

THE PANACEA FOR POVERTY.

HENRY GEORGE ON THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION THAT HE EXPECTS.

Mr. Henry George lectured in the Brooklyn Academy of Music last evening, to an audience which filled the orchestra seats and half filled the seats in the balcony and dress circle, on the subject of "The Crime of Poverty." Mr. George said that he insisted that poverty was a crime. It was the poor who filled our jails. They had in New-Jersey six rich men who were in jail, but these were exceptional cases, and they were getting up petitions to have them released. All over the world poverty was what men mostly feared. Temples were erected all over the civilized world to the living God, but really the devil that most men feared was the devil of want, and the hell which most men feared was the hell of poverty.

"Poverty," said Mr. George, "does not necessarily mean intemperance and vice. Nothing is more false than that poverty is the result of intemperance and vice. And yet nothing is truer than that this ought to be so. It ought to be that only the intemperate and vicious should be poor. The Creator decreed that poverty should only come from idleness and vice, and nothing shows that nature has lost her hold in this world so forcibly as the fact that industry does not command wealth. All over the civilized world it is not the man who works the hardest in producing wealth that becomes rich. The whole question whether poverty is a crime turns on the question whether we must have poverty. If poverty is not a necessity, then it is not a crime. But what can be more certain than that poverty is not a necessity? In the very infancy of the arts the natural bread winner could sustain himself and his family. He could provide bread and meat for his family. In every direction as man's wants increased his power of producing food for himself increased. And yet man to-day in New-York and London, where wealth concentrates, is in want of food. No such poverty as exists there exists in nature. There is want in nature, but there is no such thing in nature as starvation in the very midst of abounding wealth." Mr. George said that the trouble to-day was not overproduction; it was unjust distribution. The most dangerous men to-day, he said, were not the Nihilists; they were the men who said, "This will do to-day; we can wait for to-morrow." Poverty demands for its cure something greater than alms. It demands justice. The power is in the hands of the poor, and they cannot throw the responsibility upon the rich. "What the poor have to do," said Mr. George, "is to seek the cause of this trouble, and then demand the remedy. It will not do to seek violent measures until every other method has failed. The other methods will not fail when the poor stand to the front and seek the cause of their trouble.

"So long as land is the property of a class," the speaker said, "it is not in the province of the Almighty to prevent poverty. Just so long, then, will we want in the midst of plenty. If we are all born to the same right, if we have equal rights to life, then we must have right to land, which was given to us by the Creator, who created us and the land. But, it will be said, you can't divide up the land. Of course you can't divide up the land. I don't know of any sensible man who would suggest such a thing. But it would not be impracticable to divide up its income. Begin, if needs be, by shifting the taxes on to the value of land. The effect would be in the first place to give an enormous and increasing fund to public use. By taking this revenue coming from the land we should not only have enough to pay the expense of the Government, but also enough to give every man, when he came to a certain age, a pension large enough to keep him comfortably the rest of his life."

The speaker said that he asked his audience simply to think for themselves. He believed if his hearers would think earnestly on the subject, they would see that the cause of poverty was simply the fact that men were denied their birthright. On the other side of the ocean, he said, the cry for land for the people had been raised, and he believed it would soon begin here. The great social revolution, he thought, had already begun in this country, which, by peaceful or warlike means, would aid in carrying out the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

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