SIR GEORGE GREY.

(*See Frontispiece.*)

By R. A. HOULD.

(Condensed from the *Liberator*)

In Auckland on December 21st, 1904, there was unveiled a monument to Sir George Grey, one of the great leaders of the people, who in some sense may be called the Father of New Zealand, certainly that country's most impressive figure. On the western panel of the Auckland monument may be read these words: "Soldier, statesman, lover of his fellow-men, whose wisdom, eloquence, and strong personality gave to the people of this colony a large measure of the liberties they now possess."

Sir George Grey was above all an idealist, a dreamer of those dreams which "grow realities to earnest men." He lived, mentally, in and for a future, which has no charm for the materialistic money-grubbers of the present. His ideas were not those of the "ruling classes," neither here nor at home, and therefore he was never liked by so-called "respectable" people. As a young ensign in the 83rd Regiment, stationed with the English garrison in Ireland, it was his painful duty to support the civil power in plundering the wretched peasants of their earnings for the benefit of alien landlords and an alien church. His very soul revolted at the injustice he was compelled to witness and assist in. On some such occasion he had to report on the circumstances to his commanding officer, and sent in a frank account of the event as it appeared to him. This the commanding officer did not desire, and he returned the report to the writer with a request that it should be made *formal.* "Sir," was young Grey's reply, "I have stated just what happened, and I should wish, with your permission, to abide by my report" (see James Milne's "Romance of a Pro-Consul," p. 30). No willing tool of tyranny was he, and this may account for the readiness of the authorities to release him from such distasteful work, and to grant him leave to go and explore Western Australia.

In a passage curiously recalling another in which Henry George describes his own reflections while walking the deck of a vessel in mid ocean on a clear moonlight night, Mr. W. L. Rees in his "Life and Times of Sir George Grey" quotes the latter as saying years after: "I saw enough there (in Ireland) to give a bias to my mind for ever as to the necessity for change and reform. It was really from a desire to find relief for that misery that I went to Australia. In all my walks on deck, on my first voyage, my mind was filled with the thought of what misery there was in the world, the hope there was in the new lands, and the greatness of the work of attempting to do something for the hopeless poor. The effort to get lands, made by single individuals, seemed to me a wrong to humanity. To prevent such a monopoly in the new

countries has been my task ever since. Even in the case of the missionaries I found the same desire for selfish gain. Sent out by the contributions of many whose gifts involved self-denial, I found them living in good houses, enjoying a competence and an assured position, with pensions for their wives and children. It seemed to me a dreadful thing that they should have come out on purpose to gain great estates for themselves and their families, and to use their influence over the natives—and the influence which a missionary has over a converted native can scarcely be imagined—to make them agree to all this; and my heart sank still more when I found the missionaries, as a class, opposing with all their power, and with bitter persecution, all those who dared to make a stand for fair dealing—to uphold those principles of eternal justice which the missionaries themselves were sent to teach."

On March 1, 1890, Henry George passed through Auckland on his way to Australia in the Mariposa. We take the following extracts from the *Herald* of March 3, 1890:—"Upon his arrival his first step was to pay a visit to Sir George Grey, out at Mr. Seymour George's, in Parnell. Henry George and Sir George Grey have corresponded for many years, and being thus, in a sense, old friends, they were much pleased to see one another, especially as, to Sir George Grey, the visit was quite unexpected." At eleven o'clock representatives of the Anti-Poverty Society, and kindred organizations, assembled at the Star Hotel, Albert Street, to present an address of welcome to Henry George. Among those present were Sir George Grey, Rev. E. H. Gulliver, and many others. The proceedings were fully reported in the *Herald* of 3rd March, 1890, and from it we take the following remarks with which Henry George closed his reply to the address:—"What we aim at is simply the culmination of Christianity. It is simply the carrying into effect of the golden rule. It is simply the bringing on earth of that kingdom of righteousness for which the Master told His disciples to pray, and therefore, to work. . . . . It is no mere dream of dreamers. It is no mere imagining of a crank, or cranks. We believe it is possible to abolish involuntary poverty. We believe it is possible to bring about a state of society in which there will be work for all, leisure for all, abundant opportunities for development for all, because we believe God is good, because we believe that His laws do not support injustice, that they are such as will give their fullest development to all reasonable human hopes and aspirations; and here in New Zealand, as there in the United States, or still more in the old country, the man who is working in this cause is working, not merely for his own children, not merely for his own community, but for the whole Anglo-Saxon race, and not only for the Anglo-Saxon race, but for the whole world; and in that spirit of fraternity (taking Mr. Gulliver's hand) which binds us all together, whether under the North Star or the Southern Cross, I thank you all."

Mr. Gulliver asked permission to add a few words to what he had already said. He had presented the address as president of the Anti-Poverty Society, but he could not forget that there stood amongst them one whom he might call an uncrowned king—one who towered above them all—and who, therefore,

if he might so say, should have had the honor of presenting the address. He referred, of course, to Sir George Grey. He had been a tower of strength to their society, and years before it was started Sir George Grey's name had been intimately connected with the movement in which they all took such a deep interest.

Sir George Grey said:—"Mr. George is, I may say, an old friend of mine. I have corresponded with him for years, and I have to thank him for many ideas. I have to thank him also for a copy of his first work, 'Progress and Poverty,' and that has been my companion for years."

Henry George said: "Nothing could gratify me more than this opportunity of paying my respects to Sir George Grey, and there is nothing in which I feel more honored than in the presence of that man. He has been a little in advance of his time. Ten years ago he gave you what would have made you the leading English-speaking community in the whole world—the root and beginning of the Single Tax. But it was too early. Though the seed was sown, the ground had not been prepared, but I trust he may still live to see that seed springing up and growing into a tree to overshadow the whole earth. Whether he does or not is a matter, however, of little moment. When it is his time to go, he will know that the work he has done has not been useless work. It matters not now who dies, time and the tides are with us. Our enemies serve us only a little less than our friends. The only thing we fear is being ignored, and the day for that is past."

If anything were needed to show that Sir George Grey was a freeholder in the Single Tax sense, and not in the sense that Mr. Massey would have people believe, it is furnished by the address presented by the Anti-Poverty Society to Mr. Arthur Withy, when that gentleman was leaving for England in May, 1892, which concludes thus:

". . . . You are returning to Europe at a time when the institutions of the past are tottering; at a time when the long reign of feudalism* has

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*The following note, appended to the Society's copy of the address, shows that Sir George Gray was careful not to sign what he did not approve. The address had to be re-written because he disapproved of one word.

" 'Feudalism' was substituted for the word 'iniquity' at the request of Sir George Gray, before he signed the address, as he considered the land question in England had arisen slowly in the lapse of centuries of feudal conditions, and was, in that sense, less 'iniquitous' than its wanton introduction into this Colony."

In 1893 Sir George returned to England, where five years later he died. "Give the people of New Zealand my love, and may God have you in His keeping," was his last message. He sent it by his friend, our Premier, (Mr. Seddon) and there, beneath the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, where lie the ashes of so many other of England's worthies, amid the misery and magnificance of mighty London.

Under the Cross of Gold
That shines over city and river,
There shall be rest for ever
Among the wise and bold.

become intolerable, and the eyes of the millions are watching for the dawn of a brighter day.

"Knowing the ruin that the hydra-headed iniquity of land monopoly has wrought in a few short years in this fair land, you go now to witness its baleful work in those old lands where it has so long held sway. But wherever you may be we know that your voice and pen will ever be on the side of justice—simple justice for all mankind; and with hearty good wishes for your health and happiness, and in the hope that you may return ere long with ripened experience to aid us in our struggle for the right,

We are, dear sir, for the Anti-Poverty Society,

G. Grey, President,
Adam Kelly, Vice President."

A REMINISCENCE.

(For the Review.)

A few years ago I met a gentleman who had just returned from a trip to Italy. He was well known to literary fame, an able and interesting writer, a keen critic, well versed in history, literature and philosophy. I congratulated him on his safe return from the old world, and told him with what interest I had read his descriptions of the scenes and conditions he had witnessed, especially the terrible poverty only too evident in that classic land.

"There is one subject, however, which you do not seem to me to view from the right perspective; that is taxation. I would like very much to have a few minutes conversation on the subject," I remarked to him.

"Very good," he replied. "I am home every morning."

I did not wait for a second invitation, but appeared promptly at his beautiful home, surrounded by an extensive lawn, and after the old country fashion, enclosed by a wall.

After the usual greeting, he asked me what I wished to say.

"I want to call your attention to this fact," I replied: "The general population of this continent has doubled every twenty-five years while the urban population has doubled every ten years, till now, some of our cities rival the largest cities of the old world. If, therefore, one of my ancestors had acquired a few acres of land in New York a century ago, with every increase in the population he could claim from the occupants a greater and greater rental, and if that land had come as an inheritance to me, I could collect a thousand dollars ground rent daily for the occupation of each acre, provided the land was well situated. Now, if the same conditions continue another century, it must eventuate in this: those who produce nothing will get nearly everything, while those who produce everything will receive almost nothing."