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HENRY GEORGE: HIS LIFE AND WORK

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Adam Smith, the first of the English political economists, had been dead forty-nine years when Henry George was born on September 2, 1839. His youthful days were not very different from those of other boys except that his powers of observation and his reasoning faculties were in more constant exercise. At the age of fifteen he manifested a strong desire to go to sea. This desire was kindled by the things he had read of Australia, the island continent, and of India with her jungles and monkeys, tigers and elephants, her gold and precious stones, her mysteries and philosophies — the land that was old when the pyramids of Egypt were young. His desire to see the world was somewhat more intelligent than that of most youths who run away to sea. He did not run away, however, but went with his father's consent. His father, indeed, hoped that one long voyage would cure his son of his desire for a sea-faring life, and for this purpose asked the captain not to make life too easy for the young enthusiast. When somewhat over sixteen he was "before the mast" on the *Hindoo*, bound for Australia. The ship left New York in April, 1855, and on the one hundred and thirty-seventh day out the first land of Australia was sighted. Henry George did not find much gold in sight in Australia and some of his dreams began to be dissipated. From Australia the *Hindoo* proceeded to Calcutta, which city she left in January, 1856, homeward bound. George's letters home and his diary display that mental alertness and intelligent observation which always characterized him through life. Not only the physical conditions of land and sea and sky but social conditions also received his thoughtful attention. Commonplace remarks of sailors respecting wages in old and new countries suggested to him some of the puzzling problems of political economy. In fact, from his early days Henry George was a thinker. His observation of the treatment to which sailors were generally subjected made him the sailors' friend for life.

It was after an absence of one year and sixty-five days that the *Hindoo* dropped anchor in New York Bay, and Henry George gladly found himself restored to the comforts of home and the sweet companionship of family and friends. His parents desired anxiously that he should not go to sea again, and a situation was obtained for him with a printing firm and he learned to set type. His home was in Philadelphia, but before he was twenty he was again at sea, working his passage to California on board the *Shubrick*. From this time his life was one of misfortune and struggle and hardship

and many changes. When his fortune was at the lowest ebb and the prospects were darkest he got married. The circumstances that precipitated this event must be his justification. He had learned to love a noble Catholic girl, Annie Fox. She lived with her uncle, and, some serious trouble developing, she resolved to go to Los Angeles and accept a position as teacher in the school of the Sisters of Charity. The prospect of parting was painful to both of them. As they were talking it over George took from his pocket a single coin, saying: "Annie, that is all the money I have in the world. Will you marry me?" She answered gravely, "If you are willing to undertake the responsibilities of marriage I will marry you." And they were married and remained faithful and loving companions through life. During the years that followed, years of vicissitude and adversity and often of extreme poverty, George's mind was constantly occupied with social conditions and with the great questions that concern the lives of human beings, chiefly with the Sphinx's question, why poverty accompanies wealth in advancing civilization. This absorbing question had occurred to him many years before in the crowded streets of New York. It had troubled him through all the years that followed. The universal and often appalling poverty of human beings amid abounding wealth pressed upon his mind like a personal calamity. It would not let him rest. It made him sick at heart. Why should men who produce no wealth be enormously rich, and men who toil the hardest often be the poorest? One day the answer came to him like a flash. After years of patient and painful thought the cause of human inequality and poverty suddenly became clear and certain. It was monopoly of land, the locking up of the storehouse of nature, that made a few rich and the multitude poor. It was too plain to be doubted.

On Sunday night, March 26, 1871, he sat down to write the answer to the Sphinx's riddle. It grew into a pamphlet which he called "Our Land and Land Policy, National and State." It first of all deals with the reckless prodigality with which American governments since the Civil War have squandered the people's heritage, especially by grants of land to railroads. To one railroad alone — the Northern Pacific — twenty-five thousand six hundred acres have been given for building each mile of road. This land was given to the railroad corporation, not for building a railroad for the government, or for the people, but for building a railroad for itself. Then the lands of California were noticed, and the statement is made that a horse cannot gallop in a day across some of the estates which have passed into private hands, and that no settler can make himself a home except by paying such tribute as the land-owner chooses to demand. The third division discusses the question of "Land and Labor." It is denied that land is wealth, it not being the product of labor. Land values are said to indicate the distribution of wealth, the value of land and the value of labor bearing an inverse ratio to each other. The value of land represents the power which the owner possesses to appropriate the product of labor, so that where land is high wages are low, and where land values are low wages are high. Division IV shows that the tendency of our

present land policy is towards the monopolization of land and the concentration of wealth. "What Our Land Policy Should Be," is the subject of the fifth and last division of the little book. Land should be given to actual settlers in small quantities without charge. But this policy would leave untouched the vast estates granted to railroads, and land speculation and concentration of ownership and wealth would continue. The feudal system annexed duties to privileges. The privilege of holding the land carried with it the duty of providing for all public expenses. The rest of the land, the commons, was free to all the people. The departure from this system has resulted in great debts and grinding taxation. Had the feudal tenants continued it is estimated that England would now have had a completely appointed army of 600,000 men without the cost of a penny to the public treasury. It is argued that we should go back to the old system and charge the expense of government upon land values. By this method the whole weight of taxation would be lifted from productive industry, production and exchange would be unburdened, the nation would be practically free of taxation, unused land would be free to those who would use it, demand would spring up, rents would go down, and wages and wealth would greatly increase.

The wonderful insight into the economic character of land values was displayed in this pamphlet before Mr. George had even heard of the *impot unique* proposed by the French Physiocrats, or had read a line of Adam Smith. An old English writer, Thomas Spence, who printed a weekly sheet which he called "Pigs' Meat," it being intended for the common people whom some Tory had contemptuously called "Pigs," also issued a little pamphlet which taught the same truth, that land, and therefore land values, belong to the people. But George had never heard of Spence when he wrote "Progress and Poverty." Other prophets and dreamers before George had seen this great economic truth but it died with them. We have no reason to doubt that George was indebted to no other teacher than himself for the important economic doctrine which he, more than all other men combined, has taught to the world.

Before writing the pamphlet above referred to, Mr. George was for years editor and sometimes part proprietor of a number of papers and his pen was acknowledged to be a power in the cities and towns of the West coast. Many of his newspaper articles obtained extensive notice and made him many friends and some enemies. Sometimes he was exposed to personal danger through the courage and persistency with which he assailed public abuses and their authors. But no danger deterred him and no personal considerations influenced him. He did a considerable amount of lecturing. On occasion he was invited to address political and other meetings, to lecture at the University of California, to address the Episcopalian Church Congress and to deliver Fourth of July orations. It was suggested at one time to make him professor of political economy with a chair at the University of California, but although the students would have welcomed him the professors and the regents did not relish his

plainness of speech and feared his radical utterances. They did not want to be disturbed. George never got the chair.

On September 18, 1877, Mr. George commenced writing "Progress and Poverty." He finished it in March, 1879, with the conviction that he had accomplished a great work and written a book that would become famous and influence mankind for good. The fire that burned in his heart is manifest in the latter chapters of the book. In a letter to a friend he says: "When I had finished the last page in the dead of night, when I was entirely alone, I flung myself on my knees and wept like a child." Henry George cared nothing for creeds, he was a member of no church, but all the more probably he was a truly religious man. Personal excellence, social amelioration and national righteousness were more to him than all the articles of faith about which men have contended for ages. In writing "Progress and Poverty" he honestly believed that he had done a great work for humanity, and who can deny that he had? No work on political economy ever had the success within a year of its publication that this book had. Within two years it was read and talked about all over the world; and today no other book is doing as much to bring the reign of justice and righteousness on the earth. Thousands of men who never read a line of it have imbibed its teachings from others and sometimes (as was the case with Labouchere) proclaim Henry George's doctrines while ignorantly abusing Henry George. Notwithstanding the writings of Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill and other great writers, very few men attached much importance to the land question a quarter of a century ago. Today there are millions of men earnestly desiring and many of them devotedly working for the destruction of private property in land. The mother of vested rights was Henry George's estimate of private property in land and for its destruction he wrote and spoke and toiled till the last day of his life. After much discouragement and disappointment, after many publishers had refused to publish it, "Progress and Poverty" was brought out by D. Appleton and Company who had once declined it. In less than two years, in January, 1881, Mr. George was able to write, "The book is a success." Also Kegan Paul of London, who had undertaken to sell the book in England, wrote hopefully and wanted more copies. One of the first words of cheer from abroad came from Dr. F. R. Lees, editor of the Leeds *Independent*. Dr. Lees was one of the ablest writers and speakers that the temperance movement in England ever brought to the front. In his paper he declared "Progress and Poverty" to be, "A book which every Englishman ought to read" and proposed to receive subscriptions for it. Michael Davitt, who had been honored by a sentence to imprisonment in an English jail and come out to establish the Irish National Land League in 1879, became a disciple of Henry George. So did Count Leon Tolstoi of Russia; Dr. Edmund [Edward -- ed.] McGlynn of New York, a Catholic priest and one of the noblest men that ever breathed; Thomas G. Sherman, [Shearman --ed.] author of "Natural Taxation," and hundreds of other good and great men whom it would be an honor to name. Henry

George's new gospel of social justice has taken hold of the hearts of the best men in America and in England.

On October 15, 1881, Mr. George sailed for England as correspondent for the *Irish World*. At this time about five hundred political prisoners were in jail in Ireland, victims of the coercion act, and Parnell, John Dillon and J. J. O'Kelly had just been added to the list. In response to this last act of the English government the Irish Land League sent out the no-rent manifesto and the government suppressed the Land League. This crisis in Irish affairs induced George to get off at Queenstown and hurry to Dublin. He was soon invited to lecture, which he did, and could hardly avoid being drawn through the streets by the enthusiastic crowd which desired to unharness the horses from his carriage. Among the many friends that George made during his brief stay in Ireland was Miss Helen Taylor, step-daughter of John Stuart Mill. She was a very able woman and had great influence in the land movement. In January Mr. George, with his wife and two daughters who accompanied him, sailed for London. After spending several weeks with Miss Taylor at her London home, a visit was made to Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Hyndman in Portland Place. Mr. Hyndman had long been a leading writer on the London press and was a strong and influential socialist. He had found at the British Museum a copy of a lecture delivered by Thomas Spence on "The Real Rights of Man," before the philosophical Society of Newcastle, November 8, 1775, a year before the publication of Smith's "Wealth of Nations." For this lecture Spence said the society "did him the honor to expel him." This lecture proclaimed the common rights in land and proposed that land values be taken for public purposes, all other taxes to be remitted. Henry George had never heard of Spence before and was delighted at this discovery and urged Hyndman to publish it in tract form. While guests at the Hyndman's Mr. and Mrs. George were invited to a reception, when Mr. George met Herbert Spencer. The author of "Social States" [Statics -- ed.] had written: "Equity does not permit property in land." Now he vehemently condemned the Irish Land League for "inciting the people to refuse to pay their landlords what is rightfully theirs — rent." If London drawing-rooms could not alter the relation in which men stand to the earth on which they must live, Mr. George discovered that they could very materially change the attitude of a great philosopher toward the doctrine of "Equity" which once he so ably expounded. Mr. George met on other occasions Mr. Walter Besant and Mrs. Besant, John Bright and Joseph Chamberlain. He found Mr. Bright very much of an intellectual fossil. Mr. Bright never took the trouble to understand the land question, and the great Free-trader died in the dark.

On May 9 in accordance with an understanding with the government that the Irish Land League agitation should be slowed down, Parnell, Davitt and Dillon were released from prison. Early next morning Mr. George received a telegram from a friend in Ireland informing him that the new chief secretary Cavendish and the under

secretary Burke had been stabbed to death in Phoenix Park. George roused a cabman and drove to Westminster Palace Hotel and woke up Davitt and Dillon to hear the dreadful news. A manifesto was drafted to the Irish people denouncing the crime as “cowardly and unprovoked.” The movement was slowed down and under Parnell’s influence a new league was formed and the cry of “The Land for the People,” was exchanged for “Home Rule.” Mr. George wrote Ford of the *Irish World* saying: “Parnell seems to me to have thrown away the greatest opportunity any Irishman ever had. It is the birthright for the mess of pottage.”

A few months in Kilmainham jail with all the luxuries he could command had been enough for Parnell and he came out to slow down the land movement. Seven years of penal servitude and another year of less rigorous imprisonment had not made Davitt unfaithful to the old cry, “The Land for the People.” On June 8 Mr. George wrote Patrick Ford of New York, “Davitt will be with you as soon as this letter.” But while Davitt, whose spirit prisons could not subdue, was becoming somewhat apologetic in America Henry George was carrying on the crusade in Ireland. He was making a trip with a correspondent of the *London Times* and arrived at the little town of Longhree. It had one hotel but was abundantly supplied with police barracks and military guardians. The travelers drove to the hotel and as they stepped down from their carriage they were surrounded by the police and arrested under the Crimes Act as suspicious strangers. Mr. George was too much amused to be angry. They were taken to a barred room in the barrack and their luggage and papers were minutely examined. After three hours’ detention Magistrate Byrne came to examine them and, concluding that a mistake had been made, released them. They proceeded next day to the town of Athenry, a town which had but one pump, a hand pump, from which all the water for the whole town was obtained. The town could not support a doctor but it had twenty-six police constables and fifty-six soldiers. After visiting Father McPhilpin and viewing the antiquities of the place the travelers went to the railway station to take train for Galway. Here a great number of police closed in around them and arrested Mr. George but not his companion. Mr. George was taken before Magistrate Byrne again, and after some hours’ detention was again discharged. Mr. Trevelyan stated in the House of Commons that he had sent telegrams to Ireland on the subject, which probably accounts for Mr. George’s discharge. He returned to Dublin in August. He wrote a letter to the President of the United States protesting at the uselessness of the American Ministerial representation at the court of St. James. On his return to the United States he was invited by Secretary of State Frelinghuysen to put in a claim for damage, but this he declined to do, only caring that American citizens should be properly protected abroad. Mr. George’s arrest and the questioning about it in Parliament drew the attention of all the newspapers in England. The *London Times* reviewed “Progress and Poverty” in a serious article five columns in length, and before afternoon of the same day Kegan Paul had sold all the copies he had in

stock. The *Times* review was significant. Other papers followed suit. Henry George could no longer be ignored. The friendly article in the *Times* made the book famous not only in England but throughout the English-speaking world. Just at this time a sixpenny edition of "Progress and Poverty" was issued numbering twelve thousand copies and two thousand copies were distributed free. Early in 1882 the Land Nationalization Society was established in London with the eminent scientist Alfred Russell Wallace for president. He is the author of a book called "Land Nationalization" which contains the most powerful indictment of landlordism ever published. Terrible beyond conception are the accounts it gives of the burning of thousands of cottages, the laying waste of fruitful fields and gardens, and the forcible expulsion of the peasantry to make way for sheep or grouse or deer. If the land *does* belong to the landlord he has a right to do what he pleases with it.

These crimes against the people who had tilled the soil for generations were dignified by being called 'improvements of the estate.'

The Land Nationalization Society invited Mr. George to lecture to working-men in Memorial Hall on September 6. Professor Wallace presided. This society proposed to buy the landlords out and let the land at quit-rents to those who wanted it. Those who believed in George's idea that private ownership is economically and morally wrong withdrew from the society and formed the Land Reform Union. After his lecture to the working-men Mr. George attended a conference of Church of England clergymen which was satisfactory evidence of the attention which he and his teachings began to command. The same evening he was honored by a two-shilling working-men's banquet and then bade adieu to his English friends and started via Dublin for home.

Mr. George had cherished the intention of writing a book on the tariff question, which was suspended to write a series of articles he had been invited to contribute to *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. These articles brought him into a discussion with Professor Francis A. Walker who had held the chairs of political economy in two colleges and was author of a text-book on the subject. In reviewing this discussion *The New York Sun* said: "It is amusing because, while there is no lack of suavity and decorum on the part of Mr. George, his opponent squirms and sputters as one flagrant blunder after another is brought forward and the spike of logic is driven home through his egregious fallacies." The Leslie articles were afterwards put together in book form and called "Social Problems." The book is dedicated to Frances G. Shaw who left a thousand dollars which enabled Mr. George to write his book on the tariff question which is entitled, "Protection or Free Trade." It is one of the best books ever written on the subject. It is a mass of facts, figures and arguments ably and dispassionately presented, and well worth attention of those who really desire to understand this most important question. Only protectionists need to be warned that if

they accept George's premises they will hardly be able to avoid his conclusions.

It is not given to every reformer to see his work culminate in success during his lifetime. This great satisfaction, however, was afforded Henry George. So great were the results which had followed his seed sowing in this country and in England that he was able to say to his son Richard as he stopped short in the street in a sort of reverie: "I could die now and the work would go on. It no longer depends on one man. The great Revolution has begun." But his own energy and zeal and eloquence were still needed — so his many friends thought — and increasing calls came for him to visit England again. With his son Henry he sailed to England the day before Christmas, 1883. His most important lecture on this tour he considered to be that delivered in St. James Hall, London. The great hall was packed. Ill-health prevented John Ruskin from presiding. Henry Labouchere, M.P., editor of *Truth*, was chairman. He said four Georges had meddled with and muddled public affairs. He introduced "George the Fifth, who does not wear a crown, but who comes with keen intelligence and a generous impulse — a man whose sympathies are with the poor and lonely, instead of with the high and mighty." Michael Davitt was conspicuous on the crowded platform, and nobles and commoners and all classes and callings were represented in the audience. This lecture set all the newspapers in England discussing Henry George and his mission. Those who helped him most, however, were those who wrote and spoke against him, among whom were John Bright, M.P., Samuel Smith, M.P., of Liverpool, Frederick Harrison, the Positivist, and the Tory and Parnellite press generally. While in London Mr. George was introduced to Cardinal Manning, with whom he had a friendly and interesting interview.

In 1886 the working-men's unions invited Mr. George to become a candidate for the mayoralty of New York. He was urged to accept the nomination by his faithful and influential follower, Rev. Dr. McGlynn, who was excommunicated for holding and teaching Henry George's doctrines, which, however, he continued to teach till he was reinstated without retractation, and ever afterwards preached till he died.

Before his nomination Mr. George was invited to confer with Mr. Ivins, the Chamberlain of the city, who told him that he could not possibly be counted in, however many people might vote for him, and made tempting offers to induce him to refuse nomination. "If I cannot be elected why do you want me to withdraw?" asked Mr. George. The reply was, "You cannot be elected, but your running will raise hell." Mr. George answered, "I do not want the responsibility and the work of the office of Mayor of New York, but I do want to raise hell, — I will run." The other candidates were Abram S. Hewitt and Theodore Roosevelt. Whether Hewitt or George was elected was not publicly known, but George was "counted out" notwithstanding his large vote.

Mr. George paid another visit to England and took a trip to Australia and round the world. In 1897 he became candidate for the mayoralty of greater New York made such by the absorption of Brooklyn. His wife and his medical advisers feared that the work and excitement of the campaign might prove too much for him. He began to show signs of physical weakness. But the probability of fatal result did not deter him. At a crowded meeting of working-men he was introduced as "the great friend of labor and democracy." His first words were those of dissent. He said, "I have never claimed to be a special friend of labor. Labor does not want social [special -- ed.] privileges. What I stand for is the equal rights of all men." Loud and long cheers of approbation followed from an audience of workmen.

But Henry George's work was done. A stroke of apoplexy occurred in the night. He soon became unconscious and in a few minutes as noble and unselfish a heart as ever beat in human bosom was stilled forever.

Mr. George left unfinished his last book, "The Science of Political Economy." It is published in its unfinished form as he left it. Some of the first chapters contain some very interesting reading on matter and spirit, on man's place in nature, his growth in knowledge and civilization. But there are not a few Single Taxers who do not accept Mr. George's doctrine of spirit. They believe that in all this vast universe there are but two things, matter and energy, and that from the infinite play through the eternal ages of the past of these two factors have been evolved all the manifestations of mind and spirit and all the marvelous beauty and order of the earth and heavens. They hold that the unalterable laws of political economy are no more dependent on the theory of a great First Cause, or the doctrine of spirit, or the doctrine of design, than are the demonstrable laws of geometry on any theory of white or blue triangles.

Mr. George's great glory as a political economist consists in his rescuing that science from the muddle and mystery in which it is involved as taught in the colleges and text-books. These authorities tell you that labor produces all wealth and that land is wealth; that labor produces capital but that labor can produce nothing till capital comes to its assistance; that wages are paid out of capital and yet capital is greater after payment of wages than it was before the work was done for which wages are paid. These puzzles result mainly from looseness of definition and disappear in the clear light of the political economy taught by Henry George in which the fundamental law is that men seek the gratification of their desires with the least possible exertion. His definitions are clear and distinct. One definition never includes something included in another. Wealth is the product of labor or of labor and capital and never anything else. Land is never capital and never wealth. Wages, which is the reward of labor, is the product of labor and nominal wages is only part of the product, the rest going as interest to

capital and as rent to land. Eliminating interest, which is only the wages of capital, George's political economy may be condensed into two formulas:

Production — Land + Labor == Wealth

Distribution — Wealth + Wages == Rent

All wealth is produced by the operation of labor on land or on the products of land. All wealth is distributed through two channels, wages and rent; therefore the more rent, the less wages. One-third of the total wealth produced every year in this nation goes to rent or land values. It is this immense fund of unearned wealth which George claimed for the community for public use, abolishing all taxation on the products of industry. How demand would spring up, how wages would rise, how rents would go down, how the cost of living would be reduced and prosperity become universal and involuntary poverty unknown under the operation of this single tax on land values is argued and demonstrated in the eloquent pages of his book. Only from this source, land values, can capital and labor ever receive their just share of their joint product, for by a natural social law which governments and legislatures do not control, and cannot prevent, all surplus value goes to land, and land values increase while interest and wages are stationary or decline. To have drawn the attention of the whole civilized world to these great economic truths and to have convinced millions of men of their great importance and far-reaching influence on social conditions is glory enough for one man, and this glory belongs to Henry George.

HENRY GEORGE

It is all very well to pooh-pooh Mr. George and to prove him mistaken in his political economy. But he is right in his impelling motive: right, also, I am convinced, in insisting that humanity makes a part, by far the most important part, of political economy; and in thinking man to be of more concern and more convincing than the longest columns of figures in the world. For unless you include human nature in your addition, your total is sure to be wrong and your deductions from it fallacious. Communism means barbarism, but Socialism means, or wishes to mean, co-operation and community of interests, sympathy, the giving to the hands not so large a share as to the brains, but a larger share than hitherto in the wealth they must combine to produce — means, in short, the practical application of Christianity to life, and has in it the secret of an orderly and benign reconstruction.

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A NOBLER CIVILIZATION

Morals and civilization stand in relation each to the other both as cause and effect. They act and react on each other. A material basis has been sought for morals, and a material basis has been assigned for civilization. Both these theories have been attractively presented and strongly contended for by different writers, both among English and other authors. The latter theory is but a reasonable deduction from the former, for what we are accustomed to speak of as civilization is but the result of certain moral qualities and sentiments which have obtained acceptance among men, and have swayed human society and determined the history of mankind. Without morals there could be no civilization; but whether morals have been derived from some divine source and presented miraculously to mankind, being the gift of the gods to men, or whether they are the deductions of expediency and are the necessary results of human experience, having their cause and genesis in material things, has been the source of contention among thinkers and writers. It is certain that civilization is inseparably associated with material things. It is as certain that there can be no civilization without material progress as it is that there can be none without morals. Civilization doubtless took its rise out of that early accumulation of material wealth which afforded leisure and independence and led to observation and reflection. Man became civilized when he began to think, and he began to think when he found respite from the incessant toil required to provide the means of living, and at the same time from the vigilance necessitated by fratricidal strife or actual engagement in tribal warfare. His material possessions must increase in order that the first step may be taken toward civilized conditions.

Material Progress

How inseparably connected is civilization with material progress is made clear by the fact that the civilizations of the past have taken their rise in the fruitful valleys and plains of the earth where nature responded most more than wealth accumulation, that is to say, something more than a material basis, is required to bring into existence the highest forms of civilization and to make them permanent. Consider for a moment the rapid accumulations of wealth which have taken place in America and England, and to a less extent in other European countries, and ask whether the civilization of these nations has progressed and improved proportionately with their creation of a material basis. The total material wealth of the United States in 1850 is given in the government returns as \$7,135,780,000. In fifty years it had increased to the inconceivable sum of \$94,300,000,000. The wealth of great Britain increased during the same period of half a century from probably £4,500,000,000 to £13,000,000,000. These immense items of wealth, however, require to be taken into consideration in connection with increase in population. The total wealth of a nation is no guide to its actual condition socially or morally or even commercially, apart from the consideration of its diffusion among the citizens of which the nation is composed. One nation may greatly outstrip another in the figures which represent its total wealth, and yet may remain greatly inferior in all that goes to make a nation truly free and happy and prosperous. It will remain inferior in these respects just in proportion as unwise laws or public policy interfere with the natural tendency of wealth to diffuse itself among mankind. Nature has so wisely ordered the social and commercial relations existing among mankind and inseparable from any possible form of government that one man cannot accumulate wealth, nor create nor enjoy it, without conferring benefit on others and on society generally. In spite, however, of the beneficent provisions of nature the interferences of legislators often convert a blessing into a curse, and the accumulations of wealth become hurtful instead of beneficial to a nation. National liberty and happiness and righteousness are sacrificed on the altar of mammon. But this is never the fault of natural social laws; it results entirely from the greediness and folly and ignorance of mankind. The Honorable Thomas B. Reed saw this matter clearly and stated it admirably in his minority report on the Wilson tariff measure when under consideration in Congress. He said: "The moral and material the national income and consequent improvement in the material conditions of all the people. Under a rational and scientific system of taxation, and never without it, the streams of wealth that now flow into the coffers of monopoly would diffuse themselves among all classes and gladden the humblest home. The time would no longer seem as it now does like a dim and distant era, it would have arrived. generously to human toil, and food was most abundant and most easily provided, and human existence could be

most easily and pleasantly maintained. The valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris were the seats of the earliest civilizations of which we have any positive knowledge; and possibly the fertile valleys and plains through which the Mississippi and the Amazon flow have been seats of great civilizations which rose and flourished and passed away long before that early date which we speak of as the dawn of history. And it is equally true to-day that civilization flourishes in those portions of the earth's surface which present the most suitable conditions for the creation and accumulation of material wealth. All the civilized nations of modern times have multiplied and continue to exist almost entirely within the temperate zones. In the frigid zones nature is too harsh, man becomes stunted and oppressed, the struggle with nature is too severe. Wealth cannot be made and accumulated by men amid eternal snow and ice. In the torrid zone man becomes indolent and unprogressive. The fierce rays of the burning sky dispose him to seek rest and retirement: and in the luxurious profusion of nature he finds no strong inducement to labor. The very wealth of nature ready to his hand deprives him of that wholesome discipline which a sterner necessity imposes upon him in the temperate zones. It is true, therefore, that in the temperate zones man finds the happy medium best suited to his development; it is here that he finds both the material basis on which his civilization depends and the best incentives and conditions for material accumulations. It is in the temperate zones of the American continent, and in Europe and Asia that the most progressive nations flourish and that the highest civilizations exist, because it is in these regions that the best conditions offer themselves for the production and accumulation of wealth.

A Material Basis Not Alone Sufficient

At this point, however, further consideration seems to lead to the conclusion that something and social condition of a people depends less upon the total of a nation's wealth than upon the yearly distribution of the yearly gain." Very few statements so discerning and so important have been made by any statesman in recent times. And this statement was made when the then President and other high officials were loudly proclaiming the prosperity and happiness of the nation without the smallest reference to the distribution among the people of the enormous total of material wealth, which they failed to understand and did not know how to accomplish. It will ever remain true, however, as the Honorable Thomas B. Reed and others have taught us, that our happiness and high civilization as a people must be sought in the Universal and Just Diffusion of Wealth rather than in its enormous production. While the wealth of the United States increased during the half century as stated above, the population increased from 23,191,876 to 76,303,387. So that from 1850 to 1900, while

population increased more than threefold the total wealth increased more than thirteenfold, and the wealth per capita therefore increased more than fourfold. But it does not need to be proved, it needs only to be stated, that this proportion of the national income has not gone to swell the incomes of the masses of the people. They have not received their proportionate share of the national increase. If they had it is hardly possible to conceive the superior conditions that would have existed for the capitalist, the inventor and the trader in this nation, nor the immensely superior civilization that would exist in the nation to-day. It was this that Mr. Reed saw and pointed out. He saw what others have seen, how grandly superior is the civilization that is possible compared with the civilization which exists. Buried as we are in the pressing concerns of daily life, with our thoughts almost completely absorbed in the strife of parties and the struggle for existence, we little dream of the nobler and happier conditions which the wealth we already possess renders possible for every man, for the richest millionaire as much as for the poorest and meanest citizen in the nation. It is well, however, to remind ourselves occasion

“ When wealth no more shall rust in mounded heaps
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to gladden lower lands;
And light shall spread and man be liker man
Through all the season of the golden year.’ ’

HENRY GEORGE: HIS LIFE AND WORK BY SAMUEL BRAZIER

This article attempts in brief space to describe the career and life-work of one of the greatest men of the age. For if it be great to discover and present a vital truth inseparably connected with social well-being, or to rediscover such truth and bring it home to men's bosoms and business, then Henry George was great. If it is great to attract the attention of the civilised world to a vital economic doctrine, to set men by millions in all civilised nations discussing and considering it, then Henry George was great. Mr. Brazier has presented to the readers of this magazine a rapid sketch of his busy life — a life full of toil and suffering, toil and suffering as he believed and intended for the good of mankind. The article also contains a rough presentation, or very condensed epitome, of the cardinal doctrines of Henry George's political

economy. This necessarily is very brief and inadequate, but will answer a good purpose if it should induce readers to go to the books themselves which, independent of their economic value, good judges consider to be unexcelled for good logic and good English. Mr. Brazier's high estimate of Henry George as a writer and as a political economist receives considerable support from the fact that probably no book except the Bible, or Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress or some other standard book, ever was translated into so many languages or was so widely read and discussed as Mr. George's principal book, "Progress and Poverty." In every civilised country on earth this book is influencing the opinions of men and the policy of governments. It is not necessary to accept every position maintained by George in his books before endorsing the judgment of this article that he was an able political economist and a great and good man.