

1884-1885

-1-

Fourteen months in the United States, from October 1882 to Christmas the next year, thrust upon Henry George a succession of events and recognitions that added up to a vast elevation of his position at home. His personal history in 1883 confirms handsomely the opinion he had used to persuade Mr. Shaw to subsidize the low-cost English edition of *Progress and Poverty* — that Britain reacts on America, and that a British hearing would advance his book and his cause in the United States.

Yet, again in agreement with his foresight, American gains did not affect his standing in Britain with equal force. Accordingly we may best reserve for a later chapter the hero's reception on returning to New York, and the mounting events and circumstances which made the name of Henry George a household word across the continent. The period in the United States closing with the calendar year 1883 prepared in a way for the campaign for mayor of New York in 1886, but had little bearing on building up his reform movement in England and Scotland, in 1884. Except for one achievement at home, there is no reason to think that he might not as well have chosen a long vacation in California as to work hard in and out of New York, so far as his influence overseas is concerned. The exception is the magazine articles he wrote for *Leslie's* in the spring of 1883. These were published as a book later the same year, and then on his return published again in England. *Social Problems* is George's most socialistic sounding book, no greater or more influential than one or two other of his minor works, but very timely.

Rather than American gains giving his reputation new force in England, it was the movement he had started in 1882 which with accumulating momentum now carried forward there. *Progress and Poverty* was being bought and read and discussed, and his friends were searching for ways and means to put his ideas into practical effect.

He had left the British Isles warmly invited, and wanting and expecting to return. But he had left also without a single line of commitment from anyone which would make return a practicable thing. Yet October 1882 had not passed before James Durant, the printer of the cheap editions, was telling him that with Gladstone he was one of the two most talked-of men in England. In the same month William Saunders, who wrote on land questions and who was the head of the British Central News Agency, sent him a proposal to start a newspaper in London. And before long an invitation to lecture offered also.

Except that in Britain lecturing was less well paid and less organized than in the United States, that was the kind of invitation now the best for Henry George. Accepting the newspaper would have required him to settle in England more or less permanently; and neither this offer nor later invitations that would have expatriated him ever really engaged his mind. Lecturing involved the fewest difficulties and the most of what he wanted: a temporary commitment, a chance to meet people of all kinds, above all a personal opportunity to start discussions and make converts to his ideas.

The source of the invitation he accepted was the new Land Reform Union, an organization set up in London during the spring or summer of 1883. As the union was explained to George it signified an addition, not an opposition, to the work of the Land Nationalisation Society. The people in it whose names are mentioned make practically a roster of his English friends; and the Land Reform Union seems to have been very much like the California Land Reform League in San Francisco five years earlier. It was the second organized movement to promote the ideas of Henry George.

Probably the most distinguished members were Miss Helen Taylor and two clergymen, the Anglican Stewart Headlam, he who spoke for the motion at the Land Nationalisation Society meeting just before George left London, and Philip Wicksteed, the scholarly Unitarian, about whom more presently. The Land Reform Union contained also sympathetic journalists and publishing-house people: William Saunders and James Durant, and William Reeves who was soon to bring out another cheap edition of *Progress and Poverty*. Two members are recognizable as men of wealth, George's admirers Thomas Briggs of London and Thomas Walker the manufacturer of Birmingham. James Joynes belonged. His letters during the

winter of 1882-3 told Henry George that their Irish adventure together had cost him his mastership at Eton and turned him toward a career of writing about social problems — a career which would lead to Marxist socialism.

With the advantage of present hindsight on the making of modern Britain, Henry George's rising influence will be plainer if we notice a couple of younger members of the Land Reform Union about whom he could have known very little, much less have suspected their distinguished futures. One of these, who may or may not have been an early joiner, was Sidney Olivier, a recent graduate of Oxford who within a few years would be a Fabian tractarian on 'Capital and Land,' and four decades later secretary of state for India in Ramsay MacDonald's first Labour government. During the late autumn of 1882 this young civil servant wrote a letter which supplies a rare insight into how a very sophisticated and intellectual Britisher could react both to *Progress and Poverty* and to his own class's ordinary reaction.

'I would remark with respect to the main thesis of the book,' he said to Graham Wallas, 'that it is all very well to poke fun at Henry George and his deduction of the immortality of the soul from the sound theory of property in land, in which I do not think you will have any fear that I shall follow him — indeed he does not himself point out the connection, but I am anxious to see, what I have never yet seen, some other argument than the pooh-pooh one, which is all one is generally treated to except when the "whatever is, is best" is assumed ... I have no wish to champion George, who has a rhapsodical and unchastened style, strongly suggestive of the pulpit, and who starts with ideas of the Divine Purpose and Final Causes exceedingly incongruous in such a treatise, but inasmuch as his book has brought the question into general notice of others than readers of Mill and Spencer, I think he is to be thanked.'

If George had any way at all of sensing that *Progress and Poverty* was beginning to disturb the young, the able, and the heterodox among Britain's intellectuals, the instance known to him was Philip Wicksteed. At the age of thirty-nine, Mr. Wicksteed was already a distinguished man, the vigorous minister of the important Little Portland Street Unitarian chapel. But he had yet written no book to indicate that he would achieve fame as one of Britain's most brilliant economists, and none to indicate his coming distinction as Dante scholar. A decade later he would begin to produce the

works which made him a leader in modern value-theory, and one to influence academicians and Fabian socialists, both. Reading *Progress and Poverty* at a time when he needed help, Mr. Wicksteed wrote the author, the book fell 'on old and deep lines of thought in my mind, and has given me the light I vainly sought for myself.' He thanked George for exposing the wages fund, and for designating political economy's weakness in explaining depressions. Meeting George on a more thoughtful level than most of the reviewers did, Wicksteed offered some suggestive comments about *Progress and Poverty*. He thought George to be right in assuming increasing returns from an ever denser labor supply only in respect of those places where more and more food was available; and, while he agreed that Malthus had been substantially refuted, he countered that population pressure, and sometimes diminishing returns, could not always be gainsaid. The minister's large judgment, however, was unqualified: you have opened 'a new heaven and a new earth,' he told George, and thanked him for a 'freshly kindled enthusiasm.'

Though they met once or twice, there is no evidence that Henry George ever learned much more about his influence on Philip Wicksteed than this first response indicates. Yet at the very time when George was making his second visit in England, the minister was leading discussions of his ideas before the Economic Circle of Manchester College in London. In time this group came to meet at the Belsize Square home of Henry R. Beeton, a member of the London Stock Exchange who strongly sympathized with George; and it grew in size and distinction. Two London professors of political economy attended, H. S. Foxwell of University College and F. Y. Edgeworth of King's College; and Sidney Webb came, and Bernard Shaw. The play of mind between Shaw and the Unitarian minister was particularly exciting.

This runs ahead of the story, for the Economic Circle lasted from 1884 to 1888; and it is not to be suggested that the members' debt to Henry George meant mortgaged minds. Yet though in the end Wicksteed's technical economics stemmed rather from Stanley Jevons than from Henry George, he remained always loyal to *Progress and Poverty's* central idea. Land nationalization, to be achieved gradually by way of taxation and with special attention to mineral lands, remained a conviction to the end, with Philip Wicksteed.

Though George could no more know all the present than foresee the future impulses that would stem from his books in Britain, the signs did accumulate rapidly. Surely compliment and challenge both were intended by Miss Taylor when, writing from Avignon, 7 January 1883, she said that she deeply deplored the way in which Gladstone's mild reformism was making little gains seem larger than they were, and then declared that *Progress and Poverty* was selling well even on the newsstands, and that England's need was leadership of vision and power. Challenge came from Hyndman too, who wrote that the anarchists were gaining in the international race to bring laboring men into politics and power. Davitt could do much, the wily socialist suggested in a line of thought already George's own, to bridge the gap between the Irish resistance and the British working classes, but that would not be enough. If he would only do so, Henry George could make himself the uniter of the British and American labor movements, Hyndman urged most warmly.

Meanwhile the less pretentious recognitions, and very reassuring ones, multiplied also. Mr. Walker wrote in the spring of 1883 that he had distributed about 100 copies of *Progress and Poverty* among Liberal party workers in Birmingham, and that he had taken the chair at a couple of meetings to discuss the book. He asked permission to have a summary made for working men. 'Anything for the cause,' Henry George replied. A few months later, Mr. A. C. Swinton, who was particularly generous in writing George about how his books were being received, reported that the London Society of Positivists was assigning their fortnightly discussion time to

Progress and Poverty for as long a period as they might need to do a thorough study.

This was notable company, though not exactly Henry George's own kind. It included Professor Beesly and Frederic Harrison, leaders of the cult, the latter a speaker and writer on social problems and one to be more forceful than logical when he praised and dispraised George. John Morley's *Fortnightly Review*, which it will be remembered had displayed a real interest in Henry George in 1882, still retained much of its old Positivist flavor.

According to the many indications that came to him, the time was right for George to return to England. When the invitation to lecture was matched by a personal invitation, that he use Mr. Walker's home in Birmingham as his headquarters, and when adequate funds were assured, Henry George had no choice except to say that he would come.

-2-

The hospitality of admirers gave George a speaking role in Britain's social drama, but other people and many minds set the stage. No question was more important to him, after the low-cost editions and after *The Times* review, than the natural one: How would critical opinion respond?

Much more now in England than three years earlier in New York, the expected reviews promised a valuation to be regarded as in a sense ultimate. There existed no critical court of appeals beyond the judgments presently rendered. There would be no higher authority to upset these decisions, should they be unfavorable, in any such way as, say, the *Alta California's* dismissal had been rendered silly by the judgments even of the unsympathetic *New York Nation*, or as the *New York Times* had in a way been overruled by the London Times' thoughtful opinion. The historic British reviews of the nineteenth century — the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, the *Contemporary Review*, the *Nineteenth Century* — represented the international as well as the national arbitrament of ideas in the English language. Far more than any journalism in the United States except possibly that of the *North American*, their opinions signified judgment weighted with authority — with the authority of the main traditions of British politics and intellect.

Much the same was true of criticism from the universities. In England's more consolidated culture, the dons of Oxford and Cambridge were more natural speakers on public affairs than professors in American colleges and universities, and they carried more prestige. At this time Sir Henry Fawcett, the blind Cambridge economist and member of Parliament, had a very high standing; and soon Alfred Marshall and later John Maynard Keynes would represent the same kind of authority. At Oxford the brilliant young Arnold Toynbee, protege of Jowett, who poured amazing energy into working-class causes, indicated most engagingly the contact point of

conscience between social scholarship and social amelioration — the point at which *Progress and Poverty* was sure to be tested.

As the London *Times* review may fairly be understood to have been a quick response to George's prominence in Ireland, so the wave of reviews and discussion meetings during the fall and winter of 1882-3 is to be understood as reaction to the popular editions. Long before George undertook the lecture tour, the sales of the Durant-Kegan Paul paper-bound *Progress and Poverty* were mounting spectacularly toward the ultimate record-breaking total of 109,000 copies; these sales were well advanced before the Reeves edition was even started. While, from the author's point of view, successful distribution vindicated his own strategy and Mr. Shaw's subsidy, from the reviewers' point of view, it indicated a change of situation. After 1882 *Progress and Poverty* could never again be reasonably dismissed as mere utopianism, or as a book mainly useful for understanding Ireland, or California.

George himself understood very well that the measurements of his book and of himself being taken principally in London meant much, and that favorable or unfavorable they signified — as John Russell Young had told him — a day of his own in the highest court of public opinion. By early March the hearing had gone so far that there was no reason why he should not boast a little when writing to an intimate. 'The animals are getting stirred up' over there, he said to Dr. Taylor.

In November the *Contemporary Review* led off the series of criticisms. Though this monthly lacked the antiquity and the associations of power of some of the other journals, it was rising into liberal influence and prestige. The November issue contained a twenty-page critique of *Progress and Poverty* by Emile de Laveleye, who had done the review in *La Revue scientifique* more than two years previously. This time the Belgian scholar shifted the weight of his comment away from the earlier degree of approval; he made a pretty evenly balanced series of observations, *pro* and *con*. The socialist in him found many faults with George's pro-capitalist ideas: with the book's justification of interest and other rewards to investment, with what Laveleye called George's exaggeration of the increment of land values (even in California), and with his under-appreciation of the profits taken in the mining lands by reason of capital monopoly (apart from site monopolization). Laveleye criticized as insufficient George's answer to the

wages fund; and he repeated his original counter-proposition, that the best land reform would be lease tenures from the state.

The professor pretty well restricted his praise to specific points this time. He applauded George for adopting Ricardo's law — 'which may be looked upon as a demonstrated truth'; he seconded *Progress and Poverty's* anti-Malthusianism; and he agreed that George had a right to claim Herbert Spencer on his side of the argument, and even suggested that John Locke and others could be claimed also. Not a materialist, Laveleye approved George's attaching social protest to the ideas of religion. How else, he queried, could the good society be brought to being?

Except for a private communication which this reviewer presently sent the author, it would be hard to say to which side his judgment leaned. But he assured George that in his net opinion *Progress and Poverty* was a book to be admired, and he offered compliments on the huge success of the English editions.

In January, two months after the *Contemporary*, the *Quarterly Review*, the *Edinburgh Review*, and the *Modern Review* all had their say. With complete fidelity to the loyalties of their journals, the reviewers in the *Quarterly* and the *Edinburgh* spoke their respective Tory condemnations and Whig objections to *Progress and Poverty*. The *Modern* of course was different. It assigned the criticism to George Sarson, M.A., who endorsed the book as timely for England, and in a moderate way — which seems to identify the reviewer as a Radical — recommended land-value taxation as sound policy. In 1884 the Land Reform Union reprinted the Sarson review as a pamphlet.

Unfortunately for the quality of the result, the *Quarterly Review* elected a very brash young writer to answer Henry George. Though its contributors had included Tories of the highest talent, ranging from Sir Walter Scott to the Earl of Salisbury, this time it let William Hurrell Mallock speak the Conservative mind. The son of a rector and a graduate of Oxford, Mr. Mallock's own memoirs identify him as a frequenter of country-house and drawing-room society, and they display him in unconscious caricature as dilettante and snob. He was concerned at the time of this review, he says, to show 'that "social equality" was a radically erroneous formula'; and his demonstrations led him into literary free-swinging at radicals of sundry Liberal and socialistic types. But Henry

George must have been this writer's special antipathy, for including the review in the *Quarterly*, he shortly piled up more than 250 pages of refutation of *Progress and Poverty*.

The *Quarterly Review* essay — for 'criticism' is hardly the word for forty immoderate pages — presumed that British institutions were at stake. To Henry George, Mallock granted no element of truth, but only surface brilliance of writing and a demagogue's appeal. The writer nevertheless took trouble to assure readers of the *Quarterly* that *Progress and Poverty* was wrong, point by point along the whole line, the critical passages and the utopian ones the same. The suggestive thing about the review is the incitement in its tone, and the apprehension it voiced in fear of England's safety. Because Mallock represents what was in some degree a national attitude which George was going to be obliged to confront, a quotation to illustrate is in order.

'False theories, when they bear directly upon action, do not claim our attention in proportion to the talent they are supported by, but in proportion to the extent to which action is likely to be influenced by them; and since action in modern politics so largely depends on the people, the wildest errors are grave, if they are only sufficiently popular. How they strike the wise is a matter of small moment; the great question is, how they will strike the ignorant.' Mallock believed that the recent visitor had excited the discontented of Britain far more than he had his own people. 'In America the author, so far as we have been able to learn, has failed hitherto to make any practical converts. He has been more fortunate on this side of the Atlantic ... Mr. George's London publishers have lately reissued his book in an ultra-popular form. It is at this moment selling by thousands in the alleys and back streets of England, and is being audibly welcomed there as a glorious gospel of justice. If we may credit a leading Radical journal, it is fast forming a new public opinion. The opinion we here allude to is no doubt that of the half-educated; but this makes the matter in some ways more serious. No classes are so dangerous, at once to themselves and to others, as those which have learned to reason, but not to reason rightly ... They will fall victims to it, as though to an intellectual pestilence. Mr. George's book is full of this kind of contagion. A ploughman might snore, or a country gentleman smile over it, but it is well calculated to turn the head of an artizan ... It is not the poor, it is not the seditious only, who have

thus been affected by Mr. George's doctrines ... they have been gravely listened to by a conclave of English clergymen. Scotch ministers and nonconformist professors have done more than listen — they have received them with marked approval; they have even held meetings and given lectures to disseminate them. Finally, certain trained economic thinkers, or men who pass for such in at least one of our Universities, are reported to have said that they see no means of refuting them, and that they probably mark the beginning of a new political epoch.'

The *Edinburgh Review*, historic carrier of the Whig tradition, recorded less anxiety and included more in the way of actual criticism. In a combination which must have given ironic satisfaction to Henry George, this quarterly reviewed together *Progress and Poverty* and Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*, published as far back as 1850, the two under the heading, 'The Nationalisation of Land.' Taking George's ideas to be sufficiently valid to speak of the good and the bad, the reviewer praised the passage against Malthus as excellent, the best in the book; and he acknowledged as common truth George's basis in Ricardo's law of rent, and quoted a recent version of that law by Professor Thorold Rogers. He rejected George's theory of distribution, however, and, not stopping to quarrel with the analysis of margins, he counter-proposed that British law and practice recognized sufficiently the difference between property in land and property in things. He said that land nationalization would lift no burden of rent from the land occupiers, and would likely be harder to bear than present land-lordism. 'The payment, instead of going into the pocket of the proprietor, is diverted into the coffers of the State. The *dramatis personae* only are changed; the plot and the outcome of the drama are the same. It is only a new way to pay old rents.'

This comment meant, of course, either that the reviewer had not caught, or that he chose to dismiss, the public benefits George asserted would follow from transferring economic rent into the coffers of the community. To the Edinburgh reviewer, *Progress and Poverty's* remedy seemed 'plunder,' quite as immoral as Mr. Mallock judged it.

In defense of all property rights he rendered his general judgment of the book. Again a quotation is required, for these concluding comments supply a special revelation of the anxieties which knowledge that *Progress and Poverty* was being read stirred up in England during 1882 and 1883.

‘Writers like Mr. George and Mr. Herbert Spencer are at war not only with the first principles of political economy and of law, of social order, and of domestic life, but with the elements of human nature ... The strongest incentive to industry, economy, and good living is the desire to provide for the future, and to hand down to our children some results of our own lives ... Land has hitherto been regarded as the most secure of all property ... We can only regard Mr. George’s work and Mr. Davitt’s speeches as a part of the revolutionary warfare now waged by certain Americans, or Hiberno-Americans, against the institutions of this country, which degrades them to the level of the Socialists of Germany, the Nihilists of Russia, and the Communards of Paris.’

Though the *Edinburgh Review*’s criticism sounded again the opinion of the *Alta California* — and many others papers — it was rendered in the context of a serious study of the book and its ideas. A decade later Henry George with the magazine open before him was able to say that this reviewer had written ‘as fairly, it seemed to me, as could be expected, though of course adversely.’

An immediate by-product of the review appeared in the conservative *St. James Gazette*, to which Herbert Spencer addressed an angry letter. The philosopher utterly repudiated the association of his name and ideas with Henry George’s, and he asserted that *Social Statics* had only pointed out a difference between the ‘purely ethical’ and the practical views of property in land. Reserved for nearly a decade later was the debate that Henry George would make of that highly arguable distinction. At the time the ruction in the *St. James Gazette* publicly knocked a weak support from under George’s argument in *Progress and Poverty*, and it perhaps diminished the connection between land nationalization and land-value taxation. The letter was widely reprinted in America, and certainly it distressed some of George’s admirers at home — as was natural, for this was the time of Spencer’s greatest American vogue. But George himself had discounted Spencer since meeting him in London; and in the direction of the support he now wanted — among the clergymen, working men, and intellectuals of England — it is not likely that repudiation by Herbert Spencer injured his cause.

Along with the reviewing came the public discussions of *Progress and Poverty*. The way in which some of these discussions were reported to

George, and how they encouraged him to return to England, has already been related. But there were others. Some were friendly, such as the debates of the Trade Union Congress in 1882, and later. Other meetings were not friendly, and in outstanding cases they fed the stream of serious criticism.

For an important example, early in 1883, Alfred Marshall gave a series of three lectures in the city of Bristol. The future distinguished economist, who was a little younger than George, was still a professor at University College in that city; within a year he was to move to Oxford, and very soon to go on to Cambridge, the scene of his influential career. In the first and second lectures Marshall criticized severely George's ideas about wages: he submitted as his own finding the fact that the product of the British economy divided into a low share to rent (£75 millions, less than 7 per cent) and high shares to interest and wages (£250 millions and £800 millions, respectively). He said that the real wages of the laboring class were constantly improving. These statements did not literally contradict *Progress and Poverty*, and perhaps Marshall did not think they did. But they were intended to deflate the book; for in presenting them, Marshall, whose inclination was toward mathematical economics rather than the methods of general logic and hypothesis which survived in George, characterized *Progress and Poverty* as altogether unscientific.

The one 'real value' which the university man acknowledged in George was his 'freshness and earnestness' — 'he is by nature a poet, not a scientific thinker.' Professor Marshall concluded the series by calling himself a 'more moderate defender' of property in land, and making a number of recommendations. For the elevation of living standards he proposed late marriages and universal education; and he thought that new countries would gain by some application of Laveleye's plan of fixed-term land tenures, held from the sovereign state. This was a rejection of Henry George ideas, quite completely, and yet another act that admitted the American radical to high debate in England.

Ten years later pronouncements by Alfred Marshall would have been the weightiest of their kind, but in February 1883 the London lectures of Arnold Toynbee — an uncle of the present-day philosopher-historian — caught far more attention. A tutor and bursar at Oxford, Toynbee at thirty had distinguished himself by dedication and quality of personality rather than by any known achievement of original thought. Yet the suggestive

little book by which his permanent reputation is made secure, *The Industrial Revolution*, is made up of lectures which he had already delivered at the university. As director at Oxford of the studies of young men preparing for the civil service in India, and as generous participator in social causes, his career brought him into public affairs; and for reasons of conscience he had chosen to live awhile in Whitechapel slums, and to travel in insurgent Ireland.

Altogether naturally he was an early reader of *Progress and Poverty*, and one who, though he discovered ‘fallacies and crude conceptions,’ would take it seriously. We gain a peep into opinion making about Henry George as we learn that Professor Henry Fawcett, visiting at Professor Jowett’s, asked Toynbee about *Progress and Poverty*, confessing that he himself had not read it. One would like to know the young man’s brief reply; and one would like to know also how much attention Oxford gave to two lectures he delivered, the last of his teaching career, in criticism of the book.

He was invited to repeat those lectures in London. Someone suggested that the Social Democratic Federation sponsor the appearance, Hyndman wrote George, ‘but we declined as I disapprove of attacking allies and Toynbee calls himself a Radical Socialist.’ The lectures were given, 11 and 18 January 1883, in St. Andrews Hall on Norman Street. The audience must have been thoroughly mixed. Among known admirers of both the speaker and the author under discussion, Sidney Olivier and Philip Wicksteed were present; and there seems to have been a large element of working men, some of whom were pretty rowdy and shouted for revolution. Between a disturbed audience and a lecturer who, especially at second appearance, was plainly suffering from illness and exhaustion, the occasion proved as emotional as possible.

Toynbee himself very largely defeated the critical purpose of the lectures. He spoke extemporaneously and overlong. Although an economist’s learning shines through the text, his objections to *Progress and Poverty’s* analysis — which largely assert inconsistencies in the book’s wage theory — are complicated and difficult even as printed, and must have been nearly impossible to understand from the platform. On the other hand, the disturbed conscience of the speaker, and his leaning backward to be sympathetic with Henry George’s ends, and to do no more than oppose his

means were transparently clear. The first lecture, 'Mr. George in California,' was I think the first commentary since Dr. Taylor's to picture George adequately against his proper background, and to present *Progress and Poverty* as thought developed from *Our Land and Land Policy*. Toynbee concluded less with counterblast than with alternative reforms. Workers' insurance, city-subsidized housing, and so on, he said, would be sounder for England than nationalization of any kind.

The record of these very exciting meetings, and the comment made about them, combine to create an impression of remarkable tribute rather than resistance offered *Progress and Poverty* by Toynbee. In his peroration the speaker admonished the well-to-do members of the audience not to resist democracy. 'It is violent, I know; it is stormy at times, but it is only violent and stormy like a sea — it cleanses the shores of human life.' To the working men present he admitted the guilt of England's social conscience. 'We — the middle classes, I mean, not the very rich — we have neglected you; instead of justice we have offered you charity, and instead of sympathy we have offered you hard and unreal advice; but I think we are changing ... But we students, we would help you if we could. We are willing to give up something much dearer than fame or social position. We are willing to give up the life we care for, the life with books and with those we love ... If you will only keep to the love of your fellow-men and to great ideals, then we shall find our happiness in helping you, but if you do not then our reparation will be in vain.'

Shortly after the lectures, Philip Wicksteed wrote George in happy irony that the Toynbee lectures had been a huge success: they had cleared out the publisher's stock of *Progress and Poverty*. Toynbee's 'concessions,' according to this expert witness, were 'large and significant, and his defense of private property in land half-hearted and feeble.' Kegan Paul followed up with a form letter, widely distributed, which referred to the lectures and invited readers of *Progress and Poverty* to organize reading and discussion groups in every town, to diffuse Henry George's ideas.

Presently the news went out that Toynbee's exhaustion of the lecture day had not been due to the one exertion, but that that effort had been too much for a chronic condition. He died in March of 'brain fever.' The *Economist* of 17 March 1883 recalled the hollow cheeks and the nervous manner of the lecturer, and how he had 'actually blazed up in defense of

Michael Davitt and succeeded in producing the impression ... that he would be prepared with a panacea more didactic than the changes which form a part of the Radical programme.' Toynbee had not been the man for the occasion, the *Economist* believed.

Exhaustive work in the historical sociology of ideas would be required to trace, from the January of the criticisms in the major reviews, and of the Toynbee lectures, until the next December, when George returned to Britain, the assimilation of *Progress and Poverty* in the kingdom. Yet there is little reason to think that any amount of investigating the labor press and the provincial press, or of searching out records of organizations and meetings, would alter very much the observation of J. L. Garvin at this point in his biography of Joseph Chamberlain. By 1883, Mr. Garvin says, Henry George's ideas had 'awakened new imaginings and aspirations among Radical working men; they thought they saw a great light.'

Only a lengthening and spreading public interest in George could explain the many efforts made, month after month, to refute his writings. In *Macmillan's Magazine* for July, for example, Sir Henry Fawcett had an article, 'State Socialism and Land Nationalisation,' which he had designed as a chapter for a new edition of his textbook *Manual of Political Economy*, and which was presently issued as such. Taking a moderate position, Sir Henry inveighed against George for proposing to confiscate land values without compensating the landlords. This was a Liberal point of view. A second denunciation from the pen of Mr. Mallock appeared in the October *Quarterly Review*. In form this was a criticism of Hyndman's *England for All*, but in the main it amounted to a fresh attack — and a less flashy and a more considered piece of writing than the January review — on *Progress and Poverty*. This article Mr. Mallock soon combined with others to make a book, *Property and Progress*, the most elaborate answer to Henry George ever written. When the *Quarterly* article appeared, unsigned according to usage, an English friend of Henry George attributed it to the Marquis of Salisbury and was worried about the effect.

Even from journals in which more favorable things had been said, signs appeared, in late 1883, of rising resistance to George. In December, the month of his arrival, the *Contemporary Review*, which had published the Laveleye criticism, perhaps compensated a little by carrying an article by Samuel Smith, a Liberal M.P. Writing on 'The Nationalisation of Land,'

this earnest man asserted that the time had now come when ‘leading statesmen can no longer keep quiet on the subject,’ for the George and Wallace movement was really ‘as absurd as a South Sea Bubble.’ And the *Fortnightly*, in midcourse of a series of articles intended to blueprint a program for the Radicals, denied that the proponents of land nationalization had shown adequately that their surgery would produce gains to justify their operating on the economy. ‘The only difference would be that the increase in the value of the land would go to the new holders.’ The Radicals should work toward the principle of ‘the right and duty of the state to fix within certain broad limits the extent, and to control the conditions, of private ownership.’ Parliament should vest in local authorities ‘the power of expropriating for public purposes, on payment of fair compensation, and adequate securities being taken against the possibility of extortionate demands.’ So qualified the *Fortnightly*.

In sum: the Irish journey had won George his first sizable recognition in Great Britain, and the low-cost editions of *Progress and Poverty* had brought unprecedented attention to book and man. The major round of reviewing, from *The Times* in September 1882 through the *Contemporary Review*, the *Edinburgh Review*, and the *Quarterly Review* of January 1883, all indicated serious discussion. As discussion waxed, however, disagreement and astonishment, and anxiety if not panic, grew that *Progress and Poverty* had reached too far.

Before the end of 1883, moreover, a more definite reaction occurred than just a cooling off among Liberal journals. A backfire started. Printed materials were circulated and public meetings called, answers in kind to the propaganda efforts on the Henry George side. A Liberty and Property Defense League circulated gratis a fifteen-page pamphlet by Baron Bramwell, ‘The Nationalisation of Land: a review of Mr. Henry George’s “Progress and Poverty.”’ This was republished two years later. And another pamphlet, four times as long, by Francis D. Longe, ‘A Critical Examination of Mr. George’s “Progress and Poverty” and Mr. Mill’s Theory of Wages,’ was issued also. Money and effort were being spent against the American egalitarian.

So negative reasons, as well as the positive ones urged by his friends, made late 1883 an appropriate time for Henry George to speak for himself again in Great Britain.

He traveled this time with his older son. The winter voyage, and the hardship and expense of lecture traveling, suggested that Mrs. George and the girls stay home. The three and Richard went to Philadelphia, to live with Kate George Chapman, Henry George's sister married to an actor-turned-farmer, at their place in Haddonfield. Both father and mother George had died only weeks before; but their natural time had come, and Henry thought of brothers, sisters, and cousins as very happy together on Christmas Day. On shipboard he wrote directing that while he was away Jennie should have dancing lessons and piano too, while Dick, the indifferent student of the family, was to go to the same Mr. Lauderbach under whom he himself had tutored.

For the voyagers all went pleasantly. Harry who had been unwell suffered only one difficulty — to satisfy a huge appetite. He reached England in good shape for his duties as secretary, assistant, and companion to his father. George himself had a perfect rest. He enjoyed four volumes of Macaulay's England better than the novel he had brought for shipboard reading. Though his letters told of a traveler's mind reaching back home, he had also much to look forward to; and it is hardly too risky to guess that returning to England he relived the day he had had in Thomas Walker's home, and anticipated return there. And how could he have helped anticipating Oxford? Max Muller had followed his overtures of 1882 with letters, once begging George to write about economic solutions for India; and, though he mentioned Toynbee and other Oxonian objectors to *Progress and Poverty*, he renewed the invitation to visit the university. There was a similar letter from a faculty member at Nottingham College.

The English visit began at high speed and in good running order. Landing in Liverpool, the two Georges were met by Michael Davitt and Richard McGhee, a Glasgow member of Parliament and the future most prominent organizer of the Henry George movement in Scotland. The visitors went on at once to Birmingham, where Mr. Walker received them warmly, and then proceeded to London. Kegan Paul snapped at a chance to publish *Social Problems*.

After being in the metropolis only a few days, George was able to write his wife and Dr. Taylor that he had sold his British rights in the book

for £400, and that with the advance from his American publishers he had had \$3600 from the book before a copy had been sold — ‘considerable difference from P if P!’ He had been paid £50 royalties from earlier British publications too. It was happiness to send \$200 home at once, half for Annie to draw on and half for himself, and to tell her to regard \$100 as her ‘own personal private money to use as you may choose.’ He could say now that he would pay all his debts, whether in California or New York, and have a surplus too. Even more thrilling to add, a kind of New Year’s message: ‘Here I am in London and at last begin to realize that I am a very important man.’

At the request of a working men’s association, Henry George went out of London on his first Sunday to return on an afternoon train as if just arriving in the city. The stunt brought out a crowd. Two or three thousand men turned up; a committee of the Land Reform Union gave the official welcome; a fife and drum corps played; and policemen directed the crowd. Though not able to conceal embarrassment about the fake arrival, George warmed to the reception after he had made his explanations. From the top of a cab he saluted the working men as members of the Republic of Man destined to federate the world. His phrases may or may not represent a response to Hyndman’s proposal.

Lecturing started under a heavy schedule. Beginning in London, a cold-weather trip loomed ahead, all the way to Wick and Skye and back, not an easy undertaking. But the pressure at the outset was of an ideological kind. George’s first few days of contact with the Land Reform Union indicated that the group harbored confusions which if allowed to continue would obscure the message he intended to deliver. On the left (as it seems fair to describe the divisions of sentiment), the union, like the Land Nationalisation Society, contained an element inclined to say that interest charges exploit labor in the same way as rent taking. This avenue would lead the Land Reform Union to socialism, George believed. Simultaneously on the right, the Land Reform Union included another element which counseled him to withhold the argument of *Progress and Poverty* that proposed abolishing the private-property values of land without compensation to the landlords.

Objection to his anti-compensationist argument was of course familiar to George at home, in California and elsewhere, and the question had come

up in a critical way when he and Davitt closed ranks in 1882. But during this second visit, anti-compensationism emerged as a routine characteristic of resistance in Britain, not among his enemies exclusively, but often among his friends. A decade earlier, finding his bearings and criticizing Mill, George had acknowledged that in the nation where since Henry VIII landholding had been intimately blended with other property holding, the case against property in land would be harder to present than in California. Now confronted with the actual British situation, George needed such a leverage of ideas as he had in America — the still-remembered moral logic of anti-slavery.

To adjust effectively the internal divisions of the Land Reform Union required, if not new theory, at least fresh tactical thinking and a pronouncement from Henry George. This need made the first lecture a doubly important event. Contrary to recent habits of preparation, George gave up the couch and took to the writing desk, as in the days of first platform appearances in California. He dictated and revised drafts for two days and a night; and when the hour came he scrambled into evening clothes and was rushed by a committee to St. James Hall, which was jam-packed with an audience of four thousand.

John Ruskin had been scheduled to introduce the speaker. This arrangement followed shortly on a report to George that the famous essayist and art professor had called *Progress and Poverty* ‘an admirable book’ — which may have been George’s first knowledge of the existence of a somewhat kindred spirit. But illness prevented Ruskin’s coming, and the chair was occupied by Henry Labouchere, who was the wittiest Radical in Parliament and one of London’s most successful journalists. Davitt, Stewart Headlam, Frederic Harrison, Philip Wicksteed, and others sat on the platform. At the moment Labouchere had an article forthcoming in the *Fortnightly* which said that all Radicals wanted land reform, and that some went all the way with George, though the wiser ones were moderate. Making the introduction, he said that four Georges had muddled the affairs of Great Britain, but that now an uncrowned fifth came with sympathy for the poor.

Taking the rostrum the speaker abandoned his manuscript and whispered to Thomas Walker to pull his coattails if he talked too long. With American directness Henry George urged the moral logic of equal

opportunity; and as in the Land Nationalisation Society speech he illustrated landlordism from the city about him. Quite as dogmatically as in San Francisco he denied moral justice to any owner's taking for private use the rent created by urban growth. The helpless-widow argument he answered by Queen Victoria's pension: she and every other widow deserved a pension by right, but widows deserve no rents — not even queens, the American asserted. When a questioner demanded to know who brought the slum dwellers into the world, George answered that it was God Almighty, 'and whom God Almighty brings into the world who shall Man put out?' Before the meeting closed Michael Davitt gave a short benedictory address.

The London *Standard* went into high irony about George's speech; and a *Times* editorial voiced alarm that the popular American was appealing to the 'shiftless' — people who should blame their own deficiencies for their poverty. But in the speaker's estimate the evening turned out a grand success, and the unfriendly reactions really gave the measure of his influence. 'I satisfied them,' he wrote Annie about the huge audience, 'I certainly have attained fame at last.' Years later Henry George, Jr., remembered being in the hotel room the next morning when his father came in, not noticing anyone present. Turning over *The Times* and other newspapers, Henry George's face lighted up. 'At last,' he said aloud, 'at last I am famous.'

After the opening lecture, he swung west to Plymouth and Cardiff and Bristol first, before the big trip through the Midlands and the length of Scotland. A packed hall pleased George in the Pilgrims' port city, and father and son took time to see the sights. There and at Cardiff, he believed that he had '*telling* successes,' and presently, following a phrase he chanced in a lecture, began to visualize himself as a 'missionary' overseas. He hit a regular stride as platform performer. He used no notes; he concentrated beforehand and relied on inspiration at the rostrum to find the best phrasing for each audience, of the central ideas which he repeated time after time.

There could be no doubt of instant excitement in the smaller cities. Even before reaching Birmingham George was writing Annie about how wonderfully he was being received. He sent money again, and promised more, and let his mind race to the pleasantest conclusions: at home time free for writing, a summer's trip to California for the family, an early return to Britain. In his own words to his wife: 'I can't begin to send you the

papers in which I am discussed, attacked, and commented on — for I would have to send all the English, Scotch, and Irish papers. I am getting advertised to my heart's content and I shall have crowds wherever I go ... I could be a social lion if I would permit it. But I won't fool with that sort of thing.' Once again he thought of launching a paper of his own — he meant in New York this time — but not before election, 'so as to arouse no political antagonisms.'

As he crossed the country, lines of comment followed him. The new Social Democratic paper *Justice* applauded warmly and consistently; and when *Social Problems* was published that paper carried an entirely approving review. According to Dr. Lawrence, this trip marked the 'height of socialist enthusiasm for his cause.' The other side of the coin was represented by an event of harsh rebuke for academic people fond of *Progress and Poverty*. Before January was out, Lord Fortescue exposed in *The Times* the fact that Henry George's book was being used in the City of London College as a textbook, with the result that the book was withdrawn from use.

About the time the lecturer reached the Midlands, the British resistance to confiscationism caught up with him, in the reaction of his audiences. In Birmingham, though he had the satisfaction of hearing Miss Helen Taylor give a twist of irony to the compensationist side, he himself was heckled rather sharply. And in Liverpool his own address had been preceded by one from Samuel Smith, the M.P. who had recently made a point of compensationism in his article against George in the *Contemporary*. On arrival Henry George discovered that this had had a telling effect. The Reform Club which had sponsored his coming now withdrew sponsorship; and only one man, the M.P. who had agreed to preside, would accompany him to the stage.

Henry George the public speaker of 1877 or 1878, and perhaps of any time earlier than this visit, might well have failed. He tells the story well. 'The consciousness of opposition which always arouses me,' he wrote to Mr. Walker, 'gave me the stimulus I needed to overcome physical weakness, for I was in bad trim from loss of sleep, and I carried the audience with me, step by step, till you never saw a more enthusiastic crowd.' At the end he used a platform device which he had tried before and was beginning to make habitual. He called for a vote on compensation, and

the whole audience except three went with him. ‘Of the effects at the time there could be no doubt, and I hear of the most gratifying effects upon those who did not go.’

But audiences are more suggestible than individuals of mind and experience, and George learned immediately that his unwillingness to compensate landlords was cutting off sympathies which were both useful and dear to him. Immediately after the Birmingham address — at the same time *Punch* went after him — Max Muller wrote, mentioning that his students had hissed at the name of George. ‘There is in every branch of human knowledge a kind of religion,’ advised this scholar as to one who demanded too much too soon, ‘something which we believe, desire, [strive (?)] for, but still we know to be unattainable in this short life ... To do evil that good may come is the excuse of Jesuits not honest men.’

Perhaps George was affected by the learned man. At any rate he had sympathy and humor to draw upon when his Birmingham host, Thomas Walker, added new and affectionate protest to the accumulation. ‘The thing for you to do,’ replied the author of *Progress and Poverty*, ‘is to pose as a compensationist and me as a confiscationist, just as Snap and Go join different churches. With you and Miss Taylor representing the Conservative Wing the landlords may well ask to be preserved from their friends.’

Flexibility was George’s virtue under this pressure, and he held up well. He did not mind too much being told, as he worked his way north, that John Bright and Frederic Harrison had spoken against him. They were not the kind he much hoped to affect. But he was grateful to learn that Joseph Chamberlain had recently announced for land-value taxation in the cities, in order to have capital for public investment in housing for working men.

Chamberlain he still regarded as Britain’s coming leader. And, as he moved through the industrial heart of the island, he conceived not without good cause that he himself was at the point of changing deeply the social conscience and mind of the greatest industrial nation of the world.

-4-

Crossing into Scotland as the month of February arrived, George invaded an area of the British economy where both feudal-style landholding and aggravated conditions of industrial-working-class poverty were present;

and, along with both, Presbyterianism's stern legacy of faith, and obligation.

The first part of the trip, which bypassed the major cities, revealed much. The chairman at one of George's meetings was a minister, named Macrae, who told of having lost his kirk by reason of a landlord's power. At the conclusion of an address in Skye, a member of the audience arose to ask what the visitor proposed to do with the landlords. George had no knowledge of the questioner as landlord, absolutely no notion of his fame for having deprived his tenants of oystering in certain waters near by. The reply, which brought the house down, was pure chance: George proposed to do what one does with an oyster — open it, take out the fish, and throw away the shell. The trip through the Highlands wore him down, the hard-working lecturer wrote home; he earned little and slept little but learned much. 'But we are waking the animal,' he assured Walker, 'there is no use talking, my audiences don't want any compensation. They nearly mobbed the provost in Wick for insinuating.

The outlying places revealed characteristic signs of social discontent, but it was the return trip, the last ten days of February and the early days of March when George was in Glasgow and Edinburgh and the smaller cities of the industrial Lowlands, which utterly confirmed in his own mind the accuracy of his two-year-old prophecy, that Scotland was readier to receive his ideas than either Ireland or England. The actual economic situation there still awaits a scholarly investigator, but there is little reason to think either that James Joynes and other associates of Henry George were wrong in saying that the condition of the crofter was particularly bad, or that statistics would fail to support the proposition that rents were huge in both country and city, and were largely monopolized among the Scottish gentry. Glasgow and the whole Clydeside area suffered especially the ravages of industrialism; an early growth of trade unionism had recently been almost eliminated by hard times and bankruptcies. Professor Clarence Gohdes's observation, that the Scots have habitually taken more quickly than Englishmen to American literature and American radical ideas — a characteristic traceable as far back as their interest in Jonathan Edwards — is suggestive.

George's schedule called for an initial appearance in the region in Glasgow, then he was to go to Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Paisley. His first

address he ventured to call 'Scotland and Scotsmen.' Reminiscent of his speech to the San Francisco Y.M.H.A., he intended to sting into new thought the bearers of a moral tradition. Not confining himself to the conditions of economic hardship he had seen, he attacked also the extravagances of the established church. He asked Presbyterians to be missionaries at home rather than to the heathen — it was a characteristically American speech.

The challenge evoked a unique response. Five hundred persons remained in the hall to form a society to propagate Henry George's ideas; and a week later, 25 February, George returned to Glasgow for the meeting which organized with enthusiasm the Scottish Land Restoration League. Mr. McGhee suggested the name; 1940 signatures were enrolled in the first membership list; and George drew up a manifesto to the people. The organization gave him a farewell dinner on March first.

A chain of development had been started. The Scottish Land Restoration League spread rapidly to the cities where George had just lectured — to Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Inverness — and into Dundee and Greenock and other towns as well. About six weeks later the English Land Restoration League was set up in imitation. This absorbed the year-old Land Reform Union; and in due time it led, through stages of organizational turnover, to the English League for the Taxation of Land Values, and to today's International League for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade.

In the descending lineage of Henry George ideas, two developments are indicated. First, the Land Restoration League marks some definition, in action, of Henry George's preference for destroying private property in land by means other than land nationalization and by a method clearly different from socialism. But for 1884 this was a clarification rather than a separation, and there appeared as yet no serious conflict of these related ideas. Second, the Land Restoration League indicates that the three impulses — land-value taxation, land nationalization, and socialism — at that time definitely continued to march abreast, as they were going to do until 1887.

Indeed two of the most memorable events of the Scottish Land League's first decade are that it launched the pilot career of Keir Hardie in labor politics and supported him in making his 1892 candidacy the first to put a socialist in Parliament. That is to say, Henry George's British mission

signifies an American impulse behind the Scottish labor movement, which became historic in making the modern Labour party, and in forging the character of twentieth- century Britain.

-5-

There were two or three ordinary public meetings before George reached London again, at Leeds and Hull, but nothing counted in George's anticipation like the second week end in March, when he was scheduled for a Friday lecture before a university audience at Oxford and a Monday one at Cambridge. For the first event Max Muller had made detailed arrangements; for the second, George had been invited by a group of students.

Though in their recent correspondence Professor Muller had mentioned, in writing of opinion at Oxford, that his colleague, Bonamy Price, an economist, had been very critical of *Progress and Poverty*, he had said also that this kind of expert opinion did not change his own mind. And the professor could hardly have been more generous in honoring his American guest. He insisted that father and son would find his guest rooms more pleasant than a hotel; he would have as additional house guest, Mr. George E. Buckle, the new editor of *The Times* (and future biographer of Disraeli); he would provide an opportunity for the visiting Americans to see Oxford; he would have a group for dinner before the lecture, at which he expected a large attendance.

Perhaps George would have been more comfortable had his host tried less hard. Tired for weeks beforehand, he could not sleep the night before the lecture. Thanks to this ordeal we have, from a letter to Annie, an extra insight into the strains and tensions of the situation. Here we are at Max Muller's: a beautiful place, splendid man, nice family, everything charming only I am suffering from my old enemy sleeplessness. I hardly got any sleep last night; have been like a drowned rat all today and now tonight it is as bad as ever until in desperation I have got up and started to write ... I am to lecture before a magnificent audience of University people tomorrow night. The only thing I fear is my condition. Well, good night.'

In the Clarendon assembly hall the next evening George made no effort to present new learning or new criticism, such as had given body to his one earlier university lecture at Berkeley seven years before. He tried a

simple inspirational address, in moral challenge not different from the ‘Scotland and Scotsmen’ lecture in Glasgow. He told the students that it cost £250 a year to attend Oxford; he contrasted the situation of the poor; he proposed that educated men work through land reform for England’s social betterment. Possibly no choice of subject and no tone of presentation could have been right to engage this particular audience. Certainly he chose with little understanding, and he made a tactical blunder when, cutting his remarks short at twenty minutes or so, he asked for questions from the floor. To Oxford men this meant debate and a chance for heckling.

First Alfred Marshall, who had come to Balliol College that year, and then an undergraduate son-in-law of Max Muller each in his own way made the speaker miserable. Marshall’s serious questions, and those of others, attacked the depression theory of *Progress and Poverty*. For whatever reasons of exhaustion, or not unlikely because he was annoyed by patronizing phrases the don chose to direct toward him, George answered the questions all too captiously. The undergraduates roared and heckled and moaned; and the worst occurred when the son-in-law called George’s remedy a ‘nostrum’ and the visitor lectured the young man on his manners.³² The affair ended with Henry George telling the students that it was ‘the most disorderly meeting he had ever addressed,’ and with the undergraduates giving groans for ‘land robbery.’

Though Professor Muller apologized, and a tutor wrote at once how sorry he was ‘for the personal rude treatment you had to endure by being baited by a mass of howling simpletons,’ George must have felt pretty grim about going next to Cambridge. His undergraduate hosts had been honest to warn him that everyone was ‘so disgustingly cautious’ that they had trouble to get permission — from ‘an autocrat most supreme’ — to have the meeting. On the other hand, they had persuaded the Reverend Mr. Caldecott, ‘an economist of the new school’ who was understood to go a great way with *Progress and Poverty*, to take the chair. Mr. Keynes, the father of the future economist, and others would sit on the platform, and the inviting committee believed that ‘the great majority among the undergraduates and younger and more progressive dons are in favor of land nationalisation.’

We are lucky to be able to see the visit through the bright eyes of Mary Gladstone, the prime minister’s daughter. She had been well prepared for

the week end. She had read *Progress and Poverty* the previous summer and had discussed it in the family. The reputation she had heard of it, as ‘the most upsetting, revolutionary book of the age,’ had not put her off. While reading she had agreed with it ‘at present,’ and when she finished she confessed to her diary ‘feelings of deep admiration — felt desperately impressed, and he is a Christian.’

The young woman met Henry George at a Trinity College tea. At the more liberal university he had regained his composure. Professor James Stuart was in charge, a friendly host who knew *Progress and Poverty* well enough to differentiate between the morality of the book, with which he agreed, and the economics of it, with which he frequently disagreed. At this Sunday afternoon social event he was taking the critical line, making an effort to ‘convert’ Henry George, according to our witness. ‘But, alas, [George] far more nearly converted us. He deeply impressed us with his earnestness, conviction and singleness and height of aim. I don’t think we made the faintest impression on him and he was very quick and clear in argument. Helen and Mr. Sedley Taylor and Mr. Butler and the son of George sat mum throughout. I made 2 or 3 desperate ventures and got red as my gown, but felt crushed. Perhaps Prof. Stuart hardly stood quite to his guns. Walked to chapel with the man and he told me of his horrid Oxford meeting.’ Later Miss Gladstone enjoyed the ‘long and earnest’ dinner discussion of George, at Professor Stuart’s. Writing home that night, George mentioned ‘chatter’ with the prime minister’s daughter.

At the Monday evening lecture Miss Gladstone sat with her host and with Arthur Lyttelton, her father’s secretary. All three, she says, ‘were struck ... At first it seemed very doubtful whether he would be heard, and he was not well or up to the mark. Still on the whole, considering that the audience disagreed with him and were undergraduates, his fate was better than was expected, and certainly he has a good deal of the genius of oratory about him, and sometimes the divine spark — he is a man possessed and he often carried one away. Questions were asked him of all kinds at the end. He did not flinch and had a wonderful way of leaping to his feet and answering with great spirit and manliness.’

The immediate observation of another woman, the sister of William Clarke of Fabian history, confirms Miss Gladstone and makes additions. ‘Confronting what promised to be a very hostile audience he stood like a

lion at bay,' this lady felt, 'and fairly cowed his opponents. Evidently he carried a great part of his audience with him, for I think Cambridge has been undergoing a great awakening lately, with regard to the working section of society.' Already societies for the discussion of social questions were rising in the university.

Poor George went on to London played out. But after seeing a doctor and getting a bromide of potassium to break the chronic sleeplessness, he rushed back to Glasgow for an extra meeting or two. At this point of moving ahead with the Land Restoration League, he received a letter from Davitt which put a kind of Irish blessing on concentrating for the present in Scotland. 'We Irish people are too prone to man worship to lead a movement of ideas,' he said, and predicted that the new Land Restoration League would 'become a big movement, and in my opinion the Land Reform Union people should have thrown their lot with it and have one great movement for Great Britain.' Davitt's approval of what was actually happening was all that George could want, for the present, from the Irish side.

He had planned to have a free month for a trip to the Continent before going home, but under pressure the time melted away. Harry went to France alone. George's last month, after the flying return to Glasgow at mid-March, went into more lectures at Hull and Birmingham, with about a fortnight at the end in London. He needed to see people and conclude business, and there was much to do.

The last week in London was like no other in his life up until then. He went to Parliament one day and found himself 'treated with distinguished consideration,' as he told Annie. Mr. Walter Wren had him to dinner again at the Liberal Club. He called on Philip Wicksteed, and another day on Hyndman, and on still another day lunched with General Booth of the Salvation Army, whom he enjoyed more than he expected. We have no date, but this seems to have been the time when he was introduced to Cardinal Manning. It was an emotional event. 'I loved the people, and that love brought me to Christ as their best friend and teacher,' George is remembered as saying. And the churchman reformer had replied, 'I loved Christ, and so learned to love the people for whom he died.'

At top level of London Society, Lady Stepney, who had been Mary Gladstone's companion in reading *Progress and Poverty*, had George to tea.

She gathered again the Cambridge group, Miss Gladstone, Professor Stuart, Arthur Lyttelton, and this time Herbert Gladstone also. Again Miss Gladstone, who by her own story had very recently tackled her father 'on female suffrage and nationalisation of land,' and had talked Henry George with Alfred Milner, gives a lively account of British behavior vis-a-vis the American. 'Herbert and Prof. Stuart chief questioners and examiners, Alfred L listening and putting in much sympathizing with Mr. George. A great success for they much liked and softened towards the good little man, and as to Maggie [the hostess] she was converted.' By next day the guest of honor had forgotten Lady Stepney's name, but was not so wrong, it seems, in writing Annie that the younger Gladstone group was 'at least three-quarters with me.'

In a few days before 6 April, George made the concluding speeches of the visit. At a large meeting in Shoreditch Hall and at a hotel meeting of London Scots, he urged that Scotland was now as ready for leadership in reform as ever in the past; and at a farewell banquet by the Land Restoration League, in Piccadilly, he heard Stewart Headlam praise him for having applied religion and the moral sense to public affairs.

Acting on an invitation arranged by Michael Davitt, he went off to Dublin for his one appearance in Ireland. On 13 April he sailed from Queenstown for home.

-6-

Without affecting the British story we may withhold until a later chapter, as we did George's American months between the Irish trip and the trip just accounted for, the narrative of home events from April until November 1884. George's third British visit, made in the service of the Land Restoration League and spent all, except for a few days, wholly in Scotland, makes a two-month codicil to the history of the second visit rather than a separate story. Thereafter a break does occur, and the later visits in Britain — of 1888, 1889, and 1891, two of them very brief and incidental — belong to a different period of George's career and influence.

At the moment of departure, and during the months of his absence from Britain, he was treated to a cross fire of criticism such as he had never before received on either side of the water. Whereas the biggest guns of British criticism had blasted at him, or rather at *Progress and Poverty*,

during the year 1883 while George was in the United States, now the firing was more closely aimed and quite as difficult to take. Partly this occurred in the reviews of *Social Problems*, and partly the fusillades were simply the old effort to thrust his ideas out of Britain. The *Saturday Review* in a series of editorials piled up peculiarly strong invective; the article against land nationalization by Samuel Smith of Liverpool — who had refused George's challenge to a public debate — was reprinted from the *Contemporary Review* and distributed; Mr. Mallock's writings in the *Quarterly Review* and *National Review* were gathered into the book of counterblast, *Property and Progress*, as already mentioned. In 1885 appeared Robert Scott Moffat's shorter but stronger book-size criticism.

Meanwhile the friendly publishing house, Reeves, in some sense replied by bringing out a hundred-page biography, the first ever written of Henry George. Dedicated 'In Remembrance of the Campaign of 1884,' and saluting him as a 'Columbus in Social Science,' the book did a fair job of telling George's personal history. It made bitter point of how London halls had been closed to him during the latter part of the 1884 visit; and it classified him as Christian socialist and gradual land nationalizer.

Henry George made a general policy of refusing to reply to criticisms. But the April 1884 issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, which thus far had paid no attention to his work, reached him on the eve of sailing for America, and it contained a unique challenge. The lead article on 'The Prophet of San Francisco' was as packed with irony as its title; and the author, the Duke of Argyll, was one of the greatest of the great landholders of Scotland. In San Francisco days George had known of the duke as social theorist and had admired his *Reign of Law*; and by 1884 he must have known of him also as an intimate of Gladstone, a holder of the highest offices, and as the mighty Whig who had resigned from the Liberal cabinet in 1881 when the advanced Irish land law went through. Argyll had made himself spokesman for his class at that time, saying that the act which would reduce Irish landlords threatened landholding in both kingdoms.

George's followers of the Scottish Land Restoration League begged him to reply to the article. They were pretty practical advisers: the duke was titular chief of the clan of Campbell; his peerage stood close to royalty; he offered a perfect symbol of what George attacked — a debate with him would carry the question of the land into every household in Scotland.

George agreed. He worked at his reply late the night before he sailed, and then decided to ‘take it to New York and polish it like a steel shot.’ Under the title ‘The “Reduction of Iniquity”’ one envisages George’s pride as author quite as much as one recognizes his sense of the timing and tactics of publicity. The reply was published in the July issue of the *Nineteenth Century*.

Yet, though the opposed articles of noblemen and visitor to Scotland made the most telling exchange of George’s lifetime of controversy, it would not be correct to report them as a debate. Using the vehicle of irony, Argyll discovered contradictions in George’s two books: Malthus rejected, yet much argument based on a presumption of surplus population; the corruption of democracy asserted, yet a policy of vesting huge properties in a people’s government. Inveighing against the American’s wish to confiscate property rights in land as truly communistic, the duke — in his final ‘reduction to iniquity’ — condemned all George wrote as contrary to moral sense. Argyll asserted throughout the superiority of private over public ownership; and he envisaged, as he illustrated from his own estates, the beneficial necessity of large owners making improvements, and of unpropertied workers cultivating the soil — the familiar hierarchical order of society approved. If not a national it was a class attitude which Argyll brilliantly, condescendingly, and yet attractively displayed.

George equaled his opponent’s brilliance. To contradict the peer’s assertion of what landlords do to improve soil and village, capital and community, George asserted his personal observations of poverty in Skye, the terror of landlords across Scotland, and the degradation of workers — all of them ultimate payers of rents — in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The reformer had his own vein of irony which might be considered of the Jacksonian variety. Stating the presumption of equality, he asked his Scottish adversary as mental exercise to ‘put the bodies of a duke and a peasant on a dissecting- table, and bring, if you can, the surgeon who by laying bare the brain or examining the viscera, can tell which is duke and which is peasant.’

George’s friends at least thought that he had won handsomely the exchange of fire. They reprinted the two articles together, ‘Property in Land’ or ‘The Peer and the Prophet,’ in a half a dozen or so editions in London, New York, and Copenhagen; and they happily adopted ‘The

Prophet of San Francisco' as a favorite designation of their own. For years we shall find the author discovering people, William Lloyd Garrison II among them, who were first attracted to Henry George when they happened to read the *Nineteenth Century* article.

In the United States during October, two months after the article appeared, the author received two summonses from Britain, and he accepted both. When Michael Davitt asked, George cabled an article for the first issue of the London *Democrat*, a half-penny paper the Irish leader was starting with Miss Taylor and Saunders and Durant. Simultaneously he accepted the invitation of the Land Restoration League for a second series of public appearances in Scotland.

Another winter trip confronted him. George sailed in November, again taking Harry and leaving the ladies of the family behind, with arrangements too hastily made and too incomplete to be very satisfactory. When he went aboard the *Germanic* details of his speaking schedule, payment, and even the question whether or not he would go first to Glasgow or run down to London were all unsettled. But he departed in confidence. He had written no lectures, he wrote Annie, but was ready to improvise according to the occasion. On the voyage he enjoyed especially the electric light over his berth, apparently his first experience of the new invention.

From Liverpool he did go first to London. He discovered to his anxiety that his first address would be in St. James Hall, the scene of his initial triumph the year before. He wanted no small audience now, no anti climax, and he worried that the management had not done enough about publicity. But the worst that occurred was a thin attendance in the expensive seats. Miss Taylor spoke especially well, he thought, and Davitt and the president of the Scottish Land Restoration League the same; and he believed that his own address set off the campaign with enthusiasm. Presently he was able to send home \$220, but he warned Annie to go slow in paying for new furniture. 'How would you like to have me take charge of a first-class paper in Glasgow or London?' he asked his wife. That question was up again, momentarily.

The trip through Scotland, involving nearly thirty stops, only two of them in Edinburgh and only three in Glasgow, lacked the exhilaration of the previous year's schedule. The pace was hard again. Working north through the smaller cities, he had to speak from seventy-five minutes to two hours

and a half each night; and he was annoyed by the thought that his management had done a slovenly job of publicizing and arranging. He had to accept as inevitable the fact that his kind of lecture might fill the cheap seats, but the expensive ones almost never. He noticed and resented that the newspapers and news agencies pretty well disregarded him — boycotted him, rather — during this trip.

On the brighter side he had the satisfaction of understanding his audiences better and of improving his acquaintanceship with the conditions of the country. He remembered a lesson learned in embarrassment the year before, that political talks were not acceptable on Sundays. This time he made a custom of his lecture on 'Moses' for Sunday-evening and other appropriate occasions — and he was now ready to speak on 'The Eighth Commandment' and two or three other Biblical topics in addition. In Glasgow he was pleased to have 'intelligent working class' people in his audience, and in the capital city, an 'aristocratic element.' There was a very special satisfaction in lecturing in Argyll's domain. He had a glimpse of agrarian rioting in the west country; and he did some pleasant sight-seeing in Abbotsford and Melrose in the south.

Back in London by the tenth of January, George turned painfully anxious and homesick. He yearned for old days in California. He felt pride in his achievement, yet doubted that it was substantial; and he worried about his future as breadwinner. 'I have at last attained what I have always believed was in my power. This trip has aided in my development and I think that I am now a *first-class* speaker,' he wrote his wife. 'But I don't believe that the time has come when I can utilize this on the lecture platform. The people who make the paying audiences want to be amused. I feel as though I cannot count on lecturing.' He was worried not for the propaganda success of the trip but for the security of his family.

During the week before 24 January, his last abroad, George spoke at important places: London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Belfast. 'I expect that in spite of the boycott you'll hear something of this by telegram,' he wrote home in renewed excitement.

In respect of social drama the last appearance in London outdid all others. The lord mayor refused the Guildhall, but a mass meeting was arranged for a Saturday afternoon, in front of the Royal Exchange. According to estimate 7000 workmen, perhaps most of them unemployed,

turned out. Stewart Headlam and two other clergymen spoke; so did William Saunders and three representatives of labor — a tailor, a shoemaker, and a joiner. George himself brought a roar from the crowd when he pointed to the inscription carved in the granite of the Exchange, ‘The Earth is the Lord’s.’ ‘Aye, the landlords’,’ Henry George went on.

That same afternoon, in what seems to have been staging for effect and symbol, socialists of the Hyndman-Morris inclination held a meeting of their own near by. They so distributed their literature, and so arranged their speakers as not to compete with George, but to increase the size of the day’s demonstration. Thus George’s departure from the London scene exhibited his idea and the Marxist idea carrying on together, the one stimulating the other. The socialist paper, *Justice*, wished the visitor Godspeed.

In Belfast, the capital of Protestant Ulster, perhaps 4000 crowded the hall to hear George address the new Irish Land Restoration League. The affair proved somewhat disgraceful, however, with a chair-throwing episode at the end.

But the important thing — in Belfast, London, Glasgow, and the other cities the same — was mass participation. With new ideas of social justice, new practices of social politics, too, were being born in the British Isles. Henry George’s role was shifting to that of midwife to social democracy.

-7-

One more event, which occupied one of his very last hours in London, exhibits in intellectual light George’s still continuing sense of parallelism between himself and his leading Marxist contemporary. On invitation from the *Nineteenth Century*, George and Henry Hyndman met to do a dialogue on ‘Socialism and Rent Appropriation,’ for publication in that magazine. They had no time to do more than dictate to a stenographer.

Of course they diverged somewhat. Hyndman charged George with relying too much on land nationalization, and asserted in socialist style that truly the landlord plays the humble role of sleeping partner, in contrast to the aggressiveness of capitalists. Hyndman denied the validity of the idea of ‘natural rights.’ Henry George countered according to his opposite ideas. And yet he accepted still the identification of land nationalization with his own cause; and he agreed — as he had said in the San Francisco newspapers, and less clearly in *Progress and Poverty* but very clearly in

Social Problems — that certain industries ought to be socialized. Thus the dialogue ended in a sizable and practical concurrence between two men who knew their moral ideas to be far apart. George credited the socialists with helping to break down complacency about poverty, much as Marx and Hyndman from their side credited him.

Yet there is considerable paradox that the author of *Progress and Poverty* should have maintained a common front with the Social Democratic Federation people, through his first three visits to England, while he failed to make substantial, if any, connection with other socialists whose deeper ideas were much more like his own. By the time of his second visit the Fabian Society had begun to gather — Shaw and Olivier among them. Probably George knew of their group. The evidence is slight and seems to represent a tenuous connection.

But of his enormous influence among them there can be no doubt. To add to Bernard Shaw's impression, we have the authoritative testimony, first, of Sidney Webb. That scholarly leader's little book of 1890, *Socialism in England*, credits the 'optimistic and confident tone' of George's writing, and 'the irresistible force of its popularization of Ricardo's law of Rent' with having 'sounded the dominant "note"' of Fabianism. Webb credits George with having reached also Britain's none too easily indoctrinated trade unionists. 'Instead of the Chartist cry of "Back to the Land," still adhered to by rural laborers and belated politicians,' said Sidney and Beatrice Webb in 1894, 'the town artisan is thinking of his claim to the unearned increment of urban land values, which he now watches falling into the coffers of great landlords.'

As Webb estimated the influence of George's Ricardianism, Edward R. Pease, the member of the Fabian Society who became its historian, asserted the power that George's political philosophy gave to reform in England. It was the American's gift to British social thought, testifies Mr. Pease, to insist that a 'tremendous revolution was to be accomplished by a political method, applicable by a majority of the voters, and capable of being drafted as an Act of Parliament by any competent lawyer. To George belongs the extraordinary merit of recognizing the right way of social salvation ... From Henry George I think it may be taken that the early Fabians learned to associate the new gospel with the old political methods.'

In other words: *Progress and Poverty's* moral sequence and its economic syllogism, both, took hold in non-Marxian circles favorable to labor.

The most immediate practical results occurred, as was natural in the structure of British politics, not as a result of trade-union or Fabian efforts but through the pro-labor 'Lib Lab' movement among the Radicals of the Liberal party. Shortly after George's third visit a parliamentary commission on housing for the working classes reported the economic and public-health conditions of the industrial cities. It was a two-party commission. Sir Charles Dilke, Joseph Chamberlain's associate in Radical leadership, was chairman; from the Conservatives, Salisbury was a member, and two or three others voted with him in dissent from the commission's more radical recommendations. Cardinal Manning was the one member who almost surely had had personal and sympathetic contact with Henry George. But the memorandum of Mr. Jesse Collings — an associate of Chamberlain, and future writer in favor of 'three acres and a cow' — contains a strong plea which indicates more plainly than anything else in the report that George's ideas had been assimilated by parliamentary Radicals.

In the main report itself the crucial evidence of Georgism was the recommendation, urged by Mr. Collings and supported by a majority, that vacant city funds be taxed at a rate of say 4 per cent on capital value, and that the proceeds be used as capital to be invested in public housing. This proposal to shift taxes from the income of land to the capital value of land, known as the American system, would have been an innovation in Britain; and to propose a tax rate at a level at all near the interest rate on capital was of course to enter entirely within the premises and expectations of land-value taxation.

For 1885 the report signifies that Henry George's ideas had reached farther into the policy making of Parliament than they ever had into the policy of the legislature of California. And a few years later, when high urban-land taxes were actually imposed to finance slum improvement in London (though rating-levels were not put up to what Henry George asked), Herbert Spencer cried that the American radical had quietly conquered Parliament.

Twelve years after George's third British visit, in the year of his death but written in no expectation of that event, J. A. Hobson, the distinguished

liberal economist and journalist, never a socialist, wrote for the *Fortnightly Review* an appraisal of 'The Influence of Henry George in England.' The article's sweep of course includes the later visits which identified George with British Radicalism, opposed him to Hyndman socialism, and built some bridges of light traffic with the Fabians. But nearly everything that Hobson said could have been said of the influence of the author of *Progress and Poverty* and *Social Problems* without regard for his later books, and of the public speaker of 1882, 1884, and 1885. After more than half a century Hobson's authority is still good, and his findings command endorsement.

'The real importance of Henry George,' wrote Hobson, 'is derived from the fact that he was able to drive an abstract notion, that of economic rent, into the minds of "practical" men, and generate therefrom a social movement ... Keenly intelligent, generous and sympathetic, his nature contained that obstinacy which borders on fascination, and which is rightly recognized as essential to the missionary ...

'Although the thinking members of the working classes had never thoroughly accepted [the] *laissez faire* theory of the doctrinaire radical and the political free trader, they had unconsciously absorbed some of its complacency and its disbelief in the need for governmental action. Henry George shook this complacency, and, what is more, he gave definiteness to the feeling of discontent by assigning an easily intelligible economic cause ... years of gradually deepening depression brought rural land questions more and more to the front and that divorcement of the people from the soil, which formed the kernel of the social problem according to George, assumed increasing prominence ... Moreover, George's ability enabled him to fully utilise that advantage which land grievances possess over most other economic issues, their susceptibility to powerful concrete local illustration ...

'But George's true influence is not rightly measured by the small following of theorists who impute to landlords their supreme power of monopoly. Large numbers who would not press this extreme contention are disciples of Henry George because they regard unqualified private ownership of land to be the most obviously unjust and burdensome feature in our present social economy. The spirit of humanitarian and religious appeal which suffuses *Progress and Poverty* wrought powerfully upon a large section of what I may call typical English moralists. In my lectures

upon Political Economy about the country, I have found in almost every centre a certain little knot of men of the lower-middle or upper-working class, men of grit and character, largely self-educated, keen citizens, mostly nonconformists in religion, to whom Land Nationalisation, taxation of unearned increment, or other radical reforms of land tenure, are doctrines resting on plain moral sanction. These free-trading Radical dissenters regard common ownership of and equal access to the land as a “natural right,” essential to individual freedom. It is this attitude of mind which serves to explain why, when both theoretic students of society and the man in the street regard Land Nationalisation as a first and a large step in the direction of Socialism, organized Socialists regard the followers of Henry George with undisguised hostility and contempt ...

‘No doubt it is easy to impute excessive influence to the mouthpiece of a rising popular sentiment. George, like other prophets, cooperated with the “spirit of the age.” But after this first allowance has been made, Henry George may be considered to have exercised a more directly powerful formative and educative influence over English radicalism of the last fifteen years than any other man.’