

A Man

By GEORGE H. ATKINSON

HE was sturdily built, but with no suggestion of heaviness; of medium height, but his manner of carrying himself gave the impression he was taller than his inches. His blue eyes inspired confidence and invited trust. The hands were small, more like those of a painter or sculptor than an ordinary seaman who had handled ropes on full-rigged ships for several years on voyages out of New York to Australia, India and round the Horn to California. His whole appearance gave the impression that he had something to do and knew how to do it.

Born in Philadelphia, he was the son of a book publisher of moderate means. At the age of ten he went to the Episcopal Academy where H. C. and E. N. Potter and Heber and Wilberforce Newton also were students. At thirteen he entered high school in a class that was to produce some notable men in Pennsylvania—Theodore Cramp, shipbuilder; Charles Alexander, journalist; James Morgan Hart, professor and author; David H. Lane, a Recorder of Philadelphia; William Jenks Fell, Commissioner of Deeds.

Thirsty for knowledge, he supplemented his schooling with books on history, travel, fiction and poetry from the old Quaker Apprentice's Library and attended popular lectures at the Franklin Institute.

His first job was with Samuel Asbury & Co., importers, at two dollars a week. The next job was with a Marine Adjuster.

Living near the Delaware River wharves where vessels were constantly berthed, he learned the feel of a deck, learned spars, rope and sail and was at home in the rigging. His grandfather had owned two ships—*Medora* and *Packet*. It was natural that his desire to go to sea should grow.

Captain Miller commanded an old East Indiaman—the *Hindoo*—sailing out of New York. With the consent of the boy's father, he signed him as foremast boy for the voyage to Melbourne, Australia, Calcutta and India ports.

Australia was sighted 137 days out; 29 days were spent there discharging cargo and loading. Then the *Hindoo* proceeded to India and up the Hooghly River to Calcutta. Taking on 1,200 tons of rice and other freight, she cleared for home, arriving at New York 430 days out.

Working for King & Baird, printers in Philadelphia, for nearly a year, he learned typesetting, then got subbing jobs on the *Daily Evening Argus* and on the *Merchant*. But finding no permanent work on land he signed as able seaman on a coal schooner, Philadelphia to Boston.

A letter from one of the family of George Curry, Governor of Oregon Territory, suggested he come there. Getting a berth on the steamer *Shubrick* he sailed from Philadelphia

and arrived at San Francisco 155 days out. But word from Oregon was that business had turned bad. The Frazer River gold fever running high at that time, he shipped as seaman on a trading schooner and worked his way to Victoria, only to find the Frazer River boom had "busted."

He got temporary work in a general store for his keep—there was no bed, so he slept on the counter—and shortly returned to San Francisco, dead broke. On the street he met David Bond, a compositor, with whom he had worked in Philadelphia. Bond took him to Eastman's printing office, where he got work setting type at \$16 a week. He took a small room in R. B. Woodward's "What Cheer House"—which still stands—where he first saw Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" in the house library.

Times were bad. Thousands of unsuccessful miners were crowding back to San Francisco. Eastman's and other printing houses shut down and he was forced out of his own trade and took a job as weigher in a rice mill, which also shortly closed.

He started into the interior of California for the mines—on foot, as he had little money. He slept in barns, and worked on farms and at any laboring job that was offered. But he never reached the mines. Working his way back to San Francisco he got a job as compositor, then as foreman, on the *Home Journal*.

With six other printer friends, each investing all the cash he had, he tried to revive the old *Evening Journal*, all the printers giving their services free. Six dollars a week was the limit of their drawing from the paper, which was always on the verge of a shut-down. He wrote: "I worked till my clothes were ragged and my toes out of my shoes, slept in the office, did my best to economize, but ran into debt."

It was then agreed to sell the paper to the three printers who would bid most for it. His bid was low and he was out.

Afterwards, he got a job on the Sacramento *Union* at good wages, but it was not permanent. Trying to get more than typesetting paid, he put all he had into mining stocks—and lost. He returned to San Francisco and joined the Eureka Typographical Union. He canvassed for subscriptions for various papers on commission—and also peddled clothes wringers and a new wagon brake. With two other printers he bought on credit some of the outfit of the old *Journal* and set up a printing shop—which was not successful.

The talk everywhere was of the completion of the Overland Railroad into San Francisco and the great improvement it was expected to bring in the living condition of workingmen and others—but through it all there remained in his mind the remark of the old miner: "As the country grows, as people come in, wages will go down." Being unable to reconcile these conflicting views worried him.

Always a good letter writer with a clear and direct manner of expression, his relations with many papers as a typesetter

led him to try writing for publication. Articles for the *Journal of the Trades and Workingmen* were printed. He wrote on "Profitable Use of Time" and "Laws Relating to Sailors." "A Plea for the Supernatural" was printed in *Alta California* and in the *Boston Saturday Evening Gazette*. A letter on the assassination of President Lincoln, which he slipped into the editor's box without signature, was printed by *Alta* with his name signed and he was given a job as special reporter. This was the first newspaper work for which he was paid.

Soon he was writing editorials for *Alta California*, and finally became its editor. Later he was engaged as a regular editorial writer on the *San Francisco Times* and then became its managing editor. He wrote magazine articles for the *Overland Monthly*.

Each move was a step upward and a broadening of his latent abilities. He continued writing on local, county, state and national issues and began taking a strong interest in political economy. He went East to get telegraph news service for the *San Francisco Herald*. In New York he wrote an anti-Chinese article for the *Tribune* and sent a copy to John Stuart Mill, who acknowledged it with a letter of comment. His experiences continued to broaden. He became editor of the *Oakland Transcript*; editor and part owner of the *Sacramento Reporter*; secretary to the Democratic California State Convention; delegate to the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore. He lectured before the University of California, and helped establish the San Francisco Free Public Library. He went to Europe to correspond on the *Irish World*; visited England and made many lectures there; made a tour of Australia.

By this time you have probably guessed that this man was Henry George, author of "Our Land and Land Policy," "Progress and Poverty," "Social Problems," "Protection or Free Trade," "The Condition of Labor," "A Perplexed Philosopher," "The Science of Political Economy," and other works which are standard in the curriculum of many colleges.

His books have had a circulation of more than six million copies in English alone, and have been translated into Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Finnish, Danish, Spanish, Swedish, French, German, Dutch, Hungarian, Portuguese and Italian. His ideas have profoundly affected thought everywhere, and legislation in many countries.

John Dewey ranks Henry George as one of the half-dozen or more greatest philosophers of all time, and declares that no one should pretend to be educated who is ignorant of George's proposals. Nicholas Murray Butler said in a public address that Henry George had compelled a recasting of accepted theories of political economy. It is said that Secretary of State Cordell Hull carries a copy of "Protection or Free Trade" in his pocket.

Sun Yat Sen, Leo Tolstoy, Newton D. Baker, Philip Snowden, John W. Davis, Woodrow Wilson, Louis D. Bran-

deas, David Lloyd George, George Foster Peabody, William Lloyd Garrison, 2nd and 3rd, Theodore Roosevelt—these are a few of the men who claim inspiration from Henry George.

Sixty-five years ago he was an unknown printer—today his writings are an inspiration to the highest ideals in every country in the world. His proclamation of the inalienable right of all men to the bounties of the Creator, to all natural opportunities, goes on conquering throughout the world.

And wherever honesty, eloquence and self-sacrificing devotion to humanity move the hearts of men, there the name of Henry George is revered.