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"The Menace of Privilege."

("The Menace of Privilege," by Henry George, Jr. The Macmillan Company, New York. A. H. Clapp, Albany.)

Henry George, Jr., the worthy successor of his father in the field of sociological study, has produced an important and interesting consideration of "the dangers to a republic from the existence of a favored class," under the title, "The Menace of Privilege."

The author believes that "monopoly of natural opportunities, heavy taxes upon production, private ownership of public highways and other lesser privileges cause the great inequalities in distribution of wealth which are all about." For these, he argues, are not powers to produce wealth, but powers to appropriate it. He beholds, through inequality in distribution, the growth of two clearly marked and powerful classes with distinct views and mutually hostile feelings. One of them is lifted into superabundance and afflicted with vices and weakness that spring from it. The other, cut off by monopoly from free access to natural opportunities, "and robbed of and taxed on the fruits of their labor at every turn, have been reduced to an intense competition for a living." So we have two great belligerent elements: leagued privileges on the one side, labor unionism on the other. And privilege has the whip hand. "When it cannot make terms with labor unionism, by which it may peacefully rob the public, it makes war against it. Its chief weapons are soldiers and an extraordinary development of the judicial enjoining order." And not only this, but to protect and extend its life it further endeavors to control politics by corruption, and to influence public opinion through purchase of intimidation of the press, and through gifts to the university and the pulpit. Hence, the cited evils so gravely disturbing the republic.

Mr. George writes with vigor, sincerity and conviction, and he does not hesitate to draw his illustrations from the contemporary world of New York millionairess in driving the points of his arguments home. His book is in nine divisions, the first defining privilege, its extent and nature, dealing with the United States as "the land of inequality" and pointing out the cause of the inequality; the second concerns the "princes of privilege" and describes with all raciness the life of American plutocrats of the "400," the Newport "leaders," etc., which set the standard of the "smart set" and society, their amusements, dissipations and marital relations; the third division concerns the victims of privilege, the masses, their physical, mental and moral deterioration; the fourth, the resistance to privilege, the organization of laborers and the dangers of unionism; the fifth concerns the weapons of privilege, the use of the courts, government by injunction, the bayonet in civil affairs, the federal army in strikes; the sixth analyses national, State and municipal politics, and points out privilege as the corrupter of politics; the seventh division of the book describes the influence over public opinion possessed by the privileged class, "the bondage of the press," "the hand on the university," "the independence

of the pulpit," the two concluding chapters give a general summary of the past and the present conditions of government, centralization, foreign aggression, etc., with a survey of earlier civilizations and the remedy for the existing conditions of things social, which Mr. George finds to be in the freeing of natural opportunities, the stopping of taxation evils, grants and immunities and a return to the natural order, "the simple life," the right way for the individual man to live.

It is a broad-thoughted and capable discussion of the social conditions of the day, and though there are plenty of social philosophers who do not agree with Mr. George's plan of reform, his survey of the field challenges that of any contemporary writer in its breadth of observation and comprehensiveness.

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