

Remarks by
SAMUEL SEABURY
 UPON MRS. ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE

At The Henry George School, New York City

March 18, 1949

ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE was a worthy daughter of her great father, Henry George. She was born in San Francisco in 1878 while her father was still engaged in writing his monumental work, *Progress and Poverty*. She was brought to this city when her family moved east two years later. Although her education consisted only of the usual school curriculum, she enjoyed the priceless advantage of her father's careful tutoring. In addition to this she was a great reader. Thus she cultivated her taste for all that was valuable in art and literature. It was while attending school that she met her future husband, William B. de Mille. They were married in 1902. Their two daughters, Agnes and Margaret, have since made distinguished careers for themselves in the fields of art and letters, without in any respect abating their interest in the great truths which Henry George taught.

Mrs. de Mille was known to all Single Taxers as a devoted disciple of her father's teaching. It was not merely personal affection for her father which led her to espouse this cause. Her intellectual honesty required that she first be convinced of the validity of the principles he expounded. She early mastered them and made them her own through long and careful study. Throughout her life she worked tirelessly to advance them. This was especially true during the last decade when she gave practically her entire time to this work. She never stopped her efforts. She talked to people in all walks of life, wherever and whenever she met them. She held children's classes. She lectured all over this country and in many European cities. Wherever she went she would loyally visit her father's friends and supporters. Her correspondence was enormous, and she carried it on without the aid of a secretary. She was a member of practically every organization devoted to the promotion of Henry George's principles. This school was especially dear to her; indeed, she was its first president. I need not recite her many admirable characteristics. She was one who was constant and unswerving in purpose. That purpose was the establishment of a just society which would guarantee to each the product of his own labor with equal access by all to this earth's natural resources.

Mrs. de Mille's death in 1947 was a great loss to us all. She was 68 years old at the time. I had known her personally ever since she was a girl. I first met her in her father's home down the Narrows. At her funeral at the Riverside Church it was my sad privilege to read passages from *Progress and Poverty* which she herself had selected.

I propose in tribute to Anna George de Mille to recount here briefly an early experience of mine which was unforgettable. In the year 1897 I, in common with a number of others who had been inspired with the ideals of Henry George, participated in the campaign in which he ran for Mayor of New York City. He sought this office not for any personal aggrandizement. It was chiefly of value in helping to make known the principles for which he stood.

My most vivid recollection centers about a certain night, October 28, 1897, on which I

accompanied Henry George on a campaign trip. It was the last time I saw him. Let me read you a memorandum which I wrote a few days later. It is dated November 6, 1897.

"The night before Henry George died, I was one of a party to accompany him as far as College Point, Long Island. Mr. George went on to Whitestone, where he addressed a meeting and from there came to College Point. I was addressing a meeting at Turn Hall, College Point, when I saw from the action of the audience that Mr. George was entering the Hall. He walked down the aisle and took a seat on the stage amid the cheers and enthusiastic applause of those present. He seemed to me to be rather pale and somewhat dazed. I noticed that he did not remove his hat for some time after he entered the hall. This, at the time, I attributed to absent-mindedness. In crossing the 34th Street Ferry, to Long Island City, and on the train to College Point, I noticed Mr. George very carefully. On the boat he read a newspaper for a few minutes and then examined the map of Long Island hanging in the cabin. Mr. George participated in the conversation, but contented himself with asking a few questions. On the train he removed his hat and spectacles and rested his head on the back of the seat. He looked to me as if he was almost exhausted. Every now and then, however, he would arouse himself, brighten up and ask some member of the party some question. The extreme gentleness of his manner is what particularly impressed me." This is the end of my memorandum.

My duty had been to speak at the successive meetings before or after Henry George's arrival, to keep the crowd together and prevent them from becoming impatient. Henry George had been in ill health and Mrs. George devotedly accompanied him that night to do whatever was humanly possible to lighten the burden of this work, for nothing would stop him from carrying it on. The city was very different in those days from what we know now, and the journey that night was an arduous one for a sick man to undertake. Except for the Brooklyn Bridge, there were no bridges, subways or tunnels then. We crossed from 34th Street, New York, to Long Island City in one of the old ferry boats. When we arrived at Long Island City, we had to take a train to College Point where we parted, I to go to one meeting, he to another at Whitestone.

The meetings of those days were wildly enthusiastic ones. Henry George was looked upon as a social savior by the masses of the people, who perhaps did not thoroughly grasp his philosophy, but were wiser than they knew. The meetings were largely attended by the laboring classes. There was always a sprinkling of intellectuals, who were masters of Henry George's teachings and were ready at all times to support the cause for which he fought.

Among those who helped in this campaign, I recall the names of Lawson Purdy, who is a distinguished economist and eminent lawyer; Benjamin Doblin, a merchant at whose place of business on Broadway between 13th and 14th Streets many of our meetings took place,



Agnes de Mille

Agnes de Mille (Mrs. Walter Prude) presided at a meeting on March 18th at the Henry George School in New York in honor of her mother, Anna George de Mille, whose posthumous book about her father, Henry George, will be published next autumn by the Chapel Hill Press.

"It is an absolute fact," said Agnes de Mille, speaking of her mother, "that everything I have achieved or stand for in the theater is in reality her doing. All her life she sacrificed for me and devoted herself to me; and swept the stages, sewed the costumes, sat up all night addressing envelopes. She was a passionate human being. This school in a sense stands because of that burning flame. She was absolutely indomitable, unafraid, indefatigable."

Agnes de Mille, noted theatrical director and choreographer, will dance at two performances on April 16 and 17 for the benefit of the Henry George School. The brilliant caste includes many stars, and the program will be of unusual interest.

and Robert Schalkenbach, whose name is well known to all the followers of Henry George, an able businessman. He left a foundation which today furthers the propagation of Henry George's principles.

The next scene which I recall from those days took place the following day when I was going to my office, wearing a Henry George button. Someone unknown to me accosted me on the street. "Your candidate is dead," he exclaimed. At first I thought he was not serious, but he seemed in earnest and told me to step in at the nearest saloon where the news was being carried over the ticker. Thus I confirmed the tragic passing of that great leader. He died before the campaign could be fought to an end.

I recall the funeral procession which the people of the City of New York gave Henry George. It was a magnificent tribute witnessed by hundreds of thousands of the citizens of this city. I doubt if there has been since that time a more impressive one. He was loved and respected by those of us who knew him, and he was revered by hundreds of thousands who had read his works.

The hopes of mankind depend upon the success of the movement which will free natural opportunities for the use of all mankind, and permit free trade between the nations of the world. Unless we open the opportunities to world trade, we shall proceed to other world wars. There can be no other alternative.

Henry George's daughter had many of his attributes, for which we honored and esteemed her. There was no more valiant fighter for the principles for which Henry George stood than Anna George de Mille, who dedicated her life to that great cause.