

IV. CONCLUSION.

In "Progress and Poverty," after reaching his conclusion that command of the land which is necessary for labor is command of all the fruits of labor save enough to enable labor to exist, Henry George says:

So simple and so clear is this truth that to fully see it once is always to recognize it. There are pictures which, though looked at again and again, present only a confused labyrinth of lines or scroll-work—a landscape, trees, or something of the kind—until once attention is called to the fact that these things make up a face or a figure. This relation once recognized is always afterward clear.¹¹¹ It is so in this case. In the light of this truth all social facts group themselves in an orderly relation, and the most diverse phenomena are seen to spring from one great principle.

111. This idea of the concealed picture was graphically illustrated with a story by Congressman James G. Maguire, at that time a Judge of the Superior Court of San Francisco, in a speech at the Academy of Music, New York City, in 1887. In substance he said:

"I was one day walking along Kearney Street in San Francisco, when I noticed a crowd around the show window of a store, looking at something inside. I took a glance myself and saw only a very poor picture of a very uninteresting landscape. But as I was turning away my eye caught the words underneath the picture, 'Do you see the cat?' I looked again and more closely, but saw no cat in the picture. Then I spoke to the crowd.

"Gentlemen," I said, 'I see no cat in that picture. Is there a cat there?'

Some one in the crowd replied:

"Naw, there ain't no cat there. Here's a crank who says he sees the cat, but nobody else can see it.'

"Then the crank spoke up:

"I tell you there is a cat there, too. It's all cat. What you fellows take for a landscape is just nothing more than the outlines of a cat. And you needn't call a man a crank either, because he can see more with his eyes than you can.'

"Well," the judge continued, "I looked very closely at the picture, and then I said to the man they called a crank:

"Really, sir, I cannot make out a cat. I can see nothing but a poor picture of a landscape.'

"Why, judge," he exclaimed, 'just look at that bird in the air. That's the cat's ear.'

"I looked, but was obliged to say:

"I am sorry to be so stupid, but I can't make a cat's ear of that bird. It is a poor bird, but not a cat's ear.'

Many events subsequent to his writing have gone to prove that Henry George was right. Each new phase of the social problem makes it still more clear that the disorderly development of our civilization is explained, not by pressure of population, nor by the superficial relations of employers and employed, nor by scarcity of money, nor by the drinking habits of the poor, nor by individual differences in ability to produce wealth, nor by an incompetent or malevolent Creator, but, as he has said, by "inequality in the ownership of land." And each new phase makes it equally clear that the remedy for poverty is not to be found in famine and disease and war, nor in strikes which are akin to war, nor in the suppression of strikes by force of arms, nor in the coinage of money, nor in prohibition or high license, nor in technical education, nor in anything else short of approximate equality in the ownership of land. This alone secures equal opportunities to produce, and full ownership by each producer of his own product. This is justice, this is order. And unless our civiliza-

"Well, then," the crank urged, "look at that twig twirled around in a circle. That's the cat's eye."

"But I couldn't make an eye of it."

"Oh, then," said the crank a little impatiently, "look at those sprouts at the foot of the tree, and the grass. They make the cat's claws."

"After another deliberate examination, I reported that they did look a little like a claw, but I couldn't connect them with a cat."

"Once more the crank came back at me. 'Don't you see that limb off there? and that other limb under it? and that white space between? Well, that white space is the cat's tail.'"

"I looked again and was just on the point of replying that there was no cat there so far as I could see, when suddenly the whole cat burst upon me. There it was, sure enough, just as the crank had said; and the only reason that the rest of us couldn't see it was that we hadn't got the right point of view. But now that I saw it I could see nothing else in the picture. The landscape had disappeared and a cat had taken its place. And, do you know, I was never afterward able, upon looking at that picture, to see anything in it but the cat!"

From this story as told by Judge Maguire, has come the slang of the single tax agitation. To "see the cat" is to understand the single tax.

tion have it for a foundation, new forms of slavery will assuredly lead us into new forms of barbarism.¹¹²

112. "Our primary social adjustment is a denial of justice. In allowing one man to own the land on which and from which other men must live, we have made them his bondsmen in a degree which increases as material progress goes on. This is the subtle alchemy that in ways they do not realize is extracting from the masses in every civilized country the fruits of their weary toil ; that is instituting a harder and more hopeless slavery in place of that which has been destroyed ; that is bringing political despotism out of political freedom, and must soon transmute democratic institutions into anarchy.

"It is this that turns the blessings of material progress into a curse. It is this that crowds human beings into noisome cellars and squalid tenement houses ; that fills prisons and brothels ; that goads men with want and consumes them with greed ; that robs women of the grace and beauty of perfect womanhood ; that takes from little children the joy and innocence of life's morning.

"Civilization so based cannot continue. The eternal laws of the universe forbid it. Ruins of dead empires testify, and the witness that is in every soul answers, that it cannot be. It is something grander than Benevolence, something more august than Charity—it is Justice herself that demands of us to right this wrong. Justice that will not be denied ; that cannot be put off—Justice that with the scales carries the sword."—*Progress and Poverty, book x, ch. v.*