

not frame his question, George did it for him and asked, "Is that your question?" "Yes, that's it." "Very well, the answer is this." He was superbly combative, but patient of genuine doubt.

Later I came to know him in his own home in New York City; a modest home even to my inexperienced eyes, but in it every Sunday afternoon and evening, some of the best known reformers of this country and the old World assembled. No "crank" visitor from any country in those days left New York without seeing Henry George. He was one of the city's celebrities.

Fearless as a lion when combatting in public, he was the gentlest of men in private life. His low voice, his cordial eyes, his smiling lips disarmed his bitterest enemies. He made little of wealth or social distinction in his callers and recognized no lines of class or creed. In the peaceful, homey atmosphere of his East Side house, it was difficult to imagine that he had been twice thrown into prison for his disturbing speeches and that he could hold an audience of five thousand people in the clutch of his small right hand. It was entirely natural that I, possessing his friendship, should become each day more profoundly committed to the great reforms which he so boldly and unselfishly embodied.

—HAMLIN GARLAND.

## Henry George

### AN AUSTRALIAN REMINISCENCE

MANY years ago about the time when Gladstone was denouncing the Bulgarian atrocities and Disraeli, as Lord Beaconsfield, was returning in triumph from Berlin, I was chronicling their doings, and many others, on the London press. The great fight between free trade and protection was then in everybody's thoughts, and, on behalf of the former, one significant fact was constantly being urged—that the more you took off taxes on imports the greater was the revenue obtained. The explanation, of course, was simple, since the lighter the tax the cheaper the goods, the cheaper the goods the greater the consumption, and the greater the consumption the larger the area over which taxation would be spread, so that while the tax itself might be smaller it would be paid by a larger number of persons, with the result that, within certain limits, a greater revenue would be obtained. But this evidently could not go on for ever, and the question that arose in my mind was: Where is the revenue to come from when the taxation of goods through the Custom House is done away with altogether, and trade is really free? With that question still uppermost, and still unanswered, in my mind—for nobody in those days thought of suggesting, let alone solving the problem—I left England for New Zealand shortly after Henry George's magnum opus first saw the light.

A few years afterwards, when in Adelaide, I was sent to report a lecture on "Progress and Poverty" by a very able

Presbyterian clergyman—the Rev. Mr. Gilmour—the first account ever given in Australia, so far as I am aware, of Henry George's work. Then I learned to my astonishment that there was a hitherto untaxed source of revenue which had been created by the community, and therefore belonged to the community, and which was amply sufficient to meet all the normal requirements of the community without the necessity of imposing a tax of any kind. It belonged by right of creation to the individual, and could be taken by the Government to meet the expenses incurred by the community without infringing on the right possessed by every individual to what he himself had made. That lecture led me straight to the works of Henry George, and the reading of "Progress and Poverty" shed a new and brilliant light on the mazy labyrinth and complex problems which society presented at every turn. Everything he wrote was a revelation—"Protection or Free Trade" certainly not the least—and the perusal of the *Standard* was a continually recurring treat.

At last came the eventful moment when the writer of all these remarkable books, who had completely changed my outlook on life, arrived in Sydney, in answer to the urgent appeal of the Single Tax League of New South Wales, which collected and forwarded £1,000 to meet the expenses of the trip and subsequent campaign. Everything we did in order to raise the requisite funds and ensure the visit was published in the Sydney press till the people generally became almost as enthusiastic as ourselves, and when the Prophet of San Francisco actually appeared on the scene he could not have been more heartily welcomed if he had been a king, as indeed he was, although his kingdom, like that of a still greater Prophet, was not to be measured by worldly pomp but by the way in which it met the needs of the age and by the loyalty which reigned in the hearts of his disciples. I was secretary of the Single Tax League at the time and shall never forget the wonderful welcome he received, how we met him at the very entrance of the harbor and led him in triumph to the Circular Quay, where the people thronged about him as if he were—what some of us knew him to be—a modern Messiah bringing a message of salvation to a world steeped in selfishness and crime, which was for a while at any rate to reject his gospel of brotherly love with scorn. On the evening of his arrival a banquet was held in his honor, and we heard the great message proclaimed by the Prophet himself.

On a beautiful spot in Balmoral overlooking the Sydney harbor is a stately amphitheatre recently erected by the Order of the Star in the East to provide a suitable auditorium for the expected Messiah to proclaim the gospel which is to rejuvenate the world. No such auditorium had been erected for Henry George. It was an ordinary, matter of fact, every-day kind of a hall in which the Prophet spoke, but large enough to accommodate a goodly number of admirers eager to hear what their revered Master and

Teacher had to say. The Messiah whom the Order of the Star of the East is so anxiously expecting had indeed already arrived, and with him a new era had opened, and a new chapter in the Book of Life had commenced.

He had a wonderful dome-like head, and the great thinking apparatus within could always be relied upon to give the most clear and lucid exposition of his philosophy before crowded audiences wherever he went, the orator walking up and down the while and thinking it all out as he went along. There was no hesitation, no slipshod imagery, no hunting for a word, no confusion of thought. Everything was orderly, logical, and straight to the point carrying conviction to all but those whom neither eloquence nor logic could convince, leading the bulk of his audience to the irresistible conclusion that here at any rate, was a system of economics based on justice and equity, which went to the very root of the social problem, and which only required the votes of the majority to be carried into practical effect. We Single Taxers were so convinced of the unanswerable logic of the Prophet's message that we confidently looked forward to its being accepted by the majority within a comparatively short period and made the law of the land! But, alas for our simple credulity! We reckoned without our host, represented in this case by self-styled democrats of Australia, who followed leaders even blinder than themselves, and refused to accept the teachings of the greatest democrat who ever lived. Nearly 35 years have elapsed since the visit of the great Seer, and we seem but little nearer our goal than when he came among us.

It is true that both in Queensland and New South Wales the Single Tax principle has been applied in the municipal sphere, and the other States are gradually adopting our views so far as the municipal sphere is concerned, but the bulk of the people are still ignorant of what the Single Tax really is. The Labor Party, which should be the first to adopt it, is following false gods, and by its policy of exemptions and graduations which the other parties support, has done the principle of land value taxation far more harm than good, while its persistent advocacy of protection almost to the extent of prohibition still further blocks the progress of our cause. But notwithstanding every obstacle, in spite of all opposition, that cause is bound to win.

There are already signs, and very significant signs, that the belief in the efficacy of protection is breaking down, while in its stead another and far more democratic belief is springing up—that the expenses of the community should be met out of the communal fund created by the presence and activities of the people as a whole. The city newspapers, run in the interests of capitalists, may refuse to publish our views; the Church may continue to discourage our efforts to overthrow vested interests and to bring about a reign of justice on earth; lack of funds may hinder and restrict our work; and the task of educating

the people on Georgian lines may become increasingly difficult; but the present system, based on injustice, cannot last; the Great War, by the huge indebtedness which it entailed, is straining it to breaking point; and the unremitting advocacy of the gospel of Henry George by a band of enthusiastic workers in every one of the Australian States must be ultimately rewarded by the solution of the social problem on the lines which our great Master laid down. In the meantime, while the work of education is going slowly on, we must learn to "labor and wait," believing that the time must ultimately arrive when the cause of truth will prevail, and when the great gospel taught by Henry George will come into its own.

—PERCY R. MEGGY.

## Our British Letter

THE British Trade Union Congress has just concluded its 57th Annual Session. Some 800 delegates, representative of every branch of industry, have been in attendance at Scarborough for a week past, where they have varied the discussion of an agenda of 85 resolutions (with the customary "emergency" motions as extras) with the pleasant attractions of that fashionable East Coast resort.

The Congress claims to represent over 4½ million "organized" workers; but it must not be thought that all these are "class-conscious" Socialists, or even that they necessarily are adherents of the political Labor Party. Far from it, in fact. The membership of the Unions comprises men and women engaged in industry, who have joined their respective unions for the purpose of obtaining the several "benefits" held out to them in return for the contribution paid. For example, sickness, unemployment, and funeral insurances; also various "compensation" payments, such as for loss of tools and for household furniture by fire, etc. As these matters are affecting all workers quite apart from any political label, it follows that every political party has its supporters inside the Trade Union Movement, and, also, that there are many members who are quite indifferent to political issues, and who do not, therefore, take the trouble to vote at elections. Thus, in spite of the pretence of the Trade Union Bosses that they speak for the whole of organized Labor, the T. U. Movement regularly stultifies itself at each General Election, the members voting Liberal, Labor and Tory, or neglecting to go to the poll at all.

Some idea of the real strength of the "class-conscious" element within the Unions may be formed in the fact that the *Daily Herald*, "Labor's only daily," and which is the joint property of the Labor Party and the Trade Union Congress, and, as such, is boosted at all their gatherings, and in every branch meeting, only has a circulation of about 400,000, which figure, of course, includes the many readers who are quite outside the Labor Party, if not, indeed, actually hostile to it. Still, the Congress is the