further, however, and found the basis for our religion, our morals, our folkways, even our arts, in the material: "much of subjective

desire is in the material," he puts it. (Sc. Pol. Ec., Bk 1.

From this he ascends. Since man's nobler aspirations are found to have their seat in his material needs, he ventures the opinion that only as his material needs are satisfied will he be able to realize these nobler ends. There is no short cut to the direct manipulation of the individual. Human progress, he concludes, consists in the adaptation of the changing social structure to the problems in which man in the course of his development involves himself. The individual insofar as he is a social organism is a product of his environment; in George's thought man's moral and social progress is inevitably conditioned by his economic background. He can develop upward only when and as his economic problems are solved.

This brings us to the problem of the measurement of progress. George locates the law of human progress in the phenomenon of association, of social gregariousness. "Man, the social animal," as Geiger says in paraphrasing George, "is presented only with one way of efficiently solving the problem of non-progressive activity; that is, by a continuing and ever-increasing utilization of communal forces . . . the power of social cooperation." It is in this association that we find a measure of progress; its extent, George holds, determines the extent to which men are released for pursuit of the progressive activities in which civilization increases.

George feels that we might measure civilization in power which exists in the extension of man's individual power in society by what we denote as social cooperation and social integration; in wealth, the result of that extension of powers; and in justice and kindness, or, to use a more modern terminology, justice and charity, the aspect of human relations, the relations between man and man. In the latter, in the level of social justice and charity (the latter is not to be confused with benevolence), which is the moral side of civilization, was the aspect he considered the truest sign of general advance. We have but to consider the treatment of the jobless, the need and the underprivileged today, not only in the United States but in all so-called civilized countries, to realize the value of this scale in the measurement of human progress.

The further development of George's theory of civilization and of human progress in civilization, which must be set against the background of George's theory of the organization of production and exchange, is important to an understanding of the realism of George's program of social reconstruction, which is another problem. But there is an important consideration that must not be disregarded. Progress, he held, depended upon the association *in equality*.

Here we find George the realist, bringing into the concrete arena of measurable social phenomena the aspirations of a long line of utopian thinkers to whom the world is indebted for progressive motivation, even if it cannot thank them for performance. As in association *in equality*

he found the law of the rise of civilization, in association in *inequality* he saw its inevitable fall. Many lesser thinkers have returned to this discovery of George's of late. But they overlook, what George analyzed with the keen insight peculiar to his genius, the economic imperatives through which this law operates.

Acting on the suggestions of Adam Smith and Macaulay, George examines the idea of "pecuniary interests" and finds them to be special interests become rooted in the structure of society and thus, in the first book of "The Science of Political Economy, we find an extensive development of this theory of "vested interests," the first formulation of the old, vague idea of "vested rights." So valuable was this analysis, this formulation (anticipated but not defined in "Progress and Poverty" and other of George's earlier writings) that Thorstein Veblen was able to apply it to a vast range of industrial phenomena and, win, by it, his claim to recognition. ("The Vested Interests and the State of the Industrial Arts, 1919.")

George began his inquiry into society impelled by the curious phenomena produced by the monopolization of agricultural land. His insight into civilization broadened that concern from agricultural land to all natural opportunity. Social progress, he concluded, demands the socialization or the abolition of all special privilege, all monopoly exactions. It is in this perception of what Peligman called "the disturbing but fruitful concept of privilege," that George's approach to the socialization of rent "soars beyond the categories of economics," as Geiger points out, "into the very dimension of the rise and fall of civilization."

Dorothy Thompson Speaks Out

HENRY GEORGE was a great man. He is the only economist I ever read with whom I could find no fault. He was the only economic philosopher of capitalism. If the capitalists had paid any attention to him they would not be in the mess they are today."

DOROTHY THOMPSON.

Miss Thompson in a letter to Mrs. deMille gives us permission to quote. Also acknowledging receipt of a copy of "Progress and Poverty," she says she will review "some time soon."

THOSE who make private property of the gift of God pretend in vain to be innocent. For in thus retaining the subsistence of the poor they are the murderers of those who die every day for the want of it.

POPE GREGORY, THE GREAT.

EQUAL: The Earth therefore and all things therein are the general property of all mankind, exclusive of all other beings, from the immediate gift of the Creator.

BLACKSTONE.

Robert Schalkenbach Foundation Report

IN returning to the work at the Foundation I see everywhere signs of progress. Miss Peterson, who has been acting secretary during my two years leave of absence, has done a monumental work in handling the demand for books, in planning new activities, and in carrying out exacting assignments along lines not heretofore followed. We feel that in having her at the helm the Foundation has been fortunate, and it is contemplated that she will continue to direct a large share of the Foundation affairs.

Ten thousand "Progress and Poverty," two thousand "Protection or Free Trade," and one thousand "Science of Political Economy" are being printed this month. The Henry George School is taking one half the amount of each title and the balance will be distributed in channels developed by the Foundation's activities.

Further, the Trustees of the Foundation have completed an interesting arrangement by way of experiment, with Random House, Modern Library Series, whereby five thousand copies of "Progress and Poverty" printed from electroplates jointly owned, are now on the market ready for distribution through the Random House facilities.

The Book-of-the-Month Club have chosen this Random House edition for a listing among the books to be given free to subscribers, and "Progress and Poverty" will henceforth appear in each Book of the Month Club bulletin.

"The Science of Political Economy" will be the first American edition to be published since the old Doubleday McClure version and of course those versions, in double volume, that appeared in various "sets." It will match "Progress and Poverty," and its 542 pages will be obtainable for the usual standard price of \$1.

Besides the preparation of the new printings, and concern with the details of appearance, design, etc., it is the duty of the office to promote new methods of placing the books in the hands of the public. Miss Peterson reported in the last issue of LAND AND FREEDOM the sending of a letter, describing "Progress and Poverty," to accountants. Ten thousand accountants received the five-day trial offer for the book, and 330 have sent for it. Each mail brings additional orders. We find members of the same firm telling each other about "Progress and Poverty" and sending for extra copies. The Librarian of Ernst and Ernst, one of the foremost accounting firms in the country, has placed the book in the company library.

Through the series of advertisements appearing in *Fortune*, *American Mercury*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Harpers*, a certain number of Henry George's books have been placed, and we note that the demand springs from professional men, authors, editors, bank presidents, and many college professors who have sent for the books through the use of these media. For the information of those in the cause