

## From W. L. Crosman

BY way of a post card from Peter W. Schwander, Houston, Texas, I learned the other day that the highly esteemed Joseph Dana Miller had passed away. Later the same day I learned he had died on May 8. I am extremely sorry to know he has laid down his pen and gone to his reward. I hope LAND AND FREEDOM will continue to be published. There must be plenty of editorial talent among the Henry Georgeists of New York to fill the vacancy left by the beloved Miller. I always met him at the Henry George Foundation Congresses that I had the privilege of attending. I met him in Toronto last September. He seemed to be more feeble than he should be at his age, which I took to be middle life. Peace to his spirit.

## Visiting Landmarks In California

THREE interesting and pleasant experiences have lately been shared by four friends in Berkeley, California. After working strenuously on thousands of triplicate postal cards announcing extension classes of the Henry George School of Social Science, soon to begin, and the teaching of these classes, the little group decided upon three other things it would like to do. First—to see and talk with Mr. Stephen Potter, secretary to Henry George during his editorship of the San Francisco *Evening Post*. Second—to visit the spot on Rincon Hill, San Francisco, where Henry George was living with his family when engaged in writing "Progress and Poverty." And Third—to try to locate as closely as possible the place in the Oakland hills where Henry George has told us that—

"On a rise that overlooks San Francisco Bay, the commonplace reply of a passing teamster to a commonplace question, crystallized as by a lightning flash, my brooding thoughts into coherency, and I then and there recognized the natural order."

It was hoped that the visit to Mr. Potter might help especially with this third objective, though the main idea was to get him to shed any light he could upon Henry George through his personal association with him during those busy days in the newspaper office. A letter acquainting him of this had been sent, requesting time for a visit.

Upon receipt of a reply from Mr. Potter saying he would welcome the little group on the following Sunday at his home, the friends crossed the wide salt waters of the great bay now spanned by its magnificent new bridge, over eight miles long. The plan was to locate first, the site of the house where "Progress and Poverty" was written, and then go on to see Mr. Potter, whose home is on one of the green hills, on the other side of the city.

The old residential district on Rincon Hill has now become industrialized, and it was upon one of the industrial buildings that the bronze green plaque was placed by the Henry George Foundation in 1930 to mark where "Progress and Poverty" was written. This plaque was soon sighted by one of the group, as the car was being driven south, slowly along Second Street towards one of the overhead spans of the new bridge. Alighting, the friends read the inscription on the plaque, one sketching it, indicating the placing of the words and the low relief profile of Henry George in a medallion above them. Another took down the words which stated so simply the momentous fact—little heeded by the world today—of the solution of the problem of poverty, by the great humanist who once lived here. The inscription reads—

Here in 1878-1879

Henry George

"The Prophet of San Francisco"

wrote

Progress and Poverty

expounding natural laws

that, breached,

cause poverty

but obeyed, assure us all

Peace, Progress, and Plenty.

With interest the little group noted that here and there huge mounds of earth topped by green grass, still stood between some of these industrial buildings—parts of the original hill not used for building purposes. Idle land!

Sixty-two years ago Henry George had gone up and down this hill, deeply stirred by the developing theme of his book. Of his work upon it we have been given this glimpse by his son,—

"Entering his library, one might witness the author slightly inclined over an ample table in the center of the room, writing—tense thought in the brow, and a gleam in the deep blue eyes that looked straight through and beyond you as if to rest on the world of visions of the pure in heart."

Quiet as was this street, rumbles of a world in the throes of anxiety and on the brink of war, assailed the inner ears of these friends, whose hearts had but lately thrilled to the words of the inscription on the plaque. "Alas, that the great cause of war is yet unrecognized by this troubled world of ours!" was the thought of one of the friends expressed to the others.

Soon the car was turned in the direction of Mr. Potter's home on Sussex Street and in less than half an hour the group was being welcomed by him there, and was soon seated together in a pleasant upstairs room with Mr. Potter and his kindly wife.

When asked if he could locate the place where Henry George was riding horseback on the day that the idea of the "natural order" came to him, Mr. Potter said, "A favorite spot with him was in the Oakland hills, near the

Joaquin Miller place which has a wide view of the Golden Gate. In my mind I place that as the spot." Mr. Potter stated that Henry George was a great reader and a student of logic; enlarging on this he went on,—

"His general habits would lead one to believe he devoted his evenings almost exclusively to reading. He got in touch with all the libraries, the old Mercantile Library, the Mechanics' Library, and subsequently the public library, which he was instrumental in bringing about. He was the chief promoter of the public library, and its first secretary. At that time he was quite an influential man and took a considerable and active interest in Democratic politics, not in the style in which you see it taken up nowadays, but with the idea that politics was something every good American ought to be interested in. He ran for office at one time and was defeated, but he ran as one would expect an early American to have run, without any attempt to do anything out of the way,—nothing crooked—he never had an idea of undue gain."

When asked to enlarge upon his statement of Henry George's being an influential man, Mr. Potter said, "Invariably when he had opportunity to discuss anything with anybody of importance, his ability stood out in his conversation and he was immediately accepted as an equal in a general way. People recognized his ability almost instantly, and in that way he built up a great number of friends and they became very warm friends."

When questioned as to his recollection of Mr. George's family, Mr. Potter said: "I never was a social visitor at his home, but had been there many times as a messenger and, of course, knew them very well. Mrs. George was a very lovable woman, a very fine lady. The children were fine children. Harry George was the eldest, a reserved boy who seemed to be thoughtful in his ways; quiet, unobtrusive, but one who impressed you as being an able boy. I knew Richard—younger than Harry—a handsome little fellow, curly haired, mischievous—he used to make things very intense for me when he came to the office." (Mr. Potter did not remember Jennie, the elder daughter.)

When asked for his opinion as to the value of the work of the Henry George School, Mr. Potter said: "The education of the people along the line of the Single Tax should go on continuously."

Another interesting remark he made was to the effect that the proper classification for Mr. George's work is "Social Science," as distinguished from "Political Economy." He believes the former term to be more adequate and meaningful.

Before leaving, Mr. Potter was informed of the intention of the group to try soon to visit the hills behind Oakland where Mr. George had suddenly seen the answer to the problem that engrossed him. Mr. Potter said that at the beginning of the Fremont trail leading to the Joaquin Miller place there had been a riding school which had probably been known to Mr. George, and from which it

was likely he had obtained his horse when setting out on one of his solitary rides amongst the hills. He mentioned that Mr. George had been particularly fond of the effect of the light over the bay when it lay across the water, as the sun set between the hills forming the Golden Gate.

About three weeks later on a lovely sunny California spring day—the friends met again with picnic luncheon baskets, and a jolly wire-haired terrier, "Puck," to drive towards the Fremont trail leading to the Joaquin Miller place.

Lunch was enjoyed at a rustic table in a eucalyptus grove, and then a short drive brought into view three houses on a hill, and, coming down the path from the most rustic one, was the daughter of Joaquin Miller herself. In a moment, in answer to a question as to whether this was the road which was once the Fremont trail, she gave assurance that it was, adding that "frequently, when father had forgotten to bring home the rice or flour on his horse as he returned from town—we just did without it—making it up with potatoes, or going hungry till the next trip." The family of three—poet-father, wife (now lying ill) and daughter had each occupied one of the three houses. Juanita, the daughter, repeated much of her own poetry with great expression; then, upon request led the friends to a gate in the fence leading to a beautiful rounded hill without trees, which, she said, afforded a wonderful view over the bay in clear weather. A silver haze and light fog lay there now, as sunset drew near. Though one cannot be sure of the exact place where the clouds lifted on the great problem which had troubled the mind and soul of this leader of men, Henry George, we felt it was probably somewhere in this neighborhood, and wished that something might be done to mark that moment fraught with such import to the economic life and development of the human family.

A park is being constructed in this vicinity—in fact within a few hundred feet of this hill. Perhaps sometime, there may be placed there another plaque to make men pause and think, and to honor the memory of this great man Henry George—who worked that justice may reign, and liberty prevail.

These lines are sent to the pages of LAND AND FREEDOM a few days after the passing of its beloved editor, Joseph Dana Miller, who has gone to join that great company of those who did not swerve from devotion and loyalty to the cause of economic truth made clear by their leader and friend,—Henry George.

May the thought of their example encourage those who work on here at the great task (in all its varied forms) which engaged them, and which is yet to be completed only through unselfish efforts such as were made by this goodly company of men and women—truly a fellowship—growing with the passing years.

HELEN D. DENBIGH.