

## Progress and Poverty

REVIEWING in the *New York World* of Aug. 18 the Fiftieth Anniversary edition of "Progress and Poverty," Harry Hansen says:

If a list of the important American contributions to economic discussion were made this book would have a place in it.

The dedication of the book recalls the high ideal with which Henry George developed his doctrine: "To those who, seeing the vice and misery that spring from the unequal distribution of wealth and privilege, feel the possibility of a higher social state and would strive for its attainment." The man first began thinking of the economic inequalities in the world because he was crushed by monopolies of news distribution when he attempted as a young man to start a telegraphic news bureau in New York. It was New York, according to his son, that started him thinking, and returning to San Francisco he began writing on economic themes, six years later, in 1877 beginning the composition of "Progress and Poverty." The son writes: "The book was finished after a year and seven months of intense labor, and the undergoing of privations that caused the family to do without a parlor carpet, and which frequently caused the author to pawn his personal effects. And when the last page was written in the dead of night, when he was entirely alone, Henry George flung himself upon his knees and wept like a child. He had kept his vow. The rest was in the Master's hands."

No wonder that his theory of taxation stood the test of time and was not the outpouring of a mind lost in the wilderness of economic theory. With deep sincerity he had studied the principles behind rent and land values and challenged the opinions of the world. John Dewey said of him, only recently: "No man, no graduate of a higher educational institution, has a right to regard himself as an educated man in social thought unless he has some first-hand acquaintance with the theoretical contribution of this great American thinker."

In the same issue the *World* says editorially:

It is fifty years since a poor printer in San Francisco, Henry George, sent the manuscript of "Progress and Poverty" to a New York publisher, the Appleton firm. Doubting if a large edition could be marketed, the Appletons agreed to handle the book if the author would furnish the plates. These were accordingly made in San Francisco and shipped across the continent. Within the next twenty-five years probably two million copies of the book were sold, in most of the languages of the civilized world. The sale has continued to this day, amply justifying, from the publishing standpoint, the fiftieth anniversary edition of the book from new plates now issued by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, which is devoted to the dissemination of Henry George's economic doctrines.

Of these the single tax theory, from the novelty of its presentment, has attracted much the most attention—Henry George was not the only economist of his time committed to free trade. It made its author famous. It has affected tax theories and tax practice in many parts of the world.

The N. Y. Evening *World* of Aug. 19 also said editorially

It was fifty years ago that a really great thinker, having finished the last page of his greatest contribution to economic literature in the dead of night, fell upon his knee and wept like a child. It had been a hard struggle. It had meant almost two years of the most intensive labor but it had meant more—that hurt the author worse—the deprivation of his family. He had no money, and during these years of creation he had been driven to the pawning of personal effects to buy bread. The book was "Progress and Poverty," the author was Henry George.

In the fifty intervening years this book has taken its place among the classics, been translated into almost every language, and John Dewey says that no one ignorant of its contents can truly be said to be educated.

The fiftieth anniversary is to be observed by the publication of a new edition from fresh plates. When it appeared publishers refused to risk publication unless the author furnished the plates.

With the passing of time Henry George has grown constantly in the respect of the thinking portion of mankind. His honesty and sincerity were beyond question. His devotion to his fellow men was undoubted. His wisdom has been challenged but his motives never. He lived a useful life of public service, and ranks as one of the outstanding publicists of his time, albeit New York City would not have him for its Mayor. There will be many more republications of his greatest work long after the edition now announced is yellow with age.

HOW much land increases in value in spite of the so-called heavy taxation is shown by the fact that Detroit land increased in value from \$500,000,000 to \$1,500,000,000 in the past 10 years. Had the land tax been doubled, no one would have been injured, a comparatively small fraction of the population would have failed to make a billion dollars at the expense of the rest of the people, and no tax would have been necessary on anything but land.

—RAY ROBSON in *Ohio State Journal*.

## BOOK NOTICES

### NEW EDITION OF "PROGRESS AND POVERTY"

The various printings of "Progress and Poverty" in recent years have been made from the plates used for the Memorial edition published thirty years ago, and which have become so worn from repeated use that further printing would be unsatisfactory.

The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation has therefore had the book entirely reset in a large type (10-point), and printed from new plates.