

contemporaries liked him or not is relatively unimportant. He got things done. Professor Spencer says that "to criticize his methods is to make the facile assumption that he had some choice in the matter." Well, being Booker Washington, he did have some choice, and within that choice "he did what was possible . . . and did it to the utmost." Scholars may well continue to study and define the social situation of which Washington was a part with the insights and incisiveness that this author unfolds.

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*Henry George.* By CHARLES ALBRO BARKER. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955. xviii, 696 p. Frontispiece, bibliographical note, index. \$9.50.)

"I propose to seek the law which associates poverty with progress, and increases want with advancing wealth," Henry George wrote in 1879 in *Progress and Poverty*. The present state of political economy, he continued forthrightly, "does not explain the persistence of poverty amid advancing wealth in a manner which accords with the deep-seated perceptions of men."

Whatever else might be said, Henry George, whose Philadelphia birthplace lay almost within the shadow of Independence Hall, had indeed put his finger on a major enigma of industrial society. In his indelibly alliterative and paradoxical fashion, he directed attention to America's unemployment, poverty, and suffering, which in his experience was too often surrounded by gilded splendor. More dramatically than anyone else, in *Progress and Poverty* and subsequently in *Social Problems, Protection or Free Trade*, and *The Condition of Labor*, he articulated those nagging questions which underlay the popular discontents of his age. As his son rephrased them later on: "Why in a land so bountifully blest, with enough and more than enough for all, should there be such inequality of conditions? . . . Was this intended in the order of things?" Or was there not somewhere either explanation or solution, perhaps even, as George himself urged, "some simple yet sovereign remedy." Indeed, George's own explanation was simple enough: "Poverty deepens as wealth increases, and wages are forced down while productive power grows, because land, which is the source of all wealth and the field of all labor is monopolized." So was his solution: "We must make land common property." And also the means he proffered, the scheme which in time would evolve into the memorable "single tax." For George's fundamental premise was rooted in an entirely monopolistic definition of rent, with the result that private ownership of land inevitably led to the expropriation by the few of wealth which was created by the many and which rightfully belonged to society. Therefore, his solution was simply to abolish all taxes save those on land values. He would by one means or another "appropriate rent by taxation," and employ the proceeds for the welfare of society. Essentially, this was the message of *Progress and Poverty* and the

gospel according to Henry George, which spread so quickly far and wide that its author became one of the foremost lay evangelists of modern times. But strangely for so influential a figure, no biography has existed until now of anything like definitive proportions.

Charles Albro Barker has now supplied much of what has been lacking. His biography of Henry George is considerably more than its title alone might suggest. Not only are the details of George's life accounted for meticulously, together with the painstakingly assembled record of his intellectual development and maturation, but the eventful history of *Progress and Poverty* itself as well as of George's other writings is included. Although *Henry George* is neither a literary classic nor great biography, it is nevertheless an important book because of its thoroughness, its critical balance, and its discursive passages of cool analysis. At last, the world has a scholarly summing-up in impressive proportions of the life and work of this self-trained thinker who forced a belated recognition of wealth's "unearned increment" upon professional economists, and prepared the way for a great many modern reform movements.

Thus, instead of the familiar stereotype of a utopian rebel preaching a hypnotic panacea, Professor Barker's Henry George stands forth in the mainstream of middle-class reform, rooted in Christianity and natural rights, devoted to free trade, land reform, antimonopolism, and democracy. His single tax is shown for what it was after all, largely "a derivation from him, . . . less his concern than the concern of his followers." We are reminded that free trade was George's first major plank of economic dogma. The destruction of land monopoly was next, yet for a long time he regarded land-value taxation as only one possible means to that end. He was also aware of the peculiar properties of certain natural monopolies, even before he wrote *Progress and Poverty*, and favored public ownership for them. But whenever business was competitive, he defended private enterprise as essential to liberty itself. Even his onslaughts against policies of church or state were intrinsically conservative, and designed to correct abuses rather than to turn institutions upside down. His personal courage was remarkable; he delighted in public controversy for its educational effects. "At last I am famous," he once exulted, after reading denunciations hurled at him by *The Times*. Now, thanks to Professor Barker's diligence, Henry George's fame will be better understood by his posterity.

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*A Goodly Heritage. Earliest Wills on an American Frontier.* By ELLA CHALFANT. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1955. xiv, 242 p. Illustrations, bibliography, appendices, index. \$3.00.)

For the historian, as well as the genealogist, wills are revealing documents, particularly when they constitute much of the written legacy of a