

1886

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Henry George never acted more exactly in accord with his idealistic conceptions of history than he did in late 1885 and during 1886. One day, not too far in the future, he was saying over and over again, Americans will be affected by *Progress and Poverty* and *Protection or Free Trade* and right theory will bring about changes in national policy. Simply realize the hard facts about the condition of labor was the assertion between the lines of the Pennsylvania articles; then hysteria will pass and justice be done.

If George could be optimistic and idealistic about the United States, he could feel that way about Great Britain also. To be sure the British election of 1885 proved to be hard on the Radicals. And presently, as Gladstone in his third government came out for Irish Home Rule, and as this created the occasion of Joseph Chamberlain's famous exit from Liberalism into Unionism, two tendencies in British politics which George approved — generosity toward Ireland and generosity toward the laboring classes — separated themselves from one another. In time the process strengthened such pro-tariff impulses and such Conservatism as George heartily opposed. Yet even while new and strong currents of politics were beginning to eddy in unwelcome directions, he distilled hope from news across the sea.

‘A little knot of thorough-going “Land Restorationists” have been

elected to the new Parliament,’ he wrote triumphantly, late in 1885, to Josephine Shaw Lowell — his patron's daughter, and James Russell Lowell's daughter-in-law. He correctly envisaged in the handful of members, and in like-minded land nationalizers and about twenty others who would go with them, a concentration of energy that would impel British opinion and affect legislation.

Particularly James Durant, his London friend and publisher, encouraged optimism. During his last tour in Britain, Durant had told him that among circles of young men where George had previously been scorned, he was now respected. Would he consider coming to live in England? He might well assume leadership in a new parliamentary party, the publisher said; and he might become editor of a big new paper, at a salary of, say, £1000 a year.

This preceded the election of 1885. After it, early in 1886, Durant again offered enticements to bring George across the ocean and give him an established role. If he would come to London, he could count on time free for a certain amount of writing; a £300 guaranty- fund would be set up, as a kind of re insurance; he would be free to go outside the city for occasional lecturing, on subjects to his taste. Durant even suggested titles, old and new: 'Why do men starve?' 'Why work is scarce and wages are low,' 'Free Trade and Fair Trade,' 'The Coming Revolution,' and 'Christian Socialism.' In the old country, the invitation pleaded, Henry George could assume at once a certain leadership and power.

This was a little overwhelming. But as the Ohio tour indicated, George's fortunes were picking up at home, and writing for the *North American* must have been profitable in money as well as prestige. George quickly decided that he could not go immediately to Britain, or ever go to stay very long; but he did not easily say no to another visit. Even in midsummer, when the possibility of his becoming mayor of New York had dawned, he reverted to Durant's invitation and seriously considered a trip that very autumn.

To his more intimate British friend, Thomas Walker, George explained his strategy a little, as matters developed. The real reason for bringing out *Protection or Free Trade* in the way he did, setting himself up as publisher, he wrote, was to prepare the way for starting a completely independent paper in New York. He intended something much bigger than the *Free Soiler* of 1884, or the quite similar little *Spread the Light, a Journal of Social Progress and TaxReform*, which lasted a few monthly issues in 1886. (This journal used the phrase, 'the single tax reform,' in the September number.) Now he was anxious to be ready in force, whenever his hope of Cleveland's victory might be realized — the hope that a new era of political discussion would open, and advanced economic ideas could be considered

once again, in a climate friendly to growth. *Protection or Free Trade* was ‘a part of my scheme for the U.S.,’ he told Walker. ‘Then comes the paper ... Then I think I can show you that the good seed has been growing here.’

To one of his British correspondents, Richard McGhee, who as leader of the Scottish Land Restoration League and a member of Parliament ranks as the first consistent follower of Henry George to achieve a role in a national legislature, George gave just a hint, in early June 1886, that his ‘scheme for the U.S.’ might include something practical, over and beyond the ideological effort. The time would soon be ripe for entering politics at home, he wrote, as though that vague statement were sufficient to explain his not accepting the invitations to England.

This was a month before the idea of a great mayoralty campaign arose in labor-union circles in New York. There is no sign earlier than midsummer that George made any practical political moves at all, or even discussed such possibilities among his immediate colleagues. Then, when overtures were made to him, he did go to Tom Johnson and a very few others, by that time with a perfectly concrete situation in mind.

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Apparently there is no document to date the day on which the spark flashed between the cathode of the Central Labor Union and the anode of George’s own political charge. Joseph Jackson, a reporter for the *Herald*, claims to have made the original alignment between the two. At a meeting in a hat store in the Bowery, he advised a group of trades-union men that they should concentrate all political energies to elect a mayor. The name of George came up. After someone objected that the reformer was disqualified because he resided in Brooklyn, Mr. Jackson made an inquiry. ‘By the way, Mr. George, where are you living?’ he asked the question as casually as he could. ‘In Harlem, on Pleasant Avenue.’ ‘You’ll do.’ ‘Do for what?’ ‘You’ll find out later,’ Jackson answered, ‘it’s a little

secret just now.’ As Louis Post is the recorder of the conversation, the story seems entirely plausible.

The fluid situation in which the contact occurred we have glimpsed in the preceding chapter. It would be difficult to exaggerate the complexities of labor’s situation in the United States in the factors of grievance,

accumulating in strikes; the factors of ambition, exhibited as the Knights of Labor expanded and the Federation of Labor was born; and the surrounding anxieties and tensions, drawn to focus by the Haymarket affair — all denoted a condition of energy, hope, cross-purposes, and fear. It may fairly be said that an impulse to political action was as natural in trade-union history in 1886 as Henry George had always believed it to be. But not since Jackson's day had independent labor parties in the East accomplished anything significant at the polls; and, if George had in mind Joseph Chamberlain's success as pro-labor humanitarian mayor of Birmingham, he must have known also that his old friend John Swinton represented the hazard of labor politics in New York. In 1874 that maverick of radical thought, Presbyterian and socialist, had run for mayor as candidate of the Industrial Political Party and had received a mere handful of votes.

The obvious similarity of what was occurring in New York and the nation in 1886, to what had been so bitter to George in San Francisco and California during 1877 and after, must have struck the prophet of depression and reform. There was hunger in the streets, and fear of revolution in the newspapers. For days after the bombing and the bloodshed in Chicago, 4 May, the metropolitan papers carried stories of the event and the consequences of it. Quite naturally the prosecution of the anarchists and the decisions of the Illinois courts became a particularly touchy matter in New York City, and they remained so through the executions of November and afterward — and were a recurring tragic leitmotiv during the whole period of George's political emergence.

Though the dominant reaction to all this was so generally like the California red scare of 1877, there were also, of course, more liberal reactions. As Professor Henry May has observed in his study of Protestant social thought, the year 1886 designates one of the three social 'earthquakes' of the final quarter of the nineteenth century, which had the effect of arousing numbers of American Christians to the horrid conditions of labor around them. (The earlier 'earthquake' occurred in 1877, the later one from 1892 to 1894.) In the crisis of 1886, spiritual leaders of the quality of Washington Gladden and Edward McGlynn rose in their pulpits to lament and prophesy.

Other literature was converging with pulpit literature in this stream. Journals of religion gave increased attention to social problems; novelists

turned again, after the lull that followed antislavery, to writing about social issues. And in the universities likewise, occasional conspicuous scholars, such as Ely of Johns Hopkins, who in 1886 brought out a book on American socialism, and young Professor Edmund James of the Wharton School, addressed themselves to the problems and patterns of industrial poverty.

Organized labor itself had a real role, not only as the object but as a creator and participator in the new social sympathy. This is nowhere better indicated than in the sizable, intelligent, and informing collaborative volume, *The Labor Movement the Problem of the Day*, which, published in 1887, estimated the large situation of 1886 precisely. The editor and compiler was George E. McNeill of Massachusetts, who had been brought up a shoemaker and an abolitionist, and who had reached fame as a trade-unionist spokesman for the eight-hour day. Of recent years he had been an active Knight of Labor, and at present was doing all he could to reconcile the new AF of L with the older K of L. During the coming fall, exactly parallel with George, he would run an unsuccessful campaign to be mayor of Boston. It is a little surprising that, though the Fabian tracts which were just appearing in England have been so much appreciated, the volume McNeill edited is now a forgotten piece of American social literature.

Henry George's assignment in this manifesto was the twenty-third chapter, 'The Land Question.' Of course he did a condensation rather than any revision of his ideas; and the significance of the chapter is that, after American labor had for half a century entertained the homestead idea as its one theory about land policy, following the ideas of George Henry Evans and the *Working Man's Advocate*, George at this stage of his history was permitted to strike for his own particular scheme. He was being admitted not only to trade-union thinking but into distinguished independent company as well. In chapters surrounding his own, for instance: Mr. McNeill himself spoke for restricting the hours of women's and children's labor, a familiar line of trade-union policy; Professor James did an essay on the need to reform the conspiracy laws to prevent their operating against the unions; Franklin H. Giddings — who was still on the *Springfield Republican* but would soon launch his distinguished career in sociology — had an excellent chapter on labor history; and Heber Newton contributed 'Industrial Education.' In this circle, George's chapter, the most theoretical

one in the book, may be read as one sign of his arrival at a point he had been aiming for when he began correspondence with Powderly in 1883 — a position of recognition and influence in molding labor thought.

In New York City the Central Labor Union of course represented labor's capacity to combine; and questions of loyalty and attachment counted heavily in that circle. Mr. Jackson tells us that as soon as Henry George's name came up at the hat-store meeting, questions were asked. But the quarter-century-old membership in the printer's union put him in the record as a craft-union man, and his membership in the Knights of Labor certified him as belonging to the still more numerous, and more political, branch of the labor movement. It is easy to understand that George suited the CLU well when a political leader was needed.

From George's own side the *rapprochement* would not be as easy. An Irish element had assisted him into the Knights of Labor, though; and the history of the Central Labor Union showed that the organization had been established, only four years earlier, by an Irish refugee tailor 'for the purpose of sending greetings to the workers of Ireland in their struggle against English landlordism.' (The timing permits conjecturing whether an *Irish World* article by Henry George incited the gathering.) But during the years since 1882 elements less acceptable to George had entered the CLU. Marxist members of the Socialist Labor party sometimes gave addresses; and a class-conscious goal was written into the official appeal. In the organization's own words: 'The concentration of all unions into one solid body for the purpose of assisting each other in all struggles — political or industrial — to resist every attempt of the ruling classes directed against our liberties, and to extend our fraternal hand to the wage-earners of our land and to all nations of the globe.'

From the beginning the organization had matched vigor of words

with forwardness in action. It was the first in the United States to use the boycott in a large way, the new Irish weapon of economic coercion; it made itself the central-strategy body of the New York strikes in 1886; it interfiliated with craft unions, with independent bodies, and with assemblies of the Knights of Labor. It made a rule that none but working men were eligible to join; and, apparently at the suggestion of Louis Post, its legal counsel, it was first to adopt and promote Labor Day as an annual holiday.

When a new constitution was drawn up in 1886, the CLU brought together 207 unions, and it represented about 50,000 working men in New York, Brooklyn, and Jersey City.

Politics had been the CLU's unsuccessful department, so far. In its year of birth, 1882, candidates had been nominated for Congress, Louis Post among them. But after that election seemed to prove that members of trades unions voted for the nominees of the major parties according to individual preferences, the union withheld in 1884. Thus the nomination of Henry George in 1886 represents a strand of personal succession from the candidacy of Louis Post, the author of Labor Day, to the candidacy of Post's friend, the author of *Progress and Poverty*.

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On 2 July 1886, occurred the event which swung the Central Labor Union back to political activity. The place was the law court of Judge George C. Barrett.

During the spring the union had won a remarkable victory over a keeper of a music and beer garden. This was George Theiss, an employer whom the waiters and bartenders unions by themselves had at first been unable to bring to terms. But the CLU's boycott had worked; and part of the settlement to which the proprietor acceded obliged him to pay the union \$1000 as costs.

The matter came to law when Mr. Theiss denounced the commitment as an extortion and illegal. A grand jury acted first, then the criminal court, presided over by Judge Barrett. Mr. Post represented the working men. But the lawyer for the employer, using the rhetoric of the freedom of capital, won the case and won a devastating decision. The judge sentenced five CLU men to terms in Sing Sing, none shorter than eighteen months. To be sure clemency was exercised after 100 days by Governor Hill, who commuted the

sentences on the ground that Mr. Theiss's payment 'seemed to lack many of the elements necessary to constitute "extortion" as it had been previously interpreted in the courts.' But by that time, in October, the Central Labor Union had returned to politics in force.

Labor's first response to the Barrett decision was a Cooper Union mass meeting on 7 July. Addresses were made by John McMackin, the union leader who would soon take direction of the mayoral campaign, and by John Swinton, who for four years now had been bringing out a labor weekly under his own name. Four days later the Central Labor Union set up a committee on political ways and means, and that committee in turn proposed a conference to take place in August. The committee envisaged what the twentieth century has known as 'united front' politics. Specifically, it proposed a meeting of delegates — one delegate for each 100 members of the supporting organizations — from all the unions in town and from such friendly political bodies as the Anti-Monopolists, the Greenback party, and the Socialist Labor party. Presumably the hat-store episode occurred at some stage of the warming-up for the conference, during the month of July.

In February 1884, while George was making speeches in Scotland, *John Swinton's Paper* had nominated him for President of the United States, and Louis Post for Vice-president, on a platform of the principles of *Progress and Poverty*. Now on 1 August, Swinton again spoke first. 'It May Be a Boom,' the editor headed his pronouncement. 'A fitter candidate could not be found. He is as true as steel. He embodies the aspirations of the masses. He is a worker, a printer, a unionist, a Knight of Labor, a man of business experience; and it will not be held against him that he is a native of the country, and the most renowned living American author, it may be a boom.' *John Swinton's* must have been the paper which Henry George, Jr., says his father refused to take seriously when Richard interrupted an office conference to bring in the exciting forecast.

But very rapidly the nomination ceased to be at all unlikely. The Central Labor Union called for a clean sweep of the city's offices: 'Honest men can be elected to administer the affairs of government and the laws can be enforced by the rich and poor alike.' On the scheduled day the convention met in Clarendon Hall, more than 400 strong; and it voted, 362 to 40, to fight an independent political

campaign. Within two weeks an organization had been blueprinted. A platform was drawn. Planks announced for 'freesoil ideas' and for labor's more familiar and less doctrinaire demands: an effective eight-hour system, the abolition of child labor, and the like. There was no loud sound of

socialism, and up until 20 August, no names were announced. On that day a committee called. Would Henry George accept a labor nomination for the office of mayor of New York?

George took a week to answer. To say yes he would have to put behind him for the time being all thought of going to England, and of course would have to defer still longer the writing of his primer of economics. But there is in the Henry George collection a memorandum in his own handwriting entitled 'John Swinton and His Friends' which gives an uncomfortable modern-sounding reason for his hesitating about united-front politics. Would he become a front-man merely, less than a true leader, possibly the puppet of forces which denied his own ideals?

Henry George's anxieties are voiced in comment on a little book of political travels, which Swinton had brought out in 1880 — that is, after the intimacy of their correspondence between California and New York. Swinton, he noted, is 'widely known as a thorough going communist, in full affiliation with all those European destructives who come to New York when they find their own countries too hot to hold them, and who are plotting to bring about the destruction of society.' The memorandum is undated, but it represents George's attitude of 1883 and after, as we have seen it.

The invited candidate's reply to the labor convention naturally avoided phrasing any such issue. First of all George stated his general convictions broadly, along lines straight from his earliest California-based thinking. Labor should be active in politics, he said, and there ought to be a political party democratic in the fullest meaning of the word. His second proposition was at least as old with him as the *Post*, but one senses reinforcement from his British experiences. Municipalities are the place to start reform, he asserted, for we must 'address ourselves to what is nearest at hand.' One point, of seven in his message, went to land-value taxation. Applying that idea in New York, taking the 'immense values created by the growth of the population,' could bring into existence the most beautiful and healthful of cities. Defeat held no fears for him, George said, in concluding, but he would not be involved in a movement that might prove to have little popular support at the polls. So he fixed a condition which was then unique in the history of American vote-getting. Yes, he would accept candidacy for mayor if and when the new political organization would present petitions

signed by 30,000 men who would pledge themselves to work and vote in his behalf.

As he doubtless wanted, the immediate effect was to slow down and to intensify the labor effort. In September there had to be meetings at every level of organization. To bring funds to the CLU an assessment was placed on all participating organizations, at the rate of twenty-five cents for each individual member. The petition rolls had to be prepared, circulated, and signed. Time was required, and dedication by a great number of people.

But even while energies were being tested and gathered, there were ample signs that George had not demanded too much. On Labor Day he reviewed a parade and received an ovation — the first American demonstration for him to outdo the reception home from Ireland four years earlier. Perhaps the most convincing testimony of labor's mounting political spirit is that of Samuel Gompers. Writing after almost forty years of opposing the American Federation of Labor's entering politics, Gompers recalls 1886 in his autobiography. At first he resisted even this political impulse, he says, but on second thought, 'I appreciated the movement as a demonstration of protest. The campaign was notable in that it united people of unusual abilities from many walks of life and that it proved a sort of vestibule for many who later undertook practical work for human betterment. Many leaders in the constructive work of the following years were recruits of the Henry George campaign.' Presently Gompers became chairman of the city organization of Henry George Clubs and took charge of the speakers bureau. By October he was making speeches every day, convinced in spite of himself that he was marching toward a great victory.

On 23 September occurred a major step in the consolidation between candidate and party. A second general conference at Clarendon Hall made the nomination formal, and it endorsed a new platform written by Henry George himself. Frank Ferrell, a Negro prominent in the Knights of Labor, presented it; and the New York *World* caught the spirit of the document in saying that it was an epitome of *Progress and Poverty*. The new party — some months were required to establish its name as the United Labor party — now departed altogether from the eclecticism of the original platform. On the economic side, there was a denunciation of monopoly in the old and eloquent way. The new platform demanded that values created by urban growth — land values and the monopoly values of utilities alike — should

be channeled to the people. As in San Francisco, George called for the reconstruction of city government, and especially for simplifying court procedures. Again as in California he spoke for a constitutional convention, in order to open the avenues for reforms not to be made in any other way. Asserting as always the principle of equality implicit in the Declaration, George reduced the first platform's emphasis on social class; and he appealed for the support of all citizens.

Though formality and finality of acceptance still waited on the great number of signatures, the Clarendon Hall platform brought the union of man and movement close to completion. George may have intended real reservation in an *if* clause he inserted in an interview, which the *New York Sun* printed on 24 September just after the convention. 'I have not sought any nomination, and if I accept one it will be only for the sake of advancing principles I believe in.' But a *Tribune* reporter described him as entirely at ease in his office, dressed in a Prince Albert coat and surrounded by friends, and in an optimistic frame of mind. Would he be able to put his theories into practice, if elected, the reporter inquired. No, not very well as mayor. But election would greatly advance his ideas, George said, and he would not be surprised to receive 90,000 votes. He was counting on the support not of labor alone, but also of men of independent mind, such as Father McGlynn, James Redpath (now of the *North American*, later of lecture-bureau fame), and Poultney Bigelow, all of whom were already committed.

In private fact George made his own irrevocable commitment in a conference with an enemy. Here we have his own account which, though he did not render it until 1897, and then it was objected to, seems to tell the essential truth. While still free to withdraw from the campaign George was sought out by William Ivins, the city chamberlain and a personal friend of the Democratic mayor in office, William R. Grace. As a man of wealth, education, and in

terest in reform, Mr. Ivins represented the more civilized branch of New York's Democrats, as well as the party in a general way.

The two men met for dinner in a German restaurant in Lafayette Place. 'We sat down in a private room, unattended, and smoked some cigars together.' According to the candidate's memory eleven years later, Mr. Ivins spoke entirely to the point: Henry George could never become mayor of New York, no matter how many votes were cast for him — he 'could not

possibly be counted in.’ So the Democrats proposed a deal. If George would refuse the nomination, Tammany and the County Democrats would have him elected to Congress from a district they controlled — perhaps this meant Congressman Hewitt’s — and, in the interval, George could visit Europe. Mr. Ivins’ denials of 1897 said that he could have offered no seat in Congress, because he had no such party authority; that he went to George not to bribe but to befriend; and that he told him that he would be snowed under if he ran, not counted out.

The common area of the two stories is that the two did meet, that Mr. Ivins did suggest that George run for Congress, and that a representative of Mayor Grace did say that George would surely lose if he persisted as candidate. This supplies sufficient agreement as to fact to make it unnecessary to question George’s story of his own reply. ‘You tell me I cannot possibly get the office. Why if I cannot get the office, do you want me to withdraw?’ To which Mr. Ivins did not deny answering: ‘You cannot be elected but your running will raise hell.’ Then Henry George ended the interview. ‘You have relieved me of embarrassment. I do not want the responsibility and the work of the Mayor of New York, but I do want to raise belli I am decided and I will run.’

By September’s end, at war with the country’s most powerful machine, George tried a tactic from the fight of 1882 in Ireland. He sounded out the new archbishop of New York. Himself an intimate now of the powerful Father McGlynn, George had every opportunity to understand the interfiliations which, to his advantage, tied his old friends of New York’s Catholic and Irish element with his new friends of the labor movement. Likewise he must have understood equally well the loyalties which, to his disadvantage, cross-connected both sets of friends with his new enemy, Tammany Hall. At the moment Father McGlynn was still forbidden, under a ruling given by Archbishop McCloskey, to speak on Irish landaffairs. But he had announced for Cleveland in 1884, and he was anything but a cowed or politically indifferent man. If he were free for politics, George would have an incomparably valuable political ally.

The new archbishop, Michael Corrigan, had had as yet no reason for fresh action within the premises. Yet surely, when Father McGlynn supplied George with a letter of introduction, both of them must have understood that they were approaching the most authoritarian kind of archbishop,

different in ideas from the Bishop of Meath, and in temperament from a McCloskey or a Cardinal Gibbons. Archbishop Corrigan belonged, as definitely as Bishop McQuaid of Rochester, to a type of churchman frequent in Ireland and traditional in French Canada. On the other hand, he and McGlynn had been collegemates together in Rome; and it is just conceivable that George made his call actually believing that the archbishop could be brought to say that he would not interfere if McGlynn chose to participate in labor politics.

Certainly George proceeded as though he believed in such a possibility. But, while Corrigan received him courteously, he refused to discuss any phase of the coming campaign except the problem of Edward McGlynn. Thus George learned at once that if the preacher were to enter the campaign he would be suppressed. George tried to explain that the ideas he held about property involved no conflict with church doctrine. But here he confronted a closed mind; through all that followed, Corrigan never comprehended, and apparently did not try to comprehend, George's distinctions between property in land and property in things. George fared no better when he tried to persuade the archbishop that priests as citizens should exercise the same right to speak in behalf of a labor candidate as in behalf of a Democrat. Whatever success the meeting had for George lay in its plain revelation of a rough road ahead.

Acting as though their business were not closed, George sent Corrigan a copy of the diocesan letter of the Bishop of Meath, which he himself had distributed in Ireland. (The archbishop's father had come from County Meath.) 'By its incidental allusions,' George explained, the day after the interview, the letter showed that the Irish bishop 'fully shares the views I hold with respect to property in land.' George also sent copies of all his books. 'If you will do me the honor to look over them you will see clearly that there is nothing

in them inconsistent with any of the teachings of religion and I think you will agree with Cardinal Manning, who declared to me that there was nothing in the principles I have advocated in regard to the treatment of the land that the Church has ever condemned.'

Before he closed George switched his letter from persuasion to threat. 'If you should step in now, and prevent [Father McGlynn] from expressing his sympathy with the organized labor associations of this city, it will seem

to that great body of citizens as if you use your ecclesiastical authority for the purpose of breaking up a movement which has for its aim the destruction of political corruption and the assertion of popular rights.' Very soon John McMackin, the Catholic chairman of the Clarendon Hall conference, clinched the threat with a protest of his own, that Father McGlynn should not be forbidden to campaign.

By the early days of October the lines of political division were pretty clear, and the forces were gathering in mass. On the second of the month, days ahead of George's formal acceptance, he was nominated by non-labor people, some 2300 who crowded into Chickering Hall. Two Episcopalian clergymen took the front: John Kramer, who presided, and Heber Newton, who made a speech. Three intellectuals, all professors at least in name, gave addresses: David Scott, of City College; Daniel de Leon, future socialist leader who at this time was a lecturer at Columbia; and Thomas Davidson, the wandering philosopher who had been one of the founders of Fabianism in Britain, and who would later assume a role as transmitter of moderate socialist ideas to this country. But the great climax of the evening came when Father McGlynn took the platform. Although already forbidden to speak, he had told no one, not even Henry George. He poured out his feeling 'as if he expected that night to be his last.' The Chickering Hall meeting voted through the nomination with a roar.

The formal consequences of the many beginnings, Henry George's acceptance on 5 October, had the character of a dedication and a festival. Again the place was the somber, be-pillared meeting room on the basement floor of Cooper Union. The huge petitions, tied in blue ribbons and displayed on the platform, looked like gifts of some overwhelming kind. The Reverend Mr. Kramer presented the Chickering Hall resolution. The chairman, Mr. McMackin, said briefly that Henry George had received such a nomination as had never been made anywhere before.

Replying, George offered a line of personal history. Once earlier he had had political ambitions, he admitted; but another career had come to him, 'that of pioneer — that of men who go in advance of politics.' He did not want to be mayor, but he had been told that he alone could unite the forces of labor. He would fight uncompromised as he had been nominated without restriction. The speech voiced the same civics he had made his own in San Francisco. He would not be corrupt; in office he would enforce the

laws equally for all; he would work to have the mayor's office transformed into a seat of powerful and responsible leadership. At peroration he spoke, I think for the first time in public, about the New York vision and dedication of 1869. He renewed the pledge: he would do all that lay in him to improve the life of such people as he had noticed for the first time when he was far from home, a visitor from a land of aspirations tramping the incredible streets of America's great city.

George had made a moving address, its thought entirely consistent with his past. If there had been any August danger that he might fall into being a captive candidate, dominated by unions or used as cover man for ideologies not his own, the danger was now passed. By October he had made himself the captor — the writer of the platform, the leader of 30,000 by their pledges, the establisher of tone and feeling. In whatever way he might choose, he could now raise hell as he had told Mr. Ivins he would do, in the politics of New York City.

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For two months and more the initiative had all lain with the labor party; and that situation did not change at once, or change much, after 5 October. As of the end of September, hopes had soared fastest and highest in *John Swinton's Paper*. Henry George would capture the mayoralty this year. Would he not go right up the ladder, as van Buren and Cleveland had done, that paper queried, and take the governorship next, and then the Presidency? As the campaign got under way *Swinton's* saluted the George movement as the bringer of new forces, and said that a New York victory would

lead to a great uprising of the masses. Meanwhile the nominee himself had accepted as real the possibility that he might discover in the end that he had done more than fight an educational campaign, and had actually become the mayor of New York.

It is safe to interpret as a sign of the control of the huge city's politics by the machines that neither Democrats nor Republicans nominated a candidate earlier than the middle of October. As late as 7 October, Congressman Abram S. Hewitt, the distinguished man of business and philanthropy who six years earlier had hired Henry George as ghost writer,

wrote to Tammany Hall's new boss, Richard Croker, that he preferred not to be re-elected to the house, because he felt 'old and weary' (he was sixty-three), and that he would change his mind only if he were persuaded that 'in the judgment of your organization the public interest will best be served this way.' Two days later Hewitt believed that Tammany's decision for him was another term in Washington. But a week afterward Croker's insistence had made him the Democratic party's choice for mayor; and in his speech of acceptance he claimed for his candidacy the one real alternative to socialism, anarchism, and nihilism — New York's escape from scenes like Paris under the Terror.

At the middle of the month precisely, the Republicans nominated Theodore Roosevelt. The future Progressive was now twenty-eight and six years out of Harvard — since graduation he had lived awhile in the Bad Lands, written three books, and served three years in the state legislature. As opponent of George he offered, in more aristocratic, youthful, and brighter version, many of Hewitt's qualities — wealth, distinction of background, education, a record free of corruption. True, the directions of his reformism in Albany were less promising for labor than Hewitt's record in state and nation. But Roosevelt now as later brought special charm into popular politics. Though from first to last the campaign tended to become a duel between George and Hewitt, the *Times* and the *Tribune* as Republican papers remained loyal to their young man; and Roosevelt's attack kept doubly alive the doubt whether enough votes would go to Hewitt to prevent George from winning a stunning victory.

Republican efforts and motions for the three short weeks of the mayoralty campaign provide some of the most telling illustrations we have, of New York's loyalties, anxieties and needs. In a way

quite comparable to George's experience with the San Francisco *Alta* and its editors Hittell and McCrellish during the red scare of 1877 and after, the New York *Nation* and *Evening Post*, dominated by the fiery reformist Republican, E. L. Godkin, swung entirely to Hewitt and against political labor. Using words calculated for incitement, the *Nation* wondered, in the last October issue, what the result would be should Henry George bring 'the Anarchists and Socialists and Strikers and Deadbeats of every description within 10,000 or 20,000' of victory. To Roosevelt's mind this was party perfidy, which he described in his own way: 'Godkin, White, and various

others of the better element have acted with unscrupulous meanness and a low, partisan dishonesty which would disgrace the veriest machine heelers.’

But the young candidate had no illusions about his capacity to win back Republican turncoats. Confessing his most private expectations to Henry Cabot Lodge and one or two others, Roosevelt foresaw that he would lose thousands of votes to the Democrats; and he refused to estimate how many to the labor party. Even now there is little evidence from which to guess about the number of Republicans who wanted Henry George, and voted for him. We know simply that some interesting members of the party did do so.

There were echoes of anti-slavery, for instance, surely welcome to the recipient, in a letter written on the stationery of a post of the Grand Army of the Republic. This assured George that a lot of the ‘old boys’ were on his side. There must have been Republicans among such groups as the Columbia College Alumni for Henry George Club; and nowhere is incidence and connection of Republicanism more likely than among the sixty or so Protestant clergymen — compared to about forty Catholic priests — known to have been favorable. These ministers represented many denominations, spaced as far apart as Universalist and Episcopalian. From a different corner of the religious field, Robert Ingersoll declared that Republicans particularly ought to vote for Henry George.

The simultaneous candidacy of Allen Thorndike Rice, proprietor and editor of the *North American Review*, for a seat in Congress, gave George his best chance to say that Republicans and labor men could be allies. One remembers the root of George’s loyalty to Mr. Rice, and he expressed it openly in a letter to the *Tribune*, which was intended as endorsement. ‘Mr. Rice in throwing open the pages of the *North American Review* to the full expression of radical thought on social subjects has done more to bring moral support to the cause of the downtrodden than all our members of Congress put together.’

From a most unlikely source we have a revealing peepsight into an area of sympathy, not followership, for Henry George, at very high level. Coincidentally with the heat of the campaign, Rutherford B. Hayes had come from Ohio for a meeting of the trustees of the Peabody Fund for education in the South. As the ex-president tells the story, he buttonholed his fellow trustees, and inquired what they thought. Robert C. Winthrop, of

the first family of Massachusetts, ex-congressman and ex-senator but always scholar and orator, replied that the labor candidacy had his 'hearty sympathy ... it is a protest against the wrongs that have been growing up, and are now threatening the life of the Republic.' Chief Justice Waite approved the comment, and so did Bishop Whipple; and Dr. Samuel Green, one-time mayor of Boston, 'wished success to Henry George, whom he believed to be a thoroughly sincere, honest man, with the welfare of his fellow men at heart.' So at least four of the twelve Peabody trustees, five if we count the Republican ex-president, presumably not one of them an acceptor of *Progress and Poverty*, were favorable to George's candidacy. No such Olympian attitude would have been natural in any group predominantly Democratic.

Certainly so far as local Democrats were concerned, whether of the Tammany Hall or of New York's County Democracy variety, there was increasing cause for panic. During late October the labor campaign moved with amazing vigor. Party headquarters were set up at the Colonnade Hotel. John McMackin, the Knight of Labor, and Catholic, who had taken the chair at the principal preliminary meetings when the CLU had charge, became campaign manager; and Samuel Gompers took charge of uniting the efforts of the Henry George Clubs, which sprang up in great unlisted numbers. On 20 October the George organization was reported to have set up twenty-four districts, each with its leaders and workers, some of them having meetings every night.

At that point labor had a windfall. A minor Democratic machine, Irving Hall, abandoned Hewitt and, out of hatred for Tammany, dropped into George's basket. To Henry George it was an apple

none too sweet. But when the formal nomination was tendered he was present, and he delivered an address which promised reform — and denied any other commitment. Though never departing from his principal role as intellectual and moral standard-bearer, George himself did succeed in making a number of sizable contributions to the practical and organizational effort. He channeled money into the campaign treasury from as far as San Francisco, in the touching case of his devoted translator, Herr Gutschow; and he tapped purses as fat as those of Tom L. Johnson and August Lewis, a New York trader and manufacturer recently converted to his ideas.

Campaign time also brought in such return payments from Britain as visitors could make — from people whom George had aided or counseled during his missions overseas. On 25 October, for instance, according to a newspaper account, ‘a venerable, white-bearded gentleman in spectacles,’ whom George introduced as ‘the most eminent British naturalist,’ spoke for the candidate. He was glad to do so, Alfred Russel Wallace said later, somewhat ruefully: ‘I tried my best to be forcible, praised George, and said a few words about what we were doing in England, but I could see that I did not impress them much.’

Even before the campaign proper began, by ironic coincidence on the day on which he called on Archbishop Corrigan, George met Eleanor and Edward Aveling, daughter and son-in-law of Karl Marx, who were over from England and at the moment house guests of George’s publisher, John Lovell. Though entertaining reservations about him as thinker, they liked George, and reasoned from *Social Problems* that he was almost the right kind. In speeches before socialist groups they favored and supported the labor candidacy. Apparently a little later than the Avelings, George met Sidney Webb, and the two established a durable, not intimate, friendly connection.

How welcome or unwelcome such socialist attention was, even when it was Fabian, George does not say. But plainly his feelings were hurt when Michael Davitt, in America on one of his many visits, passed him by. The veteran of the Land League wrote that he could not interfere in an American election, nor did he really think that George should win. Thus cropped out again the old touchy problem of international radical politics, and perhaps also an Irishman’s persuasion that power corrupts. But George would

have liked more generous treatment — it would have diminished the effect of the opposition of Archbishop Corrigan and the hierarchy generally. Though there was no lack of endorsement by the heterodox — in rapid succession by Terence Powderly, Felix Adler, and Robert Ingersoll, for assorted examples — none could have seemed more natural or just than the one he wanted and was denied, from the fighting old Land Leaguer.

The most heartening thing was the volunteering of the masses. Building on the September success in getting the 30,000 signatures, the October campaign rapidly became a new phenomenon of crowds and

excitement. One is reminded of the age of Jackson; but this surpassed the rallies and marches of 1828 and 1840, as the industrial age — big-city life and the new immigration — now made possible. An illustration in *Leslie's Weekly* of 30 October gives a good idea of what occurred on many nights. George is portrayed speaking outdoors, center; he stands with three other men in an uncovered, unhorsed tailcart; the four are shown knee-deep in a horizonless sea of standing working men. There are signs raised aloft: 'An Injury to One is the Concern of All.' 'No More Rings No More Halls.' 'Vote for George.' The picture's feeling of disturbance is heightened by torches flaming and smoking in the background. Until the end, even the weather seemed friendly to labor, dry and mild and favorable to meetings and marchings. The campaign history says that many able speakers stood up on carts as George did, on the East Side, night after night, not infrequently several times an evening.

At the moment of the Democratic and Republican nominations, the labor leaders decided that they had to have a daily paper. The Central Labor Union had felt such a need since July; and in the interval the George movement had had the backing of the *Irish World*, *John Swinton's Paper*, and the socialistic *Volkeszeitung*, weeklies all three. Not a single metropolitan daily came out for George. In response, the New York *Leader* was thrown together in just five days. The *Volkeszeitung* lent physical facilities; the Central Labor Union subscribed \$1000, and the paper became known as its organ. But financially the *Leader* was no unilateral effort: the carpenters' union subscribed \$1500, and other unions \$100 apiece.

There was no trouble either, about gathering the necessary manpower. Louis Post, the most appropriate person, both because of

his experience with *Truth* and his old connections with CLU and Henry George, and because he had defended the Theiss boycotters, took charge. But he had the help of many volunteer journalists, some of them from the conservative papers. From the first issue on 19 October, the paper achieved good character, not a sensational one, as news purveyor — at about the intellectual level of the San Francisco *Post* under George. During the two weeks before election, circulation zoomed to 50,000 or more, and perhaps held that number for a few days. To the reader of today, the *Leader* offers an amazing display of high energy and quality of talent placed at the service of the labor party.

Just as the paper began to appear, Abram Hewitt dutifully took up the outpouring challenge. In accepting the nomination he at first made efforts to be disarming: he acknowledged great need for reform in the city, and he drew on his record in Congress to recommend himself for labor's votes. But from justifiable claims for past performance, the Democratic candidate moved immediately into the name-calling for which Roosevelt censured him. Under pressure, we are told, from Croker, whose new career hinged on winning this campaign, Hewitt descended through vulgarism to malice, as he described himself as a son of poverty and as the only present choice for New York to avoid revolution, 'nihilism' (a particularly strong fear-word in 1886), and terror.

George thought he knew how to deal with this kind of procedure. Let us do what Lincoln and Douglas did, he proposed: meet in face-to-face debate. We can acknowledge at the start that the mayor's office does not control tax policy. This would render us the freer to discuss whether land-value taxation signifies what you say it does, the destruction of society, or what I say, its democratization. On what basis, George inquired in an open letter, would Mr. Hewitt meet him? Several times, or once or twice in the city's largest halls? The challenge was printed in the *Leader* and everywhere noticed in the press of city and nation.

Hewitt declined without regrets. The public discussion of public issues had never before been so considerable, he dryly observed, and the voters knew well enough the differences between Henry George and Abram S. Hewitt. Then the Democratic candidate pressed a question of his own, a little hard to answer: If Mr. George sincerely means to put into effect his ideas about property, why does he not contest my seat in Congress? Hewitt commended Andrew Carnegie's recent book, *Triumphant Democracy*, to those who believed that present methods of government had failed. He returned to the proposition that the Democratic party must save New York from anarchy and chaos.

George answered, and challenged a second reply, in the newspapers. Hewitt's practical question he let go with the observation that he could never afford to undertake the costs of a campaign for a seat in Congress. George did not need to say that the present campaign came to him self-generating and largely self-financing; and perhaps he did not wish to spell out for criticism his idea that any campaign in which he participated would

be primarily educational and symbolic, and only secondarily a fight to win office. He concentrated now on Hewitt's proposition which infuriated him. Tammany save society from what, he demanded. Did Mr. Hewitt understand how city officers buy votes, and at the moment were doing so, by the old bribery of hiring men for public works, on the eve of an election?

This brought out Hewitt's final statement. The Democrat denied, first, that his voters were being influenced corruptly; and he demanded second, that George elucidate certain questions of his social theory. Why tax a poor man's land? Why relieve from taxation a rich man's capital investments? These were the same old questions as those put by the outlying newspapers of California in 1873, the same ones put by the *Sacramento Record-Union* in reviewing *Progress and Poverty*. At this stage Hewitt's part in the exchange of question and answer ended. He ignored George's final challenge, to appear at a meeting in Chickering Hall, where he would be given half the time if he wanted, to counter a statement of George's ideas. In a third letter and in many speeches, George willingly elucidated the economics of his proposals.

Henry George had been unable to bring his opponent onto a public platform, and yet he had succeeded in having a debate. So his contemporaries, at least, understood the open letters in the newspapers. The *New York Tribune*, for one, assumed a judicial air in sizing up results. 'Mr. George's [second] letter is not quite parliamentary in tone but it is terribly severe because so much of it is true,' that paper editorialized. *Leslie's*, though it could say in one issue that 'what all crime is in practice, Georgism is in theory,' re-treated now to a position of balancing judgments. George had proved himself the 'hardest hitter,' Hewitt 'the most skillful fencer,' it estimated. George was right about corruption in New York, and Hewitt correct in saying that present political institutions would be adequate to solve social problems; George had justly ridiculed Hewitt's partnership in reform with Tammany, but Hewitt was as right in denouncing George's theories. Thus a philistine editorial page at bay. The sixty or so relevant excerpts, which were reprinted in *Public Opinion* from newspapers across the land, at least suggest that the panic reaction to George was pretty well limited to the city where the campaign was fought.

After the open letters Hewitt carried on his campaign quietly. He addressed half a dozen or so meetings, none of them very large. His real

work was done by Tammany and its allies.

George made everything possible of his forensic opportunities. He took the occasion of the Chickering Hall meeting, to which he had dared Hewitt to come, to speak as he had in London about the community's right in the land. Illustrating concretely from well-known local conditions, he called New York the most crowded city in the world, and deplored with eloquence the space held empty by private owners. 'We want all the buildings we can get. I think that every American citizen ought to have a separate house ... We are all creatures of the Creator ... I say that the right to land is one of our inalienable rights.' Perhaps more perfectly than any other event in his American career, this Chickering Hall address represents the battle as Henry George loved to wage it — his mind at play, his audience sympathetic, his major ideas being visibly drunk in with emotion by thousands as he performed.

From five to ten meetings a day, as October came to a close, was almost a routine performance for Henry George. Speeches before labor unions, immigrant groups, and clubs; noontime appearances at factory gates; and evening addresses out of doors — these were the characteristic events. On 16 October, for example, he addressed: a meeting of French Americans, a group in Abingdon Square, an assembly of Broadway railroad workers, and, at eleven in the evening, a crowd in Sulzer's Harlem River Park. On 25, 26, and 27 October he addressed at least seventeen meetings: four were meetings of cigar workers, two were other unions, one was an immigrant group, one a Columbia College Alumni club, and one a meeting of spiritualists. Strenuously courting the support of groups or organizations of Frenchmen, Germans, Bohemians, Irishmen, and Jews, George made himself the exception to the rule, recently stated by Professor Oscar Handlin, that reformers of this period did not much appeal to the new immigrants, or get their interest and votes. At a meeting of the Uptown Bohemian Henry George Club, the candidate said that he was very proud to be endorsed by 'Germans, Austrians, Russians, Polanders, Scandinavians, and Irish.'

At campaign's close, the arrival in the city of Terence Powderly brought into focus the most disturbing issue of loyalty then at stake, the one George had discussed with Archbishop Corrigan. The Grand Master Workman arrived at a stage of being intensely burdened with his dual role

as labor leader and Catholic layman. He was fresh from the conferences with Cardinal Gibbons in Baltimore which had decided that, as Catholic scholarship now makes perfectly plain, American Catholics need not be excluded from the Knights of Labor, as French Canadians were. In New York, Powderly met Father McGlynn. Since the one speech, this most dedicated of all Henry George men had kept silence under discipline, except for a single interview. He was quoted then as having declared that Henry George was inspired 'by the same love of justice as was taught by Christ,' and that he believed the candidate to be 'peculiarly a man of destiny ... Destined to be President of the United States.'

What would Catholics do who felt the least bit the same way as Father McGlynn? How would the Irish voters perform, on 2 November? *The Irish World* continued for George; the *Irish Herald* went for Hewitt. Several times during the last days of the campaign, Powderly spoke for Henry George. He literally took a seat beside the dynamic priest. He and Father McGlynn rode in a barouche together, shortly before the poll, an open and purposeful symbol of Catholics for the labor party. On election day he went about with Henry George, from polling place to polling place, to observe how things were going.

Meanwhile, however, Archbishop Corrigan's side had acted, not altogether quietly. After Father McGlynn had given his interview, a Tammany Hall official had turned in alarm to the vicar-general, Monsignor Thomas S. Preston. What would he say to the question whether the Catholic clergy favored Henry George for mayor? The

reply was as definite as the archbishop's discipline: 'The great majority of the clergy in this city are opposed to the candidacy of Mr. George. They think his principles unsound and unsafe, and contrary to the teachings of the church ... His principles, logically carried out, would prove the ruin of the workingmen he professes to befriend.' The vicar-general's letter was widely circulated by Tammany Hall, and was even passed out to the congregations leaving the churches on the last Sunday or two before the election.

For the final Saturday night of the campaign, 31 October, labor planned a vast demonstration. Samuel Gompers was placed in charge. The hope for Tuesday was 90,000 votes to win; and the plan called for a parade of 88,775 to pass before Henry George in a reviewing stand in Union Square. But the weather changed that night: a cold downpour set in, and the

police failed to prevent traffic snarls. Estimates of actual participation vary from 25,000 to 70,000, as the number of men and women who did march — ‘intrepidly, a very real symbol of the spirit in back of the campaign.’ Perhaps the campaign history’s figures are as accurate as any: 30,000 in the ranks, 10,000 watchers in Union Square, two hours required to pass the reviewing stand.

At a rally afterward, the Knights of Labor cheered Powderly on the platform; and the trades-union men shouted for Gompers. Gompers relishes remembering how he answered Hewitt’s charge that labor was fighting a class battle. Class warfare was not the goal, but true democracy, he told the crowd.

Confidence prevailed on Saturday night — after the storm, after the parade, and after the vicar-general’s letter. The very last words were said on Monday evening, at Cooper Union. Powderly made a speech then, a kind of ultimate endorsement by a Catholic. Though not scheduled, the crowd demanded George, and the candidate spoke briefly, full of hope for victory.

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At the close of the campaign’s labors, George’s party had its peculiar difficulties to provide the machinery which parties had to provide for election day — ballots and boxes, in that period before the Australian ballot was adopted. Watchers and inspectors had to be organized in numbers. Labor suffered its greatest disadvantages, opposite Tammany, in this part of the effort; but, thanks partly to

Irving Hall, arrangements were ready in time. The election-eve advice of speakers for George, and the last editorials of the *Leader*, urged working men to be sure to vote. Be careful to get your ballots, and allow no dishonest tactics, they were counseled. In case of being ruled out as disqualified, or of being offered a bribe, they were to report and protest the offenders through regular channels of the law.

The recorded vote of 2 November follows: Hewitt, 90,552, a figure just the size of labor’s highest hope for George. George, 68,110, a figure just about equal to Godkin’s worst fears — a labor vote so large as to come within 10,000 or 20,000 of winning. Roosevelt, 60,435.

Tuesday at midnight George conceded defeat — admitted a setback rather. ‘This is the Bunker Hill,’ he told disappointed campaign workers. ‘We have hit a fire that will never go out ... This has been but a skirmish that prepares our forces for the battles that are to follow.’ He blamed for labor’s loss ‘the perverted and unscrupulous press,’ and said that if there had been a fair vote ‘I would be elected mayor tonight.’ The campaigners gave him round on round of cheers.

George would have more to say later, and, more bitterly than he, others would speak for him, about having been cheated of victory. But immediately there were more hopeful things to concern him. Less than a week after the vote a labor meeting was called, to take place in a hall which would seat 1600. But 4000 people appeared, and the crowd shouted for five minutes when George came to the front of the platform to speak. The meeting endorsed the principles of the campaign platform and set up a temporary committee to carry on. Thus the United Labor party was born. A brass band and a body of marchers escorted George back to his hotel.

The enthusiasm was by no means limited to those recently first drawn into politics. Ninety men turned out for a post-election meeting of the Henry George Journalist Club; and that organization transformed itself into the Henry George Press Club, for permanent operations. A Social Reform Club of New York was founded also. About half the members were trades-union men, remembers Samuel Gompers, who himself sat on the advisory board. But the memorable names are Lyman Abbot, Felix Adler, Hamilton Holt, William Dean Howells, Mary E. J. Kelly, Josephine

Shaw Lowell, Albert Shaw, E. R. A. Seligman, and the Reverend W. S. Rainsford. Though ‘not a believer in everything Henry George advocates,’ this famous clergyman said in a Thanksgiving sermon at St. George’s, still he was grateful for the campaign, ‘because it stirred the people up to a true sense of citizenship, and the movement has just begun.’ Commenting on some of this carry-over, *John Swinton’s Paper* spoke in pride of having been the first paper ever to nominate Henry George for President. The *Leader* professed contempt when the New York *Herald*, recently for Hewitt, proposed Henry George for Congress. ‘Mr. George has more important work in hand.’

As for the retrospect, the bitterness and the blame for losing out to Tammany, the most that came from party headquarters about possible cheating was an announcement that a law committee wished to receive 'complaints of bribery, intimidation, or other illegal conduct.' Apparently only a handful of cases were reported. Henry George himself waited until 1897, until his second mayoralty campaign, before he said much more in public than he had said on the evening of his defeat. At that time he made it plain that when he spoke about unfairness he was speaking about such crimes as stuffing ballot boxes with illegal votes, and stealing legal ones from them. But, as of 2 November 1886, it is necessary to consider that he may have been thinking of the Roman Catholic hierarchy when he spoke of unfairness in the election. 'On a square vote I would undoubtedly have been elected,' he wrote his dear friend Gutschow, without explanations, two months after the election.

Certainly Poultney Bigelow, the literary friend who will be remembered as belonging to New York's highest and most informed circles, put the blame for George's defeat squarely on the church. Henry George Mr. Bigelow estimated to have been 'too credulous and kindly to detect the machinery by which he had been defeated,' but he himself was unqualified in saying that George's 'noisy Land League supporters howled themselves red in the face until the Sunday before election day, and then from every pulpit came a soft whisper more potent on the Tuesday after than Moses on Mount Sinai.'

Bad consciences and resentments among Catholics themselves go some distance to confirm Mr. Bigelow's hard judgment. Michael Davitt, though he had held his distance from George, took home

to Archbishop Walsh of Dublin such a picture of cross-purposes and defiance of authority within the archdiocese of New York as he hardly dared to put into words. The messages he bore, from the most venerable clergymen and from laymen worthy of respect, he said, were intended to enlist the sympathy of Cardinal Manning and others, in hope that Rome would be moderate toward Father McGlynn. Davitt's sense that the George campaign had created great moral trouble within American Catholicism was later confirmed by Thomas Sugrue, a Catholic independent. In 1886 many Irish Americans learned, according to this writer, that Catholic loyalty and American citizenship require a different reconciling from the one offered —

in the form of clerical bossism — by Archbishop Corrigan and his colleagues.

Concerning the kind of misuse of power first suggested by George in his after-election complaint, the perversion of the press, neither the journalist ex-candidate nor any other participator in the campaign, so far as I know, ever followed up with a specification of changes. But criminality at the polling places has been charged to Tammany by the biographers closest to George — by Louis Post, and by Henry George, Jr., who was twenty-four in 1886; and the assertion has gained rather than diminished with the years. Father McGlynn's biographer says that the beloved priest's appearance at one polling place caused that set of election officials not to manipulate the vote, as they had expected to do. And, a few years ago, relying on a witness who had spoken in detail, Anna George de Mille enlarged the indictment.

Mrs. de Mille's star witness is Charles Edward Russell, well-known social novelist and journalist and occasionally a public servant. He had been a reporter in 1886, and he recalled George as a 'Little Red Rooster,' because of his appearance and temperament. He remembered also his own opinion of 1886, shared by 'skilled observers,' that the labor party was 'impelled irresistibly by the revolt of the workers and the propertyless,' and that it would win. With such recollections, and with a persisting strong economic interpretation of events, Mr. Russell accepted, and placed in his own autobiography as an important truth, a remark that came to him from Richard Croker: 'They could not allow a man like Henry George to be mayor of New York. It would upset all their arrangements.' Mr. Russell puts down, as his own opinion, that, 'When

the last vote had been deposited that day, Henry George was elected mayor of New York. In the next three hours he was deprived of his victory by the simple process of manipulating the returns.'

Other students of Tammany Hall hold the same, or very similar, opinions. According to Gustavus Myers: 'if the reiterated statements of reputable eye witnesses are to be believed,' frauds occurred in the mayoralty election of 1886 to surpass all other occasions. Lothrop Stoddard believed that the Tammany machine had to put on 'the last ounce of pressure' in the presents, and had to bring in repeat voters and illegal voters from Philadelphia and Jersey City, in order to win. More recently Professor Allan Nevins, as scholarly biographer of Hewitt, has taken the more

moderate, but it seems to me not more logical, position, that, yes, there may have been vote switching by the tabulators, but, no, there could not have been enough switching to cause a difference of result. Professor Selig Perlman, as historian of labor, is much more suspicious.

There remains, of course, no heap of yellowed ballots for the present writer to count, to settle the doubt forever. I have uncovered no new testimony, nor discovered secret confessions of wrong-doing. My own judgment, I should say inclination, is that the big cheat could have occurred and probably did. But we shall never know certainly whether George or Hewitt received the larger number of legal votes.

At this distance in time certain characteristics of New York's mentality, morality, and politics of 1886 seem more memorable than the issue — the two-year term as mayor which ended Abram Hewitt's political career. The city's voters clearly were in no condition, and most especially the Catholic voters were not, to give the hearing of reason and fair judgment to Henry George as candidate for office. Yet, despite the mentality of panic, and despite the possible cheat, George the loser achieved a triumph which was both numerical and moral. Seventy thousand votes for labor were unprecedented.

The triumph justified hopes for a further effort.