

Writing Reveals the Man

An unusual view of the character of America's greatest economist and philosopher is derived from a study of his handwriting as formed at different periods of his career. DOROTHY SARA, the talented manager of talent in the Henry George School, where she runs the lecture bureau, is one of the outstanding graphologists of our country, and in her own original way applies the principles of her specialty to George.

★ IN MY WORK as a graphologist and an economist as well, it was natural for me to haunt the manuscript department of the New York Public Library and to revel for hours upon hours in the files of original letters of Henry George, which were presented to the library by his daughter Anna George de Mille, and others. It was exciting to trace the man's emotional and intellectual progress as revealed in handwriting. A most unusual development in his script occurred at the time of his writing "Progress and Poverty," the before-and-after styles being notably different.

Here are specimens of the two periods:

In Specimen 1 may be seen the earmarks of what we regard today as the dignified Mid-Victorian middle-aged gentleman. We might not take it for the writing of a young man, unless we remember that this particular style was fashionable for all ages at this period. He used it in 1861, when he was barely twenty-one years of age.

The analysis of that early specimen reveals a logical mind, capable of sustained thought; yet the writing has the deliberate style of that period; it lacks the individuality and enthusiasm which were to mark his penmanship later on. There is not much originality. The decided forward-leaning slant discloses affection, but held in check, as we see by the restrained spacing between the letters of each word.

As a brilliant contrast, examine Specimen 2, written in 1883, when George was forty-three. How modern the writing looks, with its wide margins and wide spacing! Gone are the restrained and cramped formations, gone all the restraint of a self-imposed sense of dignity in youth. Here the formations are simple and devoid of

SPECIMEN "1"

Give my love to all.

Your affectionate brother

Henry George

SPECIMEN "2"

*I wish you could get a chance to
take you to England next summer. I
do my own purchase to go too.*

Yours as ever

Henry George

all flourishes, and they show a clear-thinking progressive individual. While the letter formations are fairly small, the spacings between lines and words are proportionately large, indicating that generosity and extravagance extend to others, while his personal tastes do not run to extravagance.

During this first period, between the two specimens, George wrote "Progress and Poverty," and as his intellectual horizons broadened, as his attitude toward others developed and extended itself, his style of handwriting changed in conformity.

His innate character did not change; it could not. The slant and pressure and basic formations, especially in the signature, retained their original form. The changes which took place were growth of mind and of spirit, expansion in tolerance toward others. As the man grew

older his reserve broke down, he relinquished the overbearing weight of an imposed dignity, he became more outspoken; and while the signature retained a bit of the constraint of that earlier era, the letter formations became simpler. Especially it is gratifying to note that the capital "I" became small in proportion to the signature. This indicates that personal egotism was completely put aside; that "I" was not a dominant factor in his works.

It would be possible to go further, into the minor details of the character, into the bits of stubbornness, the impatience to get going—but the purpose of this article is to show only the broad differences between earlier and later in Henry George, the effect upon his character development of the writing of his great work, "Progress and Poverty."
