

Seabury—Friend of Henry George

THE MAN WHO RODE THE TIGER. The Life and Times of Judge Samuel Seabury, by Herbert Mitgang. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York. 1963. 380 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by PHILIP CORNICK

IN his introduction, the author of this volume says of his subject, "if your name is Samuel Seabury, and your great-great-grandfather's name was Samuel Seabury, and he was the first Episcopal bishop in the United States, you bear a responsibility to the past—and to the future. This fact became for the biographer one of the key pieces in fitting together the pattern of the stalwart reformer's life."

Only 28 pages farther along in his biography he makes this observation: "it happens once in a great while, that a book so influences a man's thought that one may properly characterize it as a turning point in his life. So it was for Samuel Seabury."

That book was Henry George's circulated in the second Presidential struggle between Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison, when the tariff question was the main issue. Grover Cleveland and a Democratic House of Representatives were elected. Tom L. Johnson and many others believed that the most telling agency in that result was the circulation of *Protection or Free Trade*. Now again, in a Presidential campaign the tariff is to be the dominant issue. . . . The people want light on the subject—underlying principles and argument—not the *ex parte* findings of tariff boards and statistical jugglers. Where can the plain truth of the matter be *Progress and Poverty*. After he had read it, he became a regular visitor at Henry George's home, along with Oscar Geiger, founder of the Henry

George School, and Lawson Purdy, long president of the Schalkenbach Foundation, "and many writers, theologians, college professors, and students of the unfinished American dream." The contacts he made there, during Henry George's campaign to become the first mayor of Greater New York which ended in his death—and the things he learned by experience, especially about the need for fusion—helped form the man destined to ride the Tammany tiger, and to become a dynamic and constructive leader in the resulting movement for reform which brought charter revision and the repeated election of Mayor LaGuardia.

During the early thirties, the growing insolence and corruption of Tammany, and Samuel Seabury's own reputation as a man, as an incorruptible citizen, as an able lawyer, and as an experienced and distinguished judge, brought him an appointment from Edward R. Finch, presiding justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, as referee to investigate New York City's magistrates courts. This appointment had the approval of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The second appointment — that to investigate New York County's district attorney — came to Mr. Seabury directly from Governor Roosevelt; the third — to investigate the affairs of New York City — from a joint legislative committee of the state. The three together produced an array of dismissals or resignations, the like of which no city elsewhere had ever seen.

From patrolmen who had framed women in "vice" cases, through judges who had "bought" their offices and then made a handsome profit on their investment, on through the elective

sheriff of New York County, and scores of administrative officials whose "tin boxes" were the only sources cited by those investigated to account for their surprisingly large bank accounts and stock holdings, right on up to Mayor Jimmy Walker himself—these were the fruits of the work of Judge Seabury and his able staff.

But not the only fruits. There was

also needed charter revision. For a time also, there was a sadly discredited Tammany, a system of selecting city councilmen by proportional representation after nomination by petition which was not easy for district leaders to manipulate, and a reform administration under LaGuardia's leadership.

Those were all directly to the credit of the man who rode the tiger.

A Universal Formula? That's Easy!

by URQUHART ADAMS

IN ONE OF William P. McGivern's stories, "Seven Lies South," a mixed-up guy recalls a yarn someone told him about a scientist who "had a dream of a universal formula which would solve all the world's social and economic problems." Waking in dazed excitement, the scientist scribbled the precious equation on a pad by his bedside table and fell back into a contented sleep. In the morning he snatched it eagerly to find only one sentence, "the world smells vaguely of tinctured iodine."

Even for a dream, this is not as absurd as it seems. There is a formula which is quite simple and can be stated in an even shorter sentence: tax land values. It will solve a surprising number of problems.

Another story comes to mind, by Edgar Wallace, about a marvelous "Book of Allpower." It was not a book at all, but a receptacle shaped like one, hollow, and filled with bank notes. This shoddy imitation of a piece of literature, was purported to be the only power our dull plodding minds could conceive of. But there is a book called *Progress and Poverty* written in 1879 by an American economist and social philosopher, that strangely enough explains the universal

formula for solving social and economic problems.

George Ade called this first book by Henry George "the finest dialectical treatise that has been written in the English language," and yet it enables anyone of moderate intelligence to clarify much of the world's confusion. It is a key to wisdom, with prophetic insight into things as they are—an invaluable asset to men and women who want to enlarge their mental capacities. *Progress and Poverty* could be likened to the old philosopher's stone which gave its possessor the power to turn dross into gold. It is truly a book of "all power"—over and over again, in the course of a long life, I have seen its influence reflected in the lives of people who took it seriously enough to accept its obvious truths. Some of the instances have been remarkable, others less so, but invariably there has followed a quickening of the mind that few expected, and frequently an improved social and financial status.

This book of "all power" containing the "secret of success," can be had for the small sum of two dollars. Wouldn't you give two dollars for a pair of seven-league boots? This is a better buy. But you have to study it after you get it, as many others have, with remarkable results.