

less of the possible effect upon their political future, and they will not only give courage to the progressive element of the party, but they may be able to checkmate and nullify the attempt of the reactionaries to deliver the organization into the hands of the plutocrats.

The vote shown in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado and Missouri last Fall, clearly demonstrates increasing radicalism and power of discrimination. The elections in Chicago and in Kansas, Kan., (where an oldtime Single Taxer, W. W. Rose, was chosen Mayor) also indicate the rising tide. To give this growing radicalism force and direction in Congress we must do what the radical democrats have done in those two cities, put Single Taxers forward as democratic candidates.

We must, of course, continue our propaganda work, but let us emulate the plutocrats, who months, sometimes years in advance pick the men who at the right moment are to be brought forward as candidates. Let our friends throughout the country do this and they will be surprised to wake up after the Congressional elections of 1906 and discover that the Single Tax philosophy has at last become a positive if not controlling force in Congress.



## GEO. BERNARD SHAW'S TRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF HENRY GEORGE.

Henry George has one thing to answer for that has proved more serious than he thought when he was doing it—without knowing it.

One evening in the early eighties I found myself—I forget how and I cannot imagine why—in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, listening to an American finishing a speech on the Land Question. I knew he was an American because he pronounced “necessarily”—a favorite word of his—with the accent on the third syllable instead of the first; because he was deliberately and intentionally oratorical, which is not customary among shy people like the English; because he spoke of Liberty, Justice, Truth, Natural Law, and other strange eighteenth century superstitions; and because he explained with great simplicity and sincerity the views of The Creator, who had gone completely out of fashion in London in the previous decade and had not been heard of since. I noticed also that he was a born orator, and that he had small, plump, pretty hands.

Now at that time I was a young man not much past 25, of a very revolutionary and contradictory temperament, full of Darwin and Tyndall, of Shelley and De Quincy, of Michael Angelo and Beethoven, and never having in my life studied social questions from the economic point of view, except that I had once, in my boyhood, read a pamphlet by John Stuart Mill on the Land Question. The result of my hearing that speech, and buying from one of the stewards of the meeting a copy of *Progress and Poverty* (Heaven only knows where I got that sixpence), was that I plunged into a course of economic study, and at a very early stage of it became a Socialist and spoke from that very platform on the same great subject, and from hundreds of others as well, sometimes addressing distinguished assemblies in a formal manner, sometimes standing on a borrowed chair at a street corner, or simply on a curbstone. And I, too, had my oratorical successes; for I can still recall with some vanity a wet afternoon (Sunday, of course,) on Clapham Common, when I collected as much as sixteen and sixpence in my hat after my lecture, for The Cause.

And that the work was not all gas, let the tracts and pamphlets of the Fabian Society attest.

When I was thus swept into the Great Socialist revival of 1883, I found that five-sixths of those who were swept in with me had been converted by Henry George. This fact would have been more widely acknowledged had it not been that it was not possible for us to stop where Henry George had stopped. America, in spite of all its horrors of rampant Capitalism and industrial oppression, was, nevertheless, still a place for the individualist and the hustler. Every American who came over to London was amazed at the apathy, the cynical acceptance of poverty and servitude as inevitable, the cunning shuffling along with as little work as possible, that seemed to the visitor to explain our poverty, and moved him to say, "Serve us right!" If he had no money, he joyfully started hustling himself, and was only slowly starved and skinned into realizing that the net had been drawn close in England, the opportunities so exhaustively monopolized, the crowd so dense, that his hustling was only a means of sweating himself for the benefit of the owners of England, and that the English workman, with his wonderfully cultivated art of sparing himself and extracting a bit of ransom here and a bit of charity there, had the true science of the situation. Henry George had no idea of this. He saw only the monstrous absurdity of the private appropriation of rent; and he believed that if you took that burden off the poor man's back, he could help himself out as easily as a pioneer on a pre-empted clearing. But the moment he took an Englishman to that point, the Englishman saw at once that the remedy was not so simple as that, and that the argument carried us much further, even to the point of total industrial reconstruction. Thus, George actually felt bound to attack the Socialism he himself had created; and the moment the antagonism was declared, and to be a Henry Georgite meant to be an anti-Socialist, some of the Socialists whom he had converted became ashamed of their origin, and concealed it; while others, including myself, had to fight hard against the Single Tax propaganda.

But I am glad to say that I never denied or belittled our debt to Henry George. If we outgrew Progress and Poverty in many respects, so did he himself too; and it is, perhaps, just as well that he did not know too much when he made his great campaign here; for the complexity of the problem would have overwhelmed him if he had realized it, or, if it had not, it would have rendered him unintelligible. Nobody has ever got away, or ever will get away, from the truths that were the centre of his propaganda; his errors anybody can get away from. Some of us regretted that he was an American and therefore necessarily about fifty years out of date in his economics and sociology from the point of view of an older country; but only an American could have seen in a single lifetime the growth of the whole tragedy of civilization from the primitive forest clearing. An Englishman grows up to think that the ugliness of Manchester and the slums of Liverpool have existed since the beginning of the world. George knew that such things grow up like mushrooms, and can be cleared away easily enough when people come to understand what they are looking at and mean business. His genius enabled him to understand what he looked at better than most men; but he was undoubtedly helped by what had happened within his own experience in San Francisco as he could never have been helped had he been born in Lancashire.

What George did not teach you, you are being taught now by your Trusts and Combines, as to which I need only say that if you would take them over as National property as cheerfully as you took over the copyrights of all my early books, you would find them excellent institutions, quite in the path of progressive evolution, and by no means to be discouraged or left unregulated as if they were nobody's business but their own. It is a great pity that you

all take America for granted because you were born in it. I, who have never crossed the Atlantic, and have taken nothing American for granted, find I know ten times as much about your country as you do yourselves; and my ambition is to repay my debt to Henry George by coming over some day and trying to do for your young men what Henry George did nearly quarter of a century ago for me.

G. BERNARD SHAW.

LONDON, ENG.

[Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, probably the foremost wit and certainly one of the foremost playwrights in the English speaking world, is also a well known Fabian socialist. The foregoing letter addressed to the Progress and Poverty Dinner in this city on Jan. 24th exhibits at once the defects and shortcomings of his philosophy of life and his political economy. Liberty, Justice, and Natural Law have no place in his creed; they are to him what he calls them, superstitions, shibboleths that stand for nothing in his theories of social adjustments. He would probably regard as a mere idle meaningless statement the contention that there is a natural order in the industrial world, that the law of competition is beneficent, and gives only to those who earn; and that co-operation under freedom from state control, when the path is finally cleared of obstruction, will give all the benefits, without the disadvantages of socialism. All these notions he imperiously rejects.

But how curious it is that men to whom these really profounder aspects of the greater economic problem do not appear, should accuse inferentially, if not always in set terms, those who do see them, of superficiality, of not going "far enough." Yet what can be more superficial than the made-to-order arrangement of society, with its ignoring of so many of the laws of economics? Is not socialism the more obvious, therefore the more superficial, therefore, too, the least profoundly rational solution of the great economic problem? Does not the untrained, the unphilosophic and childlike mind naturally revert to the State, as

"The infant crying in the night  
And with no language but a cry,"

reaches out instinctively for help. But what of the man full grown, to whom years have brought the philosopher mind? Realizing that he is endowed with faculties the exercise of which depends upon his individual initiative, will not profounder reflection bring also a realization that there is a natural order of industry independent of artificial, man-made regulation? Will he not see that the law of competition, the law of co-operation are not mere meaningless terms, but dependent in their operation upon the same fundamental causes that determine the regularity and order of the material universe everywhere? Will he not then advance a step further, and discover the line that marks off those things naturally and properly subjects for state regulation, and those which may be left free of such control to the individual members of the community? Is not this view, because requiring far more prolonged analysis and keener scrutiny, and because it is not the earlier, but always the later aspect presenting itself, wrested as it were from philosophic travail, the profounder one, and socialism the more purely superficial?

In this light Mr. Shaw's letter with its curious though not ungenerous egotism becomes amusing. Does he imagine that those who accept the teaching of Henry George have not travelled the ground over which he magnanimously proffers his leadership?

"He saw only the monstrous absurdity of the private appropriation of