

Hamlin Garland in the STANDARD

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THE DESIRE to express a particular economic point of view has been long recognized as an influential factor in Hamlin Garland's early work. However, there have been various interpretations of the motives which led Garland to adopt and later abandon economically orientated writing.¹ A primary reason for misinterpretation of this phase of Garland's career, a notable example of which is Bernard I. Duffey's recent article in this publication,² has been the lack of information regarding Garland's economic thought and activity during the years 1887-1892, these years constituting the period of both his most intensive literary output and participation in political-economic affairs. Garland himself has sketchily outlined this period in various autobiographical recollections (see notes 5-7, 37 below), but a much more particular and explicit source of information is found in the previously unnoted and for the greater part uncollected appearances of Garland in the *Standard*.³

The *Standard* was begun as a single-tax weekly, with Henry George editor and proprietor, in New York on January 8, 1887, during the flood tide of single-tax enthusiasm in the United States. Running for mayor of New York in November, 1886, George had astonished the country by his strong showing, and his supporters immediately called for a national political party to represent single-tax ideals. This new party, the United Labor party, promptly pro-

¹ Walter Fuller Taylor presents the fullest and most substantial discussion of this phase of Garland's work, and also summarizes the various interpretations, in *The Economic Novel in America* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1942), pp. 148-183.

² "Hamlin Garland's 'Decline' from Realism," XXV, 69-74 (March, 1953). Mr. Duffey's point, partly the result of an overzealous application of the Garland-Gilder correspondence, is "that for Hamlin Garland reform and realism were never in themselves primary literary or intellectual pursuits. They were accessory for a time to his campaign for intellectual and literary success."

³ A small portion of the material utilized in this paper appears in the *Standard* reprinted from other sources, and is so indicated in the notes. The reprinting was always contemporary with the original publication.

duced a candidate for mayor of Boston, and during the week of December 5-12, 1886, George was in Boston speaking for the candidate.⁴ As Garland has related, it was hearing George speak, first at Faneuil Hall and the following night at a Boston theater, that converted him "from a passive disciple to an active advocate,"⁵ as "What had been mere intellectual agreement now became emotional aspiration."⁶ He had read *Progress and Poverty* in 1884 while still in Dakota and had completely accepted George's arguments and proposals. However, though "the trumpet call of the closing pages" filled him with a "desire to battle for the right," he did not become active in the movement, rather confining himself to self-education and establishing himself as a literary figure in Boston.⁷ Even the vitalizing Faneuil Hall speech on "the question of poverty" and that the following night on "Moses and the Land Question" failed to bring him into either the Land and Labor or the Henry George clubs then existing in Boston.

It was his trip to the West in the summer of 1887 that firmly entrenched Garland in the reform movement. The bleakness and hardship of western life, which he now viewed from the perspective of his years in Boston, were readily explained by George's land theories.⁸ Returning to Boston with "two great literary concepts—that truth was a higher quality than beauty, and that to spread the reign of justice should everywhere be the design and intent of the artist"⁹—he began attending the Sunday night meetings of the Boston Anti-Poverty Society at Horticultural Hall. At the "Ninth Regular Meeting," November 20, 1887, the chairman admitted to the audience that he had no new speaker to announce for the following week. However:

After the regular addresses a sort of "experience" meeting was held, at which an able expounder of the doctrine of the land for the people was

⁴ Boston *Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 6, 1886, p. 2 and Dec. 11, 1886, p. 8.

⁵ "Memories of Henry George," *Libertarian*, V, 280 (Nov., 1925).

⁶ "Early Days in the Henry George Movement," unpublished lecture, probably given in 1902. See *Companions on the Trail* (New York, 1931), pp. 128-129. All unpublished material cited is at the Doheny Library, University of Southern California.

⁷ *A Son of the Middle Border* (New York, 1917), pp. 318 ff.

⁸ "As one goes west from Charles City [Iowa] the country changes to a fresher green. There is much open land, richly covered with grasses, a paradise for stock raisers and yet few make use of it. The houses are mainly hovels. The towns are squalid little affairs and the whole land looks as though blighted by some mysterious curse. And it is—the speculator's curse" (from an unpublished journal of Garland's trip west in 1887).

⁹ *A Son of the Middle Border*, p. 374.

discovered in the person of Professor Hamlin Garland of Boston. Professor Garland will address the tenth meeting, to be held at the same hall next Sunday evening.¹⁰

Garland "agonized" over the address the entire week. The newspaper account of it, entitled, "The Social Aspect of the Land Tax," is quoted at length because it is basic to Garland's thought concerning social problems for many years:

The speaker began by saying that while all classes would be benefited, in a pecuniary sense, by the concentration of all taxes on land values, he proposed for the evening to consider the other benefits which would accrue, advantages which he designated as social rather than pecuniary. It was not necessary, he said, to prove that people were starving or selling themselves to the devil in order to live; for even were it true that all men in this country had enough to eat, yet there were things quite as necessary to social existence which they were unable to obtain.

The consequences of the insane policy of the people here have been to permit the speculators and monopolists to fence in, practically, the whole country not already occupied. To-day, he said, free land is a myth. We have squandered our inheritance. We gave it away in empires, we sell it now in counties. We have prepared the way for our children to be serfs under the control of the land owner. The tillable land is almost gone, and unless we rob the Indian again in the course of a few years the last of our government farming lands will be but a memory. Aye! I will go further and say that for nearly a century free land has been a myth. Every foot of it was bought with blood and sweat and tears. It was and is bought with the loss of comfort, society, education. All that justifies and makes life sweet has been given up by the settler for his lonely farm. Herbert Spencer has said that no society can be highly developed when its units are scattered over wide areas. Our land policy has constantly opposed our social development by constant dispersion of men through the wilderness. Throughout the two centuries of American history, and especially during the last century, a large portion of the American people have lived in a semi-solitude, unable to enjoy the crudest forms of education. And the tendency is toward a still wider dispersion. I went out to my native west this last summer on a visit, and everywhere I found indications of a tendency toward depression [dispersion?] which frightened me. The farms are everywhere, in Illinois, Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa getting larger, passing into the hands of the town speculator. Higher education in the rural districts is a farce.

¹⁰ *Standard*, Nov. 26, 1887, p. 5. Dated Nov. 21.

The farm for the ambitious girl or boy is a living grave, a terrible solitude that eats out the life and hope and joy of life. Youth, gloomy and despairing, old age hopeless and fruitless. In the farther west and south it is feudalism repeated—two classes, lords and serfs. Look again at the cities. Monopolization of land has produced tenement houses, kept vice and drunkenness and ignorance alive, turned millions of young men and women into machines, wearing out their lives in hopeless toil. . . .

It is obvious that the remedy must do two things; it must concentrate the units of the rural regions, and removing the pressure on the centres of population, must permit them to spread. Religion, in the ordinary sense, will not do this; prohibition will not do it; labor combinations will not do it; protection will not do it. . . . Let us raise taxes from the products of human exertion and tax the land values created by the whole people. Let us free the land. . . .

Land being held for use, not for sale, farmers would use it in the natural, civilized way; they would draw together in groups, and with the closer society would come the higher education, art, music, the drama, and the leisure to enjoy all these. Production freed, wealth would be produced till all were satisfied. Matchless musicians will not waste their lives on lonely farms, nor superb voices be lost in far sierras. Sculptors will not die in dark mines, nor poets be silent for lack of education and encouragement. The reign of justice will have begun.¹¹

During the next few months Garland spoke before the Anti-Poverty Society several times on both literary and economic topics.¹² But this offered but a limited field for the now militant convert, and in March he wrote to George offering his services as a lecturer. George accepted¹³ and it was duly announced in the *Standard* that Professor Hamlin Garland, vice-president of the anti-poverty society of Boston, is open to engagements to speak in the cause of land reform at places not too far distant from Boston, at the request of any person or organization who will arrange for meetings. Mr. Garland asks nothing for personal services. The only charge would be for actual expenses. . . .¹⁴

In the summer of 1888 Garland again went west. Before leaving, he announced that "If in Madison, La Crosse, Winona or any other

¹¹ "An Anti-Poverty Lecture in Boston," *Standard*, Dec. 10, 1887, p. 5.

¹² Noted in the *Standard* are a lecture on Victor Hugo on Dec. 25 (Dec. 31, 1887, p. 2) and a speech defending Dr. McGlynn, the celebrated single-tax "martyr," on Feb. 22 (March 3, 1888 p. 8).

¹³ George's reply to Garland, unpublished letter, March 19, 1888.

¹⁴ "Interesting to Massachusetts Anti-Povertyites," *Standard*, March 31, 1888, p. 2. This is the first indication of Garland's being made a vice-president of the Boston society.

town along the line of the Milwaukee and St. Paul route there is a single tax league, or a land and labor club, I shall be glad to stop off and help them as I go to Minneapolis."¹⁵ While he was in the West his story "A Common Case" appeared in the *Standard*. When later reprinted as "Before the Low Green Door" in *Wayside Courtships* (1897), the entire first section was omitted. It is this section which presents the background for the death of Matilda Bent, a worn-out and defeated farm wife. Norman Wheelock and Rance Knapp, two schoolteachers, discuss Matilda's life. She had been vivacious and had had a taste for finer things as a girl, Knapp notes, but

"Life on Bent's farm, as on most farms in America, is a terrible grind. Yet one person can get fat where another chafes and frets the life out. The man who is content with a diet of meat and drink alone can fat; the one who wants to live on finer fare starves. . . .

"There that woman has lived, in that miserable little hovel, for a quarter of a century. She has heard nothing, seen nothing, of the grandeur and glory of this great age we boast about. What are pictures and operas and dramas to her—or to us, for that matter, Norman? Just the sunlight and shadow play on the blank wall of our prison. The mighty pageant passes by, afar off, out of sight; we catch now and again a faint pulse of the music, a flash from a banner pierces our window; the rest is a dream."

"And yet this is America."

"Yes, this is America," he went on, in the same bitter voice. "The American farmer living in a semi-solitude, his wife a slave, both denied the things that make life worth living. Fifty per cent of these farms mortgaged, in spite of the labors of every member of the family and the most frugal living."¹⁶

After spending several weeks at his father's farm near Ordway, South Dakota, Garland wrote of the opportunities for single-tax education in the West, and also of conditions:

Things are in a deplorable condition here. It would seem that the matter of mortgages could go no further. Every local paper is filled with notices of foreclosures. . . .

Vast syndicates and single speculators hold the land vacant on every hand. The towns in point of population and prosperity are mainly

¹⁵ "Professor. Garland's Western Trip," *Standard*, June 23, 1888, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Standard*, July 28, 1888, p. 6. Reprinted from "Belford's Magazine for July."

where they were five years ago; indeed most of them have fallen into decay. . . .

There is little that is encouraging just now in the outlook, save the one consideration that the people are beginning to see their situation. It is a wonderful soil, and under the proper social conditions would make a great and prosperous state.¹⁷

After noting he had organized a tax reform club in Ordway, he closed with an announcement that he would also be available for lectures along the route of his return trip to the East.¹⁸

Meanwhile, a controversy concerning independent political action had shattered the Anti-Poverty Society, and faithful supporters of George had set up Single Tax Leagues to take its place.¹⁹ The Boston Single Tax League elected Garland its president a few months after his return.²⁰ One of his first official acts was to write to the *Standard* offering many suggestions for increased single-tax activity and outlining his own intensive propagandistic program: "I spoke last week in Whitman and also at Fitchburg. . . . I shall go to Southford in a few days to help organize a league. Also to Concord. . . . Quite a large membership has already been secured in Cambridge, where I shall speak on Friday night."²¹

Spring saw "Hints for a Spring and Summer Campaign in Massachusetts"²² and also one of the most interesting examples of the extent to which Garland could apply single-tax doctrine. Entitled "The Tragedy of a Town," the article comments upon the de-

¹⁷ "Work in New Fields," *Standard*, Aug. 25, 1888, p. 8.

¹⁸ He spoke at Indianapolis, Chicago, and Minneapolis on his way west. In Dakota he spoke several times in Brown County. Returning East, he again spoke at Minneapolis, before a Democratic group, and also at Osage, Iowa, Parkersburg, West Virginia, Baltimore, New York, and Worcester ("Prof. Garland's Western Trip," *Standard*, Oct. 13, 1888, p. 3).

¹⁹ As indicated in a dispatch from Minneapolis (*Standard*, July 28, 1888, p. 2), Garland supported George's determination to throw single-tax efforts behind the Democrats, Cleveland, and free trade rather than have the United Labor party nominate a candidate for President.

²⁰ "Boston Single Tax League Reorganized and Ready for a New Campaign," *Standard*, Nov. 10, 1888, p. 4. He remained president until Dec. 28, 1890, when he was elected one of five vice-presidents (Jan. 7, 1891, p. 18). A purely honorary office was that of vice-president of the Massachusetts Single Tax League, to which he was elected Nov. 30, 1890 (Dec. 3, 1890, p. 12).

²¹ "Cheering Words from Professor Garland—Some Capital Suggestions," *Standard*, Nov. 17, 1888, p. 3. A dispatch of Jan. 19, 1889, p. 3, notes Garland speaking at Lynn on Jan. 4, while another of Feb. 23, 1889, p. 4, reports "Prof. Garland has answered calls of granges, lyceums, and political clubs."

²² *Standard*, April 13, 1889, p. 13.

struction of the town of Leola, South Dakota, by prairie fire. Garland places the blame for the fire directly upon the land speculation which caused dispersed settlement and therefore wide areas of dry grass country. "The fault is not in the land and the sky. Settled naturally and gradually, this fertile and in many regards beautiful land would enrich and make happy its settlers."²³

Garland did not go West in the summer of 1889, but rather taught summer school in Boston and New Hampshire. Late in June his poem "Points of View" appeared in the *Standard*. Making use of the conventional device of the difference between the city and country points of view, the poem reveals Garland translating economic values directly into literary aims. First, Mr. John Walker, of Boston, writes to his brother Lew, of Creston, Iowa:

What grander thing to do, dear Lew,
Than live an honest farmer's life—
To rise with song when morn with dew
Is cool and sweet? . . .

He proceeds to envy Lew's idyllic life further, chides him for complaining of his condition, and closes finding him "In happier fortune than a king." Brother Lew replies:

You'd think from the talk of poets and girls,
That the grass was green, that sun al'ays shines
On an Iowa farm—that dew was pearls,
And bees a hummin' among the vines,
'r the buckwheat flowers; that the maid
Sings high to the pigs in the sty
While *we* stan' 'round in the hayin' field
And pose picturesquely against the sky.

Damn nonsense, Jack! Let's have the truth,
No matter how tough and hard it seems.
"The sentiment school," so Howells says,
"Are about to pass" with their gauzy dreams
Of how things used to be and ain't.
Good riddance, I say, but the laughter comes next,
The fellow who sees in the laborer's life
The cue for laughter, a first rate text.

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²³ *Standard*, April 27, 1889, p. 12, "Prof. Hamlin Garlin in Boston Transcript."

Let's have the truth, I say again,
 No matter how tough and hard it seems,
 I tell you, Jack, you might as well
 Be brute or machine without life 'r soul,
 'r dropped into Milton's coldest hell
 As grind out life on a lonely farm—
 Oh! You may talk of meat an' drink—well said!
 Your fill of *that*—but souls can't feed
 On any diet of milk and bread.

.....
 Our poet says—"Does each human soul

Find rightful realm, have chance to rise
 To higher levels, learn higher things?
 Or are we bound and starved, with eyes
 On the sunlit vista fixed, while feet
 Tread on in the daily mill
 With never a pause through cold or heat
 Till the hopeless heart is dead or still?"
 Answer me that and you answer all!

Answer me whether the rights of man
 Are honestly won in an honest race
 Or is it get who may and keep who can?
 Answer me that in your silk an' lace—
 Tell me whether the handicap
 Is not the rule? Does nature's best
 Pour into the toiler's empty lap
 Or into Dives' downy nest?²⁴

On September 7, 1889, "Under the Lion's Paw," Garland's most famous story, appeared in *Harper's Weekly*. That same day the *Standard* announced "A Story for Single Tax Clubs":

Professor Hamlin Garland has a short story called "Under the Lion's Paw," that he is prepared to read for the benefit of single tax clubs. It shows in very vivid colors the whole question of landlordism, and takes about forty minutes to read. Mr. Garland will be glad to read the story before any single tax organization on payment of his hotel and travelling expenses.²⁵

²⁴ *Standard*, June 22, 1889, p. 15. This poem was never reprinted by Garland.

²⁵ *Standard*, Sept. 7, 1889, p. 3.

The readings of "Under the Lion's Paw" proved to be so successful that Garland enlisted James A. Herne, whom he had converted to the cause that June, as a fellow reader, and the two continued reading to willing groups for several years.²⁶ The story itself appeared in the *Standard* three weeks after its *Harper's Weekly* publication.²⁷ Its single-tax implications are clear and forceful. The Haskinses, forced to settle in western Kansas by the high prices demanded for land further east, are eaten out by grasshoppers. Through the help of a kindly farmer they rent a farm in Iowa from Jim Butler, a landlord who "believed in land speculation as the surest way of getting rich." After three years of "ferocious labor" Haskins is ready to buy. But Butler, viewing the land now in terms of its increased value, the value derived from Haskins's labor, doubles the original price. The story closes with Haskins crushed and helpless under the lion's paw of unearned increment.

Garland and Herne continued to give their readings that winter, frequently appearing together, with Herne reading and Garland lecturing.²⁸ In early February Garland reviewed Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* under the title "A Great Book." The qualities which Garland indicates as making Howells's book great are particularly revealing in regard to his own fiction. First, Howells is "now dealing with the most vital of all questions, the question of the persistence of poverty, vice and crime in an age of invention, art and abundance." This is not only permissible, but required, for "His canon of art is: To see, and present as he sees, life. And because the social life is to-day filled with the discussion of problems, the movements of reformers, so we find in his latest and perhaps greatest book a magnificent study of the reform spirit of today." Moreover, "The author nowhere speaks in his own person, nowhere preaches, and yet the lesson is there for all who will read."²⁹

Not until May did Garland again contribute to the *Standard*,

²⁶ See "An Interesting Announcement," *Standard*, Sept. 28, 1889, p. 3, in which Garland announced that Herne was willing to read "Under the Lion's Paw" on Sundays while on tour.

²⁷ *Standard*, Sept. 28, 1889, pp. 12-13.

²⁸ Noted in the *Standard* are readings to be given Dec. 8 at Tremont Temple, Boston (Nov. 16, 1889, p. 10); Dec. 15 at Chickering Hall, Boston (Dec. 14, 1889, p. 13); and Feb. 2, 1890, before the Actors' Order of Friendship in New York (Jan. 29, 1890, p. 11).

²⁹ *Standard*, Feb. 5, 1890, pp. 5-6. Dated Jan. 13, 1890.

though his readings and activities continued to be chronicled.³⁰ He had established relations first with Gilder of the *Century* and then, and more happily at the time, with Flower of the *Arena*, and was directing his writing towards these outlets. July saw his "single tax play," *Under the Wheel*, which he had attempted to have Herne produce the previous year,³¹ printed in the *Arena*, and immediately reprinted in excerpts in the *Standard*.³² Utilizing the juxtaposition he had made in his first single-tax speech, Garland shows Jason Edwards driven by low wages and high rent from a tenement in Boston to "free land" in the West, only to find it controlled by speculation. Driven under the wheel by the land system, he is broken in health and spirit. Late in August the *Standard* announced the forthcoming publication of *Under the Wheel* in paper covers: "It will make a book of about fifty large pages, and will be sold at twenty-five cents per copy, possibly cheaper, for the author desires it rather to be widely read than to be a paying production. He has other plays, with reform tendencies, in preparation."³³

Meanwhile, a National Single Tax Conference had been decided upon, and Garland was among the Massachusetts delegation which answered the call in New York on September 1, 1890.³⁴ During the convention he made several short speeches on the need for more women in the crusade, a topic which he later amplified in an article.³⁵ He also took the leading role in the only controversial matter facing the conference, that of the plank inserted by George into the platform calling for government control of railroads. Garland believed that "The principle [of the railway plank] is entirely away from our line of advance. We are advancing along the line of

³⁰ Garland and Herne gave their program at Lynn on Feb. 6 (Feb. 12, 1890, p. 12) and Dorchester on April 14 (April 23, 1890, p. 13). Garland himself spoke at Hyde Park on Jan. 22 (Feb. 12, 1890, p. 12), and in Boston on April 15 (April 16, 1890, p. 11). The May article was "The Massachusetts Plan," May 7, 1890, p. 12. Dated May 5.

³¹ Unpublished letter, Herne to Garland, Aug. 1, 1889.

³² *Standard*, July 30, 1890, pp. 6-7. The excerpts reprinted were from scenes i, iii, and vi.

³³ "Notes and Queries," *Standard*, Aug. 27, 1890, p. 6. Utilizing the *Arena* plates, the play was printed by "The Barta Press" to be sold for twenty-five cents.

³⁴ "The Conference," *Standard*, Sept. 3, 1890, p. 8, exhibits a pen-and-ink drawing of "Hamlin Garland of Massachusetts" among a number of like sketches of single-tax notables.

³⁵ "The Conference. . . Full Report of the Proceedings," *Standard*, Sept. 10, 1890, pp. 13, 25. The article was "Women and Their Organization," *Standard*, Oct. 8, 1890, pp. 5-6. Dated Sept. 27.

absolute freedom, and it is not freedom to put into government hands . . . the running of trains. . . ." A question was put to Garland about current government ownership of street railways, fire departments, and the mail.

Professor Garland—It can be better done by private contract, under proper conditions, when you have the single tax on land values. That is a comprehensive thing. It goes to the bottom of every monopoly, no matter what it may be. Mind you, I yield to no man in my devotion to the single tax and my admiration of our great leader, Henry George.

He then offered a compromise plank—to have government ownership of the roadbed, this to be leased to railroads. When this too was attacked, "Professor Garland of Massachusetts then withdrew his proposition, saying he did not care to impress his own personal opinions upon others who might disagree with him. (Great Applause.)"³⁶

The previous two years had seen the rising of the Farmers' Alliance organizations in the West and South as political forces. Flower, who had a catholic interest in reform, suggested to Garland late in 1890 that he write a serial novel for the *Arena* dealing "with the revolt of the farmers," and that he travel in the West to gather material.³⁷ Garland accepted, and the *Standard* carried the usual notice offering his services as a reader and lecturer while traveling.³⁸ The attitude of the *Standard* toward the political movement of the western farmers was hostile. Not only was it now antagonistic toward any third-party movement, but it considered the farmers incompetent economic thinkers. "Taken as a whole," an editorial read late in 1890, "the Farmers' Alliance, like the old greenback movement, is a sincere protest by honest and earnest men against real wrongs, the cause of which they fail to understand and the remedy for which they cannot see."³⁹ As usual, the *Standard* pledged itself to the Democrats as long as they would fight for free trade.

Garland traveled about the country several months gathering material for his novel, not returning to Boston till the spring of

³⁶ *Standard*, Sept. 10, 1890, pp. 27-28.

³⁷ *A Son of the Middle Border*, p. 422. See also *Roadside Meetings* (New York, 1930), pp. 175-188.

³⁸ "Personal," *Standard*, Nov. 19, 1890, p. 11.

³⁹ *Standard*, Dec. 10, 1890, p. 2.

1891. But in the fall he was back in Iowa, campaigning with Jerry Simpson and Mary Ellen Lease for the People's party candidates, and for several weeks after the election delivering single-tax speeches throughout Iowa.⁴⁰ In late January, 1892, he was again in the West, this time in Chicago, participating in a national platform-making meeting of the leaders of the People's party. The Chicago Single Tax Club invited him to address their group. The secretary of the club wrote:

Professor Hamlin Garland has been in the city for a week past. He took an active part in the conference between the various political reform bodies that are seeking to form a new party, and was a member of the committee that drew up the platform or basis of agreement. His influence seems to have been quite definitely felt, the land plank being rather more explicit than any declaration hitherto made by these elements. . . .⁴¹

After noting Garland's description of the farmers' movement, the secretary reports his speech verbatim:

I was prejudiced against the Alliance . . . before I went out to study it. Not that I questioned the honesty of its motives, or the general intelligence and patriotism of its adherents. But I regarded its methods as doubtful, and its aims as foolish, if not worse. When I got among the farmers, however, and really got an understanding of their position, I changed my mind. I found they were not so far wrong after all. They are not pig-headed and reactionary. On the contrary they are alive to new ideas and willing to be set right if it can be shown that they are wrong. They eagerly heard me in advocacy of the single tax. Their meetings were thrown open to me everywhere. . . . So I have cut loose from the old moorings and have thrown myself heart and soul into the

⁴⁰ Herman C. Nixon, "The Populist Movement in Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, XXIV, 59 (Jan., 1926); *Standard*, Nov. 18, 1891, p. 9.

⁴¹ This interesting claim was also made twice by Garland; first in Annie L. Diggs, *The Story of Jerry Simpson* (Wichita, 1908), p. 248, and later in "Memories of Henry George," p. 279, also in association with Jerry Simpson. It seems quite likely, though most probably Simpson, who was also a single taxer and who was present at the Chicago meeting, was more influential than Garland in strengthening the land plank. The preceding platforms of the revolt, from the initial St. Louis Demands of Dec., 1889, to the Cincinnati Platform of May, 1891, all demanded a prohibition of alien ownership of land and the reclaiming by the government of lands held by railroads and other corporations in excess of use. The land plank which was prepared at Chicago for the St. Louis Platform of Feb., 1892, and which was later included in the famous Omaha Platform of July, 1892, differed in that these proposals were given a single-tax foundation: "The land, including all the natural resources of wealth, is the heritage of all the people and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes. . . ." For the various platforms, see John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt* (Minneapolis, 1931), pp. 427-444.

farmers' movement. I think Single Taxers have been too much Democrats and not enough for the single tax. . . . But there is a glowing hope in the other direction. The revolution is upon us. The farmers are awake and in dead earnest. They are armed against the three great fundamental monopolies—the monopoly of land, the monopoly of transportation, and the monopoly of money. The free silver notion is practically dead. Discussion killed it. But the farmers are after the monopolists and will never rest till they have been run down. It is our duty to go with them and lead them in the right way. They are ripe for the single tax and we can make their party our party if we will but throw our energies in the right direction.⁴²

The secretary concluded with the observation that the audience was attentive, but that it "was not carried away with the notion of leaving the Democrats for the third party—at least, just now." Nor was it carried away when Garland was again in Chicago, in May, after a tour of the South, when he again addressed the club prior to attending the People's party presidential nominating convention at Omaha.⁴³ That fall he again campaigned vigorously in Iowa, but as in 1891, the People's party was entirely unsuccessful in that state.⁴⁴

But before this, on August 31, 1892, the *Standard* ceased publication. It had declined appreciably in quality since early 1890 and had become a problem.⁴⁵ Eighteen ninety-two also marked a turning point in Garland's career. *A Spoil of Office*, his novel of the farmers' revolt, was not a success. In late 1892, during an interview in which he reiterated his single-tax beliefs, he also declared he would no longer deal with political questions in his writings, for, as he put it, "my ideas in this respect have been stated."⁴⁶ With his move to Chicago in 1893, he determined to devote himself to "correcting any narrow view of my work" and sending out "purely

⁴² "Single Tax News. . . . Illinois," *Standard*, Feb. 3, 1892, pp. 7-8.

⁴³ "Single Tax News. . . . Discussion in Chicago," *Standard*, May 11, 1892, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Nixon, "The Populist Movement in Iowa," p. 64.

⁴⁵ When W. T. Croasdale, the editor who succeeded George in Jan., 1891, died in Aug., 1891, there was a debate in the *Standard* on whether to continue it or not. Garland, in "The Future of 'The Standard,'" Aug. 26, 1891, p. 9, urged its continuation and pledged his support to the new editor. However, as early as Sept., 1890, he had written to George about the poor quality of the paper (unpublished letter, George to Garland, Sept. 11, 1890).

⁴⁶ ". . . An Interesting Interview with a New Literary Lion—He Touches Briefly on His Political Views," *Los Angeles Herald*, Nov. 27, 1892, p. 3.

literary books."⁴⁷ Moreover, he had been wrong concerning the free-silver question. It sprang to life in 1893, and soon dominated the People's party. Garland gradually withdrew from the movement and confined himself to "pure" single-tax missionary work.⁴⁸ But this too declined as other interests captured him, and the movement itself, but for the sudden reappearance of George as candidate for mayor of New York in 1897, also began losing the great popular appeal it had had in the late eighties, and was more and more confined to a core of die-hard partisans.

The pattern of Garland's involvement in the reform agitation of 1887-1892 is clear, then, and partly explicates his estrangement from reform of later years. His intense single-tax partisanship, a belief which brooked no exceptions, led him to devote himself to the movement during its period of expansiveness. As it atrophied politically and the farmers of the West, always Garland's first concern, formed their movement of revolt, he joined them, not changing allegiance but rather changing agencies for the more immediate fulfillment of his belief, confident that he and other single-tax farm leaders could push the movement in that direction. When this too failed and the single-tax movement itself narrowed, it was not unnatural that Garland, though always the true believer, should gradually withdraw himself, particularly as he now began viewing controversial writing as detrimental to his literary career.

In those early years the religious idiom in which George and his followers discussed the single-tax movement was well applicable to Garland's attitude toward it. He grasped the single tax so tightly, so fully did it occupy his belief, that without difficulty he could see it as a solution to all the problems befalling man, and particularly the western farmer. The single tax was never merely an economic formula to Garland, but always, as to George, a means by which

⁴⁷ Garland to Herbert Stone, Jan. 18, 1894; published by John T. Flanagan, "Hamlin Garland Writes to His Chicago Publisher," *American Literature*, XXIII, 452 (Jan., 1952).

⁴⁸ He continued lecturing on single-tax topics for several years. He came to know George more closely during the winters of 1891-1892 and 1892-1893, which he spent in New York when not traveling. When George ran for mayor of New York in 1897, Garland campaigned for him and was in charge of the funeral arrangements when George died during the campaign. In later years, characteristically, he took part in social affairs connected with the single-tax movement, such as being toastmaster at the twenty-fifth anniversary dinner of *Progress and Poverty* in Jan., 1905 (*Companions on the Trail*, pp. 265-266) and speaking at George's tomb at a memorial service in Sept., 1927 (*Afternoon Neighbors*, New York, 1934, p. 443).

the freedom of opportunity which was man's natural right could operate in conjunction with a rich and beneficent nature and the natural law of progress to achieve the millennium. It was the machinations of men, obstructing this natural law by monopoly of the land, which were the true evil—the land speculator being the personification of this evil.

It is this crushing of individual opportunity by land speculation which is stressed in Garland's stricter single-tax work, such as "Under the Lion's Paw" and *Under the Wheel*. But all the stories conceived during this period which present hardship, poverty, and lack of "culture" in the West are intrinsically single-tax stories, as Garland viewed these conditions as derived from current land policy. The single-tax writer exposed these conditions, and though he did not directly indicate the remedy, such a method defeating his purpose, he exhibited the failings of contemporary life in single-tax terms. Thus, for example, such interlocking themes which appear in Garland's early work as the contrast between a beautiful and beneficent nature and a narrow-minded, poverty-stricken farmer, the emphasis upon the intellectually stifling nature of western life, or the stress upon the prevalence of solitude in the West can clearly be seen as indications of his exemplification of single-tax doctrine.