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# Henry George: the Dedication Period\*

By ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE†

## 1

### The Vow

IN DECEMBER, 1868, HENRY GEORGE was engaged by *The San Francisco Herald* to go to New York and try to get the paper admitted to the Associated Press.<sup>1</sup> Failing that, he was to establish a special news service for *The Herald*.

When he started East the transcontinental railroad was not yet finished, although thousands of Chinese coolies had been imported to work on it—as many as twelve thousand at one time.<sup>2</sup> George left San Francisco on the Overland Stage Route. Crossing the plains in a four-horse “mud wagon,” he spent days and nights sitting beside the driver. From his seat the traveller could observe sky and earth and question his companion. With years of experience on the trail the latter may have been able to answer some of them.

Were these vast tracts of virgin land, stretching to the far horizon, part of the “alternate sections” that had been deeded to the railroad, along with the mile-wide strips that would border the tracks on either side? Were they some of the twelve million acres presented to the Union Pacific Railroad by Congress?<sup>3</sup> Were they some of the lands that had been bought from the Indians by wily white men for two cents an acre, and sometimes paid for, not in money but in merchandise?<sup>4</sup> Were they grants that had been vouchsafed by sweep of pen in the hand of an alien king now long dead?

There was much to ponder over during that bumpy, jerky ride, in the springless, lumbering stage; it served to help George forget the physical discomfort of the journey. But when he reached the railroad at last and

\* Copyright, 1943, by Anna George de Mille. A section of a previously unpublished study, “Citizen of the World”; see “Henry George: Childhood and Early Youth,” *AM. JOUR. ECON. SOCIO.*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (April, 1942), p. 283n.

† The former site of the convent of the Sisters of the Order of St. Vincent de Paul, the Sisters of Charity (“Henry George: Early California Period,” *ib.*, Vol. 1, No. 4, July, 1942, p. 441n.) was at Alameda and Macy Streets, not Alameda and Tracy. It is now occupied by the Union Railroad Terminal.

<sup>1</sup> This news agency was a forerunner of the present agency of the same name.

<sup>2</sup> Oscar Lewis, “The Big Four,” New York, Knopf, 1938, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Gustavus Myers, “History of the Great American Fortunes,” New York, Modern Library, 1938, p. 440.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.*, p. 667.

boarded a sleeping car, his new quarters seemed like the height of luxury, even though he had to share his berth with a stranger.

He went straight to Philadelphia, of course. The reunion with his wife and children, as well as with his parents and his Aunt Mary and his sisters and brothers, whom he had not seen for eleven years (only Jennie was missing from the family circle),<sup>5</sup> was a joyous one. Still, he could remain at home only a short time. Engaging a boyhood friend as his assistant, he went on to New York to attend to the business that had brought him East.

It was a different New York from the one he had visited fourteen years before as a lad of fifteen, starting on a trip around the world. Now its population, half of it foreign-born, was nearly a million. The concert hall, Castle Garden, at the Battery, had been turned into a depot where immigrants, who poured into the port at the rate of 200,000 and more annually,<sup>6</sup> could get information, interpreters and guidance. And in the city, in contrast with the mansions of the affluent (a two million dollar one was then being built for a newly-rich merchant),<sup>7</sup> were ten thousand dingy tenements which the newcomers helped crowd. The poverty was reflected in the death rate, double that of London.

During his stay in the city, Henry George waged a tedious fight with the management of the Associated Press. At this time he wrote a letter to *The New York Tribune*,<sup>8</sup> attacking the Wells-Fargo Express for its recklessness in handling mail, and the Central Pacific Railroad for its excessive freight charges. Concerning the latter, he wrote that the road as yet afforded no advantage to those on the Pacific coast because transportation cost as much, if not more than in the days when the people there were dependent for haulage on horse or ox.

There would be some excuse for this, if the road had been constructed by private means; but it has been, and is being built literally and absolutely by the money of the people, receiving liberal aid from cities, counties and State of California, as well as the immense gratuity of the general government. . . .

The Central Pacific can dictate to California, Nevada and Utah, and the Union Pacific to the States and Territories through which it passes more completely than the Camden and Amboy dictated to New Jersey, and each or both will be able to exert an almost irresistible pressure upon Congress

<sup>5</sup> Cf. "Henry George: the Formative Years," *AM. JOUR. ECON. SOCIO.*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Oct., 1942) p. 97.

<sup>6</sup> John A. Kouwenhoven, "Adventures of America," New York, Harper, 1938, sections 3, 134.

<sup>7</sup> A. T. Stewart, a dry-goods merchant. The structure was built of white marble at Thirty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, across the street from the present site of the Empire State Building.

<sup>8</sup> Printed March 5, 1869.

in any manner in which their interests are involved. . . . The Central already influences conventions, manages Legislatures, and has its representatives in both Houses at Washington. . . .<sup>9</sup>

Failing to get *The San Francisco Herald* into the Associated Press, George returned to Philadelphia, where he gathered all the news he could, re-vamped and condensed it and wired it in cipher to his paper. His small service proved to be so competitive that the other San Francisco papers, which were in the Associated Press Service, brought pressure on the Western Union Telegraph Company to refuse the business. The carrier took the stand that it could not transmit a cipher or give service from Philadelphia. George promptly moved back to New York and continued to send news from there. The Western Union countered by setting a new schedule of rates, which increased charges for *The San Francisco Herald* and reduced them for the Associated Press.

The owner of *The San Francisco Herald* was strangely silent at his end of the line. Alone George fought the dragon of monopoly. He remembered the injunction, "Let no man living impose on you." To the vice-president of Western Union and afterward to the president, with whom persistence won him a hearing, he protested that the discrimination in service meant the crushing of the paper he represented. But he appealed in vain.

Then risking his future, he wrote an exposé of the monopoly which he sent, under his own signature, to newspapers in the East. *The New York Herald* was the only one of the large papers to publish the article. It did not change the company's stand. The San Francisco paper's telegraph news service had to be reduced so much that it could not compete with the rival dailies.<sup>10</sup>

Although the six months on the Atlantic coast had been a failure, from the viewpoint of his mission, they helped to shape the course of his life. He had gone through a long and bitter experience, learning how difficult it could be, even in bountiful California, to earn a living. Now he had found conditions even worse in the East. In these crowded cities where material development was far advanced, where, closer to the culture of Europe, there had been fifty years more of "civilization" than on the Pacific frontier, one would expect material wants to be more easily satisfied, life to be more abundant. Instead, everything unjust and corrupt in the body politic or the economy that was developing in the new country seemed to

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Henry George, Jr., "Life of Henry George," New York, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1942, p. 182.

<sup>10</sup> Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 181, 183-6.

be firmly entrenched in the older settlement: men begged and sweatships flourished in the very shadow of magnificent churches and private palaces.

For if, in the West, there was a small, privileged group controlling vast tracts of the richly-endowed soil, and thereby affecting the lives of the comparatively few who toiled on those lands, in the East there was a small privileged group who owned far less acreage but who, due to the density of population, wielded unbelievable power over the lives of masses of their fellows. Prominent in this New York City group were the Astors, Goelets, Livingstons, and Rhinelanders; the Trinity Church Corporation, which mulcted the very people to whom it doled charity; and the Sailors' Snug Harbor Foundation which financed the benevolences it showered on a few old seamen by extorting high rents from slum dwellers.

If, in the West, fortunes were made and lost in mining ventures, in the East fortunes were made and lost in Wall Street speculation—a form of gambling more pernicious in its wide effects. In California was the "Big Four," dishonestly acquiring land titles, subsidies and franchises through corruption of politicians and law courts.<sup>11</sup> But New York also had its schemers, who, by bribing State Senator Tweed and his Tammany "ring," contrived, at criminally low cost, to get title to the highly valuable water front of Manhattan Island, as well as to transportation franchises, public utilities and rights-of-way.<sup>12</sup>

In California the ubiquitous railroad had far-reaching powers that seemed to take toll of every enterprise in the State, but in the East chains of railroads were extracting subsidies from a much larger public, making appalling levies on industry, and through the knavery and craft of their controllers (Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jay Gould and their cohorts), corrupting the judiciary and city and state officials on their own account. Altogether, the plunderers succeeded in making the politics of New York a flaming scandal.<sup>13</sup>

East and West the unscrupulous few were able to prey upon the weak many; the few becoming richer; the many, more impoverished, George saw. Ignorance permitted exploitation. Political corruption was linked with privilege. Bitter suffering was the result. Side by side with wealth stalked want. In the wake of progress followed degrading poverty. Surely it was not because the earth was poorly equipped or nature niggardly that human beings were starving in the midst of plenty, he thought. Certainly no

<sup>11</sup> Lewis, *op. cit.*; Myers, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Henry George, Jr., "The Menace of Privilege," New York, Macmillan, 1905; Myers, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Myers, *op. cit.*

beneficent Creator could have willed it so! There must be some natural law that was being broken, else why this unequal distribution?

Which to do—to attack the political dishonesty or seek the cause of privilege?

It seemed hopeless that any one man could make an impression against these monstrous wrongs—let alone a man who had just failed in his attack on a comparatively small arm of entrenched monopoly. And why should he, Henry George, who wanted to live quietly and give a life of ease to those he loved, who wanted to study and travel and read history and poetry and to write a novel,—why should he even try?

Less than thirty, small, slender, shabbily dressed—the type of man threading unnoticed in a crowd, alone and unknown—he roamed the great metropolis. Along Fifth Avenue and around Washington Square, past the brownstone or marble mansions, where the powerful ones lived. On to the teeming, squalid districts where were the miles of unheated, unsanitary, noisome tenements of the poor—the poor who labored ten or twelve hours a day, whose young children worked in factories, all undernourished, all starved of the beauty of life.

The shocking contrast between monstrous wealth and debasing want permitted the man from the West no peace. He kept searching for the reason for this disparity. Putting aside the dream he once had had of acquiring wealth for himself, he asked now to be shown the way to relieve this suffering—and the strength to do it. Then—

Once in daylight, and in a city street, there came to me a thought, a vision, a call—give it what name you please. But every nerve quivered and there and then I made a vow.<sup>14</sup>

And from this vow—to seek out and remedy, if he could, the cause that “condemned little children” to lives of squalor and misery—he never faltered.

## 2

### The Answer

REALIZING THAT HE COULD BE of use to his paper no longer in New York, Henry George said good-bye to his family. Late in May he returned to San Francisco. At once he opened a fight to have a resolution against the telegraph monopoly introduced into the Legislature. It was later adopted.

<sup>14</sup> Letter by Henry George to the Rev. Thomas Dawson, O.M.I., of Dublin, Ireland, New York, Feb. 1, 1883. The holograph ms. was presented to Brotherton Library, Leeds, England. A photographic copy is in the private collection of the writer.

For the crusader, things were looking black again. John Russell Young, managing editor of *The New York Tribune*, had contracted with him for a series of articles about the new transcontinental railroad and the country through which it passed. George had written several while he was in New York. They were paid for but they had not been published. The new managing editor, Whitelaw Reid, Young's successor, annulled the contract. Then too, more than \$700 in back salary, due George for his work in the East, was slow in coming; he finally had to sue for it.

No other work being open, he went back to type-setting on *The San Francisco Herald*. Meanwhile he wrote editorials for *The Evening Bulletin*, read widely and made his first attempt to enter politics. He tried to get a nomination on the Democratic ticket for the Assembly, where he hoped to fight the telegraph, express and railroad monopolies. But when he refused to pay the assessment asked by the party managers, he was not chosen. Then an offer of an editorship came.

At a meeting of the American Free Trade League he had become acquainted with the Governor of California, Henry Hadley Haight.<sup>15</sup> Haight, like George, had been a Republican and had turned Jeffersonian democrat. The two men had much in common. When the owners of a small Democratic paper, *The Transcript*, published in Oakland, a suburb of San Francisco, were looking for a capable man as editor, Haight influenced them to select George.

The new editor attracted attention in his new post. While in New York he had written an article in which he discussed the relation of Capital and Labor, dwelling particularly on the wages of the hordes of Chinese coolies who were migrating to the Pacific coast and working uncomplainingly for \$40 a month.<sup>16</sup> George wrote in part:

As the competition of Chinese labor with white labor has become more general and threatening, the feeling against them has become correspondingly intense. . . .

Our manufacturers have talked of the pauper labor of Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield. Here is cheaper labor at their own doors. Labor which will deem itself well remunerated by wages upon which English operators could not keep themselves out of the poor house—which will not agitate for its own rights, form trades unions, or get up strikes; which will not clamor for eight hour laws, but will labor without murmur twelve or fourteen hours a day, not even asking Sundays; which is patient, submissive, enduring, with the patience, submissiveness, and endurance which countless ages

<sup>15</sup> Tenth governor of California, 1868-72.

<sup>16</sup> Leland Stanford held that, "more prudent and economical, they are content with less wages." Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

of tyranny have ground into the character of the down-trodden peoples of the East.<sup>17</sup>

Although the author pointed out that this problem on the Pacific coast was at bottom a labor problem, he contended also that since there were such things as family, nation, race—and the right of association—there was the “correlative right of exclusion.” The article had been printed on the front and second pages of *The Tribune* and had occupied nearly five columns. While writing it, “wishing to know what political economy had to say about the cause of wages”<sup>18</sup> he had read John Stuart Mill. George was deeply impressed by Mill’s work, in spite of the fact that Mill was both a Malthusian and a materialist and he was neither. He had sent a copy of *The Tribune* article to the English economist. To his surprise and delight a letter of commendation from Mill had followed him to California. This letter, together with a long editorial, George printed in *The Transcript*. That a celebrated European scientist should write at such length to a young, almost unknown editor, and on a subject so important to California, caused much comment.

As editor of *The Transcript* George was stimulated to study and discuss many problems of the day. But it was the problem that seemed to him to be at the root of all others—the problem of poverty—that harassed him. The passionate desire to solve it possessed him. He had turned to taking long horse-back rides. On one of them the answer came.

After riding into the hills, he had stopped to let his mustang rest. Absorbed in thought he gazed over the vast stretches of unused land on every side. A teamster passed and the two men exchanged greetings. George, for want of something better to say, asked casually what land was worth there.

“I don’t know exactly,” said the teamster. And pointing in the direction of some grazing cows, small in the distance, he added, “but there is a man over there who will sell some land for a thousand dollars an acre.”<sup>19</sup>

A thousand dollars an acre! Why, it was worth only a small fraction of that! This soil had no greater natural fertility than thousands of acres further away. Further away . . . not so near to the growing colonies of men. . . .

<sup>17</sup> “The Chinese on the Pacific Coast,” *The New York Tribune*, May 1, 1869. Copy in Scrapbook 21, Henry George Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library (hereafter abbreviated as HGC). Quoted in part by Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 194–5.

<sup>18</sup> George, “The Science of Political Economy,” New York, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1942, p. 200.

<sup>19</sup> Meeker Notes. *The New York Journal*, Oct. 10, 1897. Scrapbook 29, HGC. Quoted by Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 210.



Quick as a flash came the answer to the riddle that had troubled him.

When settlers come, when population increases, land augments in value. Without a stroke of work on the part of the owner (who could go live in town or abroad if he wished) these idle stretches, with the expansion of the cities of Oakland and Berkeley and San Francisco and the need for the use of this land, would come to be worth a fortune to him. And in anticipation of this prospective rise in value, due to the growing demand, the owner was now holding his land for one thousand dollars an acre. Soon he would be able to collect personally the value that he had had no part in creating but that an aggregation of people would bring to it.

Suddenly it was clear to George that land value is not the result of a man's labor but of the growth of the community and the development of its activities. Morally, he reasoned, this unearned gain "belongs in usufruct to all." To permit a few individuals to take for their aggrandizement this fund that is created by the community, forces the community to levy exactions upon labor and thrift for the maintenance of its services. The very process, while thus penalizing labor and thrift, offers rewards to the few for withholding land from use to the many—rewards that accrue to the speculator, the profiteer in that which is absolutely necessary to human life. . . . Here were fundamental reasons for the increase of poverty with increase of wealth. At last the problem which had tormented him was solved! Long after, he told of the significance of this moment:

I then and there recognized the natural order—one of those experiences that make those who have them feel thereafter that they can vaguely appreciate what mystics and poets have called the "ecstatic vision."<sup>20</sup>

### 3

#### The Theory

WHILE HENRY GEORGE was coming to grips with the communications monopoly of the newspapers, his friend, Governor Haight, was facing the transport combine. The Governor had undertaken a bitter fight to change the government's policy of subsidizing the Central Pacific Railroad, a policy the railway magnates themselves had "railroaded" through legislatures. The "great absorber" was not only acquiring vast tracts of land but was demanding more and more of the people's money. Meanwhile the four Sacramento ex-shopkeepers and traders—Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, Mark Hopkins and Colis P. Huntington—who controlled the corporation, were building themselves the fortunes and the power of feudal

<sup>20</sup> "The Science of Political Economy," p. 160.

lords by manipulating their holdings. In 1862 they had managed to elect Stanford as Governor of California, for a two-year term, at the same time he had been chosen president of the Central Pacific.<sup>21</sup>

Stanford's incumbency had helped materially to obtain the passage in Congress, in July, 1862, of the Pacific Railroad Act. This measure and its later amendment had deeded to the Central Pacific vast tracts of the public domain—a wide strip of land for right-of-way, as well as "alternate sections," of one square mile each, on both sides of the entire line. The grant made the company one of the biggest land owners in the West.<sup>22</sup> The statute had further provided a government loan in the form of thirty-six-year bonds at 6% interest, in amounts ranging from \$16,000 per mile of track on flat land to \$48,000 per mile of track on mountain land.<sup>23</sup>

The power wielded by the "Big Four" was now a national scandal and a Western curse. They openly purchased the votes of citizens. They flagrantly corrupted legislators as well as congressional Representatives. They bought legal decisions. They imported Chinese to compete with American labor. They underbid competing ship and stage transportation until it was destroyed, and then jacked up freight rates to prohibitive levels, blighting trade. In May, 1869, while Europe rejoiced over the opening of the Suez Canal and the United States celebrated the linking of the Atlantic and Pacific coasts by rail, California was already beginning to see that hers was a mixed blessing. The "iron horse," upon which she had had built up such big hopes, was becoming a menace.

Haight was determined to check the "Big Four's" evil power before it grew beyond challenge. Believing in George's ability, the Governor asked the newspaper man to leave *The Transcript* and take the editor's desk on the chief Democratic party paper, *The Sacramento Reporter*. George was glad to do it. In February, 1870, joined by his family, recently returned from their long visit to Philadelphia, he moved to the State capitol.

One of the things George liked about his new post was that it kept him in close touch with Haight. One evening the editor took the Governor home with him. It was late, the meal was over and Mrs. George had gone to bed. Great was her dismay when she heard the front door open and the cheery voice of her husband announce that he had brought Mr. Haight for

<sup>21</sup> Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>22</sup> *Ib.*, p. 36.

<sup>23</sup> *Ib.*, p. 45. This legislative munificence did not satisfy the four enterprisers. In one place they contrived to have 150 miles of flat land considered as mountain land, thereby netting themselves a bonus of nearly half a million dollars. (*Ib.*, pp. 66-7.) Indeed "they had the entire road constructed," according to Gustavus Myers, "with scarcely the expenditure of a single dollar of their own." (*Myers, op. cit.*, p. 522.)

dinner! Hastily she dressed. Going downstairs, she gave a gracious welcome and warmed-over Irish stew and rice pudding to the distinguished visitor, whom she had never met before. And the Governor of California, assuring her that Irish stew and rice pudding were delectables of which he was particularly fond, consumed them with conviction.<sup>24</sup>

George was with *The Reporter* for only nine months. His tenure gave him a chance to resume his fight against the communications monopolies, the Western Union Telegraph Company and the Associated Press. But he also gave his energies, with effect, to exploding the plea of the Central Pacific Railroad for further subsidies. The all-powerful transport monopoly commanded money as well as politicians and the press, and it was able quietly to buy control of *The Reporter*. Preferring to recruit George's abilities rather than wreak vengeance, the magnates tried to force on George a policy in which he would not acquiesce. To have remained would have yielded him an augmented income and surcease from financial worry. Without considering the temptation, he resigned and moved with his family back to San Francisco.

His ouster from the paper that he had turned into a weapon against reaction did not silence his attack upon the "octopus."<sup>25</sup> He turned to pamphleteering and produced a sixteen-page brochure on "The Subsidy Question and the Democratic Party." Governor Haight considered it so valuable he had a large edition of it circulated as a campaign document. In the pamphlet George declared that railroad subsidies were condemned

. . . by the economic principle that the development of industry should be left free to take its natural direction . . . ; by the political principle that government should be reduced to its minimum—that it becomes more corrupt and more tyrannical, and less under the control of the people, with every extension of its powers and duties . . . ; by the democratic principle which forbids the enrichment of one citizen at the expense of another, and the giving to one citizen of advantages denied to another. . . . They are condemned by the experience of the whole country which shows that they have invariably led to waste, extravagance and rascality; that they inevitably become a source of corruption and a means of plundering the people.<sup>26</sup>

The brochure did much to make George's name known throughout the State. It also attracted to him the particular enmity of the powerful

<sup>24</sup> Related to the present writer by her mother.

<sup>25</sup> This apt characterization, the origin of which is obscure, was, of course, made popular by the late Frank Norris. His novel of that title, a useful contribution to the record of this period, is one of the great American classics of social criticism: "The Octopus," New York, Doubleday, Page, 1901.

<sup>26</sup> Copy in Scrapbook TIQB, p. v. 3, HGC. Quoted in part by Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 216-7.

oligarchy. When he obtained the Democratic nomination and ran for the Assembly, he received proportionately an even smaller vote than Haight or the others on the ticket. He took his defeat at the polls lightly.<sup>27</sup> Still, it was a disappointment, for as a member of the Assembly he would have had a better chance to fight to write into the land laws of California just and equitable provisions. But he was compensated by the knowledge that his campaign had been successful enough to make the enemy take serious measures to insure his defeat.

The four months from March to July, 1871, were interrupted by the Haight campaign. In the midst of the fight, he had been working on an elaborated answer to the economic problem that had been consuming him. It took the form of a long pamphlet, entitled, "Our Land and Land Policy."

This study, which presented the essential rudiments of the theory which he was later to expand and refine in each succeeding work, was first published in forty-eight closely printed pages.<sup>28</sup> It was an able and authoritative analysis of the distribution of Federal and California State lands and land grants. Citing case after case in California of privately owned estates amounting to one, two and three hundred thousand acres—several of over four hundred thousand acres—it pleaded for a halt in the reckless grants of the public's site and soil resources:

The largest landowners in California are probably the members of the great Central-Southern Pacific Railroad Corporation. Were the company land divided, it would give them something like two million acres apiece; and in addition to their company land, most of the individual members own considerable tracts in their own name.<sup>29</sup>

In the essay he discussed the relation of labor and land, the analysis of which was to occupy his lifetime. He traced out the tendencies of the accepted land policy, then indicated what he thought American land policy should be. He pointed to the fact that in new countries where land is free, wages are high, but in old countries where land is monopolized and access to it can be obtained only by paying a land-owner for the privilege of using it, wages are low and poverty is great. He asserted that economic rent, or the return for the use of land, should be collected and employed for social needs, and that no taxes at all should be levied on the products of labor. His argument was to become a familiar thesis in later works that, unlike this original essay, were to be distributed widely around the world:

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Henry George, Jr., p. 218.

<sup>28</sup> Equivalent to 130 book pages of average length today.

<sup>29</sup> "Our Land and Land Policy," Henry George's Works, Memorial Edition, New York, Doubleday Page, 1904, pp. 71-2.

The value of land is something which belongs to all, and in taxing land values we are merely taking for the use of the community something which belongs to the community. . . . In speaking of the value of land, I mean the value of the land itself, not the value of any improvement which has been raised upon it. . . .<sup>30</sup>

The mere holder of land would be called on to pay just as much taxes as the user of the land. The owner of a vacant city lot would have to pay as much for the privilege of keeping other people off it till he wanted to use it, as his neighbor who has a fine house upon his lot, and is either using it or deriving rent from it. The monopolizer of agricultural land would be taxed as much as though his land were covered with improvements, with crops and with stock.

Land prices would fall; land-speculation would receive its death blow; land monopolization would no longer pay . . .<sup>31</sup>

The whole weight of taxation would be lifted from productive industry. The million dollar manufactory, and the needle of the seamstress, the mechanic's cottage and the grand hotel, the farmer's plow, and the ocean steamship, would be alike untaxed.

Imagine this country with all taxes removed from production and exchange! How demand would spring up; how trade would increase; what a powerful stimulus would be applied to every branch of industry; what an enormous development of wealth would take place. . . . Would there be many industrious men walking our streets, or tramping over our roads in the vain search for employment . . . ?<sup>32</sup> Go to New York . . . the best example of the condition to which the whole country is tending. . . . Where a hundred thousand men who ought to be at work are looking for employment . . . where poverty festers and vice breeds, and the man from the free open West turns sick at heart . . . and you will understand how it is that the crucial test of our institutions is yet to come.<sup>33</sup>

This able essay, which came from the pen of a man not yet thirty-two years old, presented a new<sup>34</sup> and startling conception of the economic crisis. It included what later critics identified as the kernel of George's social philosophy<sup>35</sup>—one of the few important systems native to America. But it

<sup>30</sup> *Ib.*, p. 106.

<sup>31</sup> *Ib.*, p. 112.

<sup>32</sup> *Ib.*, p. 113.

<sup>33</sup> *Ib.*, p. 127-8.

<sup>34</sup> It was new, of course, only to dominant thought in western civilization. George's followers have found many anticipations of his ideas, not only in times recent to his, but, in a number of instances, in earlier times. His own effort to credit the French Physiocrats as his forerunners was based on inadequate second or third-hand information about their theory; the Physiocrats were only partial anticipators, and among the less important. In spite of the anticipations, several of which were almost perfect parallelisms, George's conception actually was as original as any contribution in his field; on this see Dr. George R. Geiger's thorough study of the problem, "The Theory of the Land Question," Macmillan, New York, 1936.

<sup>35</sup> Broadus Mitchell, "Single Tax," *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, New York, Macmillan, 1934, Vol. XIV, p. 65.

did not receive the recognition for which the author had hoped. About one thousand copies were sold. He realized that if he really wished to command attention he would some day have to develop his theories more thoroughly, within the frame of current economic knowledge, and in a much larger book. The failure of the modest essay made possible—indeed, prepared the way for—the creation of a classic.

*I have reason to know that our boys at the front are concerned with two broad aims beyond the winning of the war; and their thinking and their opinion coincide with what most Americans here back home are mulling over. They know, and we know, that it would be inconceivable—it would, indeed, be sacrilegious—if this nation and the world did not attain some real, lasting good out of all these efforts and sufferings and bloodshed and death.*

*The men in our armed forces want a lasting peace, and, equally, they want permanent employment for themselves, their families and their neighbors when they are mustered out at the end of the war.*

*Two years ago I spoke in my annual message of four freedoms. The blessings of two of them—freedom of speech and freedom of religion—are an essential part of the very life of this nation; and we hope that these blessings will be granted to all men everywhere.*

*The people at home and the people at the front—men and women—are wondering a little about the third freedom—freedom from want. To them it means that when they are mustered out, when war production is converted to the economy of peace, they will have the right to expect full employment—full employment for themselves and for all able-bodied men and women in America who want to work.*

*They expect the opportunity to work, to run their farms, their stores, to earn decent wages. They are eager to face the risks inherent in our system of free enterprise.*

*They do not want a post-war America which suffers from undernourishment or slums—or the dole.*

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT