

HENRY GEORGE NEWS

VOL. 13—No. 5

MARCH, 1950

10¢ A COPY—\$1.00 A YEAR

Man With a Mission By V. G. PETERSON

THE MANY thousands to whom the name Henry George is a symbol of liberty will read with eagerness this new book by his youngest child, Anna George de Mille.

But they will not be the only ones. *Henry George—Citizen of the World* has wide appeal. It is interesting and descriptive of the man and his times, and is written with a delicate intimacy which makes the reader part of the family circle. He feels, fights and suffers with George and, at the last, weeps with the devoted wife and children when the tired body, borne in state through the city streets and across the bridge to Brooklyn, is finally turned over to them "for one last night."

This is a revealing book. It shows not only the greatness of George but also his humanness. Like most young men, in his early years he longed for wealth—not for the amassing of money, but for the comforts and protection it would afford to him and his family. Yet, when wealth finally was within his grasp, he refused it, for by that time his mission in life was plain to him, and money tempted him no longer. From the moment when he realized the cause of poverty and found its cure, his life had a single purpose—to advance the reform which he so ardently advocated.

The story of Henry George is well known. He was born in Philadelphia, on September 2, 1839, in a small red-brick house which is still in use. He was the second child and oldest boy in a family of ten children, two of whom died at an early age. Brought up in a religious, middle-class atmosphere, at the age of fifteen, unable to obtain employment in his native city, he went to sea, circling the globe in fourteen months in a full-rigged merchantman, the *Hindoo*. Soon after his return he set out once more, this time for gold-crazed California. After many stirring adventures in this frontier state he worked his way into the printing business, discovered his talent for writing and, finally, entered the newspaper field.

He married and had four children. During his newspaper career in the West he became editor and part owner of the first illustrated Sunday paper to be published in the United States. He campaigned vigorously against the land-grabbing railroads whose tracks were tren pushing silver fingers into the new territory, and against other vices which he saw springing up about him.

George never compromised with principle. At the same time, he believed in law and order and in using common sense. This was demonstrated many times and no better than when he was invited to go to Delaware and get himself thrown into jail for thirty days along with a group of his friends who had made speeches in defiance of one of Delaware's blue laws.

"I do not shirk unpleasantness in the discharge of duty," he told Frank Stephens, "but I do not want to put myself, or have the Single Tax put in a false position. The point where issue is being joined does not involve the right



ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE

Author of *Henry George: Citizen of the World*

Published by The University of North Carolina Press, 1950, 276 pp. Illustrated. \$3.50. Available from Henry George School, 50 E. 69th Street, New York.

of free speech but the right to disregard local ordinances and the action of local authorities as to the use of streets. . . . Our work is to arouse the intellect and conscience of men. This cannot be done by irritating prejudice, still less by arousing adversely a proper state respect. . . . I admire the zeal of these men, but not their discretion; and I fear to trust great matters to zeal untempered by discretion."

George traveled widely and his meetings with the famous people of his day, his conversations, correspondence, speeches and impressions are vividly recorded. He had one disappointing encounter with Herbert Spencer. Karl Marx and George never met but according to Henry M. Hyndman, a British Marxist, Marx "looked through *Progress and Poverty* and spoke of it with a sort of friendly contempt; 'the capitalist's last ditch,' he said." The contempt was reciprocated, for George wrote Hyndman that he considered Marx unscientific and "a most superficial thinker, entangled in an inexact and vicious terminology." Afterwards he summed up his feelings in a letter to Thomas F. Walker: "As for Karl Marx, he is the prince of muddle-heads."

In his early visits to England, and, indeed,

throughout his life, George made it abundantly clear that he would have no truck with socialism. "An equitable principle already exists in natural laws," he contended, "which, if left unobstructed, will, with a certainty that no human adjustment could rival, give to each who takes part in the work of production that which is justly his due." He believed that the study of political economy required "no special knowledge, no extensive library, no costly laboratory. You do not even need textbooks," he said, "if you will but think for yourselves."

George ran for several public offices including that of mayor of the City of New York. Insofar as he never received sufficient votes to gain any office, it might be said that he failed, but George never saw it that way. He went into politics "to raise hell," as he told one Tammany henchman. He brought his reform openly and bravely into the political arena, baited his opponents and challenged them to argue his principles with him on the public platform. None did. Having used the campaign as a means of further telling the world what he stood for, it mattered little whether or not he obtained the office for which he had run, and his speeches after the election were those of the victor rather than the vanquished. His discouragements were never over political failures. They came only when the pace slowed and he could not see his work making the rapid progress which he so dearly longed for. However, as the years passed, even he came to realize that success would not come in his lifetime. But now he knew that what he had started would go on without him. "I can die now," he said towards the end. "This is no longer a one-man movement, no longer a 'Henry George movement.' Others will take it up." He was right—others have!

This book is rich, not alone in its wealth of detail and description, but in the splendid selections which are included from the speeches, writings and correspondence of Henry George and those with whom he worked. The entire collection of Georgeana has been carefully combed to gather into this one volume gems from the tongue and pen of a man whose ability to articulate the hopes and aspirations of simple people was, indeed, more than touched with genius. Adding further to the interest and value of *Henry George—Citizen of the World* are its many illustrations—pictures of George and his family and reproductions of cartoons and posters published during his various campaigns. The introduction by Agnes de Mille is also valuable in dramatically setting the stage for her mother's work.

Those who knew Anna George de Mille and loved her, as I did, will mourn that she is not here today to enjoy the triumph which she would have been the first to share with Don C. Shoemaker for his skillful editing. The University of North Carolina Press are to be congratulated for their foresight in bringing out at this time the life story of a great man whose message is as pertinent in our day as it was in his.

To Celebrate the Publication of

HENRY GEORGE:
CITIZEN OF THE WORLD
By ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE

The Henry George School of Social Science
Is sponsoring a dinner on

SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 1950 AT 7 P. M.
At the Town Hall Club, New York

AGNES DE MILLE, LAMBERT DAVIS AND
DON C. SHOEMAKER WILL SPEAK

Please make reservations :-- Price \$3.50