

the silent teachers

WE do not take time often enough to evaluate the importance of the work done by all of those who have voluntarily taken on the responsibility of leading others through the pages of *Progress and Poverty* and other texts by Henry George. Especially have the men and women who come to the New York correspondence course room for a few hours after their office day, to read and correct student papers, been sometimes taken for granted. Two letters that have come to HGN are typical of others received from time to time, proving how much drama is tucked away in this one department. The first is from a man in Midland, Texas addressed to Mrs. Adele Buckalter, his CC teacher:

"I cannot honestly say, as I was able to state before, that the delay in submitting the attached lesson was occasioned by the press of work. In this instance the delay resulted solely from my intention to discontinue the course.

"Many months passed since I had thought of it until one day about four weeks ago, while walking to the office, a distance of only five blocks from my parking place to the center of town, I became conscious of several vacant lots along the way. Two new office buildings going up nearby turned my thoughts to the subject of land values and the ideas of Henry George. It seemed that the truth of at least one of his ideas came into focus more clearly then than on any other occasion—the idea that the community creates land values and therefore should receive the benefit from them. The more I dwelled on it, the more the idea became morally unassailable. . . . Why should a landowner bleed off value created by the community at large? He has his buildings and ma-

chinery and other capital and wealth; these he or his antecedents created, and he is morally entitled to them. But land values, it seemed, were an entirely different matter.

"When I went home that evening, I picked up *Progress and Poverty* and began reading it anew. In the weeks since, I have read from the beginning through Book VIII, through all supplements for those books, and through the eight lessons I prepared and the answers sent to me by you. I then completed Lesson IX, which I forward herewith. It is my intention to finish the course and to take the other available ones, if I may be permitted to do so, for I am more strongly convinced than ever of the validity of the central idea.

"Perhaps you will be able to see some effects of your efforts in such confessions as these. Truly seeds are being sown by the Henry George School. And who can tell when they will flower—or to what extent? Perhaps it is not too late even yet to set ourselves on a course for the real improvement of the conditions of man and of man himself."

The other letter was more poignant, and we believe you will have the same impulse we did—to look on your shelves for a suitable book to send this deaf and handicapped lady who is so willing and eager to learn. Her teacher, Sol Luria, tenderly passed this neatly typewritten letter on to us. Such spirit as is expressed in it is always invigorating:

"I am happy to have you for my teacher. I would like you to know something about me. I am 66 years of age. Single. I am totally deaf and have been since I was six years of age. I never went to school at all or had any teacher. My name is not really

McNeill. I do not know my real people or where they came from as I was saved from a storm at sea when I was two weeks old. I could not be adopted as no one had ever released claim on me, but I was indentured to the McNeil family, who thought education was a waste of time and books a waste of money. Those who were responsible for my welfare did not even bother to find out whether I could tell time or read or write.

"I have diabetes and am badly crippled and a semi-shut-in. I have to earn my living in my home. I also support a 75 year old person who has no income and cannot work, because of being paralyzed. But I am not self pitying—the world has so many fascinating things to see and do that I am always busy and happy. All my life I have had the hunger for education, yet no way to get it.

"I review again and again the pages *Progress and Poverty* which are so beautifully written that they are a joy to read. I also reread when I feel I have not made the lesson completely my own.

"You ask whether I have any questions to ask. There are questions but I am sure the answers will be given one by one as I go along. I compare what I have experienced with the findings of Henry George.

"One very important thing I have learned by experience is that God seems to have made natural laws so that man is forced to depend on men and that no one can stay alone. Everything in nature seems to lean this way. If you work alone you can only make as much money as one person has hours to work. If you share your work with others you will get more and more income according to how many workers you hire, because your busi-

ness can expand. I know how to make things, and one time when I was out of work I sold by mail the things I made. I was successful enough to reach the point where I could not take care of anymore, and could not find workers to help me. The big problem was how much to pay the workers per hour in order to leave enough for a place to work (rent), as I did not want them to work in my own home. I never had any lessons in arithmetic, and did not know how to divide expenses so there would be a profit if I rented a place and hired workers.

"I am going to work until late at night to earn enough to learn arithmetic and accounting through a correspondence school. Because I have no means of transportation I cannot go to the mobile library and I cannot afford to pay someone to go there to borrow books for me. When I did pay someone to go, the library had none of the educational books I wanted and I did not think I should pay so much to get just murder mysteries of which they had plenty. I have had trouble all my life trying to get educational help and always finding I could not get it no matter where I tried, as everything is for other people, or so it seems, and not for the deaf shut-ins. This will make you realize what it means to me that someone with a thought for others gives a correspondence course free of charge. I pray God to reward him and those who help him."

This letter was from Miss Daisy McNeill, Newton, New Jersey, R.D. Box 15. Since writing the above she has been ill but wrote to express her joy over two used books sent to her by Mr. Luria. "They look fascinating," she wrote. "I can hardly wait to start them."

