

asm, yet with assurances of respect.

HERBERT SPENCER AND HENRY GEORGE.

As Part II of the "Unpublished Letters" of the late Herbert Spencer there appeared in the Independent of May 26, 1904, under cover of British and American copyright, a collection of this distinguished philosopher's private letters relative to Henry George. These hitherto unpublished documents were addressed by Mr. Spencer to Mr. James A. Skilton, an American friend and disciple, and were written between January 6, 1893, and January 19, 1894. They are introduced to the readers of the Independent by an explanatory note in which the editor of the Independent says:

Henry George published his work entitled "A Perplexed Philosopher" through the now defunct house of Charles L. Webster & Co., in 1892. Its sub-title, "An Examination of Mr. Herbert Spencer's Various Utterances on the Land Question, with Some Incidental Reference to His Synthetic Philosophy," indicates its scope and purpose. Mr. George collated and compared the views expressed in Spencer's "Social Statics" (1850) with his later views, particularly those expressed in "Justice" (1892), and charged the philosopher with having recanted in order to win the favor of the political and social leaders of England. Spencer had, indeed, so thoroughly revised his views on the land question that the change can only rightly be termed a practical reversal, even though he himself insisted on calling it a "modification." On this point, and on the arguments by which he justified his change of front, Mr. George had ample grounds for attack. Unfortunately, however, instead of devoting his work to an examination of these arguments, Mr. George slighted his opportunities and directed an attack on Spencer's character, wherein he was clearly and entirely in the wrong, and a further attack on Spencer's philosophy, for which he was wholly unfitted.

In one respect the Independent's note is entirely just. Mr. Spencer had, indeed, "so thoroughly revised his views on the land question that the change can only rightly be termed a practical reversal."

Whether this excellent magazine is as fair in asserting that Mr. George was clearly and entirely in the wrong in attacking Mr. Spencer's character and wholly unfitted for attacking his philosophy as

he did, will be determined by the candid upon no one's ipse dixit. All the materials for forming an intelligent judgment are too easily accessible for that.

I

"A Perplexed Philosopher," Mr. George's book to which the Independent's note refers and Mr. Spencer's posthumously published letters relate, was written with the object, as the author says in the introduction, of defending and advancing a principle in which he saw "the only possible relief from much that enthralled and degrades and distorts, turning light to darkness and good to evil."

It was not written primarily "to gage a philosopher or weigh a philosophy." Yet at one point the philosopher had to be gaged and his philosophy weighed. The disinterestedness of the one and the soundness of the other became important factors in the controversy at the point where Spencer diverged from his original theory of equal rights to the earth, and, by what the Independent justly calls a "practical reversal," proceeded to take up a position in direct and fundamental hostility to his original one which George had adopted and to which George adhered.

The reason George gives for gaging the philosopher is that Mr. Spencer's place in the intellectual world was so exalted as to influence the large majority of his followers to bow before him as to one in authority and accept his dicta more as matter of faith than of reason. While recognizing that in some fields of investigation the ability and the intellectual honesty of the investigator may safely be distinguished, respect being paid to the one though the other is distrusted, Mr. George held that this is not so in the field of philosophy. "Since philosophy is the search for truth, the philosopher who in his teachings is swerved by favor or by fear forfeits all esteem as a philosopher." Will any one dispute the soundness of that opinion?

And although not a special student of the Spencerian philosophy, Mr. George had a cogent reason for weighing it, in so far as he ventured to do so. His competency to that extent is hardly open to rational question. As Mr.

Spencer's treatment of the principle of equal rights to the earth began with his first book and ended with his last, he furnished in that treatment what Mr. George describes as "a cross-section of his teachings, traversing the open plain of obvious facts and common perceptions." With that cross-section of Spencerianism, George believed that men of only ordinary knowledge and mental power might fairly bring to a test the vaunted perfection of this otherwise esoteric philosophy. If he was mistaken in that belief and in the result of his own test, it is nevertheless true that no explanation of his mistake has yet escaped the Spencerian sanctum sanctorum, wherein alone the mistake appears to be obvious.

It was wholly without reference, however, to the Spencerian philosophy itself and to Spencer's personality that George undertook the task of writing "A Perplexed Philosopher." Those considerations were incidental. The primary purpose was to weigh Mr. Spencer's latest opinion on the land question as disclosed in his latest book, "Justice." That George did this, and did it fairly, no candid reader of his book can dispute, whether he agrees with its conclusions or not; and every such reader will incline to suspect the candor of exclamations against George's "attack on Spencer's character" which ignore his refutation of Spencer's land theory as "modified" and the circumstances under which it came to be "modified."

George's book begins with a clear statement and explanation of Spencer's original theory regarding the land question, and, tracing his public expressions on that subject down to his latest, prints every one in full. "I shall not ask the reader to accept anything from me," writes Mr. George at page xv of the introduction (Memorial and Library editions); "all I ask of him is to judge for himself Mr. Spencer's own public declarations."

To this invitation George adds, in a spirit which one might wish but would wish in vain to find in Mr. Spencer's posthumously published letters, the following con-

siderate observations. They furnish the keynote to his book:

The respect for authority, the presumption in favor of those who have won intellectual reputation, is, within reasonable limits, both prudent and becoming. But it should not be carried too far, and there are some things especially as to which it behooves us all to use our own judgment and to maintain free minds. For not only does the history of the world show that undue deference to authority has been the potent agency through which errors have been enthroned and superstitions perpetuated, but there are regions of thought in which the largest power and the greatest acquirements cannot guard against aberrations or assure deeper insight. One may stand on a box and look over the heads of his fellows, but he no better sees the stars. The telescope and the microscope reveal depths which to the unassisted vision are closed. Yet not merely do they bring us no nearer to the cause of suns and animalcula, but in looking through them the observer must shut his eyes to what lies about him. That intension is at the expense of extension is seen in the mental as in the physical sphere. A man of special learning may be a fool as to common relations. And that he who passes for an intellectual prince may be a moral pauper there are examples enough to show. As we must go to the shoemaker if we would be well shod and to the tailor if we would be well clad, so as to special branches of knowledge must we rely upon those who have studied them. But while yielding to reputation the presumption in its favor and to authority the respect that is its due, let us not too much underrate our own powers in what is concerned with common facts and general relations. While we may not be scientists or philosophers, we, too, are men. . . . The power to reason correctly on general subjects is not to be learned in schools, nor does it come with special knowledge. It results from care in separating, from caution in combining, from the habit of asking ourselves the meaning of the words we use and making sure of one step before building another on it—and above all, from loyalty to truth. Giving to Mr. Spencer, therefore, the presumption that is due to his great reputation, but at the same time using his own reason, let the reader consider the matter I shall lay before him.

Surely every just man will feel that if George's book is in harmony with the spirit of that introduction, the philosophy and the philosopher it may seem to attack need a better defense than these irritable and vituperative private letters from Mr. Spencer, first published after the death of both men and ten years after Mr.

Spencer wrote them. Mr. Spencer himself appears to have felt their inappropriateness, for he forbade the publication of anything in them as from him. "Of course," he writes in a postscript to the first and principal one, "if any of these expressions or statements are used," in answer to Mr. George, "it must be with change from the first person to the third—'I' must everywhere be changed to 'he.'"

That George's book really is in harmony with the spirit of the introductory passage we quote, may be seen at the mere cost of reading it. Mr. Spencer's more devoted disciples have apparently neglected doing this. Mr. Spencer himself confesses to having studiously avoided it. According to his posthumously published letter of January 6, 1893, he did no more than to read the introduction and allow his secretary to read to him "sundry of the calumnious and vituperative passages." Upon that basis alone he outlined the proposed reply.

But his American friend, Mr. Skilton, to whom all these letters were written, was evidently not satisfied. For Mr. Skilton appears from Mr. Spencer's letters to have urged upon Mr. Spencer the importance of a Spencerian reply to George upon the merits of the land question controversy as presented in "The Perplexed Philosopher." Mr. Spencer insisted, however, upon confining his reply to the one question of his own personal good faith. This is disclosed by the Spencer letter of May 1, 1893, written four months after the first letter in which Spencer furnished material for answering George—a period of profound silence on the part of Spencer and the American Spencerians, but a silence explained by this disagreement as to tactics between Spencer and his American friends. In that letter we find the following:

We evidently take somewhat different views of the situation. You appear to look largely, or mainly, at the general question, whereas to me the general question is of no importance. The "Synthetic Philosophy" can take care of itself, and I don't care a straw if it is attacked by Mr. Henry George or half a dozen Henry Georges, with as many popes to back them. Pray say nothing about it nor anything in defense of it.

I should be vexed were any step taken in its support. Similarly about the land question. I have never dreamed of entering into controversy with Mr. Henry George about that or anything else, and I should be sorry to see anyone take up the land question on my behalf. The only thing about which I am concerned is the personal question—the vile calumny which the man propagates, and the only question is whether it is worth while to do anything in the way of rebutting this. Whatever is done should, I think, be done at once; and, indeed, the delay that has already taken place seems to me injurious.

What an utter lack of justice, to say nothing of its wisdom from the Spencerian point of view, there was in that attitude toward George's criticism, may be inferred from an outline, necessarily very brief, of the subject matter of George's book.

II

This book of George's, aptly named "A Perplexed Philosopher," opens with an account of Spencer's first book, "Social Statics," which appeared in 1850. In that book Spencer laid down the fundamental principle of equal freedom—that "every man may claim the fullest liberty to exercise his faculties compatible with the possession of like liberty by every other man," and from that first principle he deduced the principle of equal rights to the use of the earth. The chapter in which Spencer made this deduction George reproduces in full, and then summarizes its argument.

In that chapter George finds a passage which appeared to him at first to be incongruous, because it seemed to admit that equal rights to the earth of the men of a living generation are to some extent nullified by an equitable necessity for compensating the grantees of all previous generations. But upon taking the whole chapter into more critical consideration George concludes that this apparent incongruity was due to a careless form of statement by Mr. Spencer, who meant by compensation not compensation for relinquishing grants of title to the earth, but for the value of improvements.

The next chapter in Spencer's "Social Statics" dealt with questions of property rights. This also is quoted in full and its arguments summarized by Mr. George,

who thereupon points out with incisive and impersonal reasoning certain confusions relative to human rights and economic values by which he believed Mr. Spencer had been slightly misled. But these "crudities and seeds of error" he held to be of little moment beside the "sterling merit" of Spencer's argument as a whole.

Passing then to a subsequent book of Mr. Spencer's, "Political Institutions," Mr. George observes that therein, in 1882, Mr. Spencer repeated the views on the land question which he had set forth in "Social Statics" 32 years before.

But now came what George describes as Mr. Spencer's stage of "Repudiation," in significant contrast with his preceding one of "Declaration." It is marked by published utterances of Mr. Spencer's, beginning soon after the publication of "Political Institutions," all of which appear in full in Mr. George's book. They are there dissected absolutely without any appearance of personal feeling, and with entire freedom from anything that could possibly be regarded as calumnious—unless it be calumnious to point out what the criticised utterances themselves plainly show, that Mr. Spencer was evasive; and what all the circumstances suggest, that he had strong human reasons for being so.

"Recantation" is the next stage in Mr. Spencer's land-question evolution. Here Mr. George's book presents criminating facts which Mr. Spencer never publicly denied, which no one ever publicly denied for him, and about which his recently published letters on the Henry George controversy are silent.

Among these facts is the emasculation of "Social Statics" in the American edition of 1891, so as to expunge its theory of equal rights to the earth. The facts regarding this, as Mr. George discloses and connects them, are peculiarly condemnatory. What they mean, if not what George implies, it would be more than difficult to say.

About this time, also, "Justice" appeared, wherein Mr. Spencer reaches the conclusion, through his system of philosophy,

that landlords own the earth by a practically indefeasible title, resting upon equitable considerations, and that this title gives them the strongest kind of right to deprive all other men of equal freedom to use the earth, until they, the landlords, are paid for the privilege.

As an indication of the weakness of Mr. Spencer's argument, which George lays bare, a single example must here suffice. Still acknowledging the moral right in the abstract of equal freedom to the use of the earth, but asserting an equally strong moral right on the part of its owners to be compensated for that freedom, he concludes, upon making a calculation which credits the landowners of England with what they have paid for the support of the landless poor but does not charge them with the rents they have or could have received from the land they claim, that the amounts thus paid to the landless would outweigh the rights of the landless, and so make legal recognition of equal freedom to the use of the earth a profitless innovation. The omission of ground rents as a debit against landlords in an account which treats their land taxes as a credit, should cast suspicion upon an ordinary book-keeper, not to mention a distinguished philosopher.

If George suspected Spencer's good faith in his amazing recantation on the land question, it was because George could not account for the holes in Spencer's reasoning upon any theory of intellectual incapacity. Maybe he ought to have considered the probability of Spencer's declining mental powers; but it is easier to make that explanation now than at the time when George wrote, for Spencer's reputation was then still in the ascendant. Be that as it may, George believed that he had found the explanation in Spencer's manifest disposition to conserve a reputation for intellectual greatness by deferring in his later publications to the powerful interests which a reiteration of his earlier opinions would offend.

Nor let any one suppose that this was an unfounded inference. Whether Spencer deserved his condemnation or not, George cer-

tainly made as clear a case on the element of guilty motive as was ever made by prosecuting attorney in criminal court.

That, however, is of secondary importance. So is the other incidental inquiry that George makes—his examination into the elements of the Spencerian philosophy. This inquiry is necessitated by the fact that George's book "A Perplexed Philosopher," is a review and criticism of Spencer's book "Justice," in so far as the latter relates to the land question; and "Justice" is "by its author deemed the very summit and capstone of his whole philosophy." Secondary though that inquiry was, it therefore belonged in the controversy; and the Spencerian advocate is yet to appear with any show of evidence that George proved himself unfit for the task.

But "Justice," besides being the climax of Mr. Spencer's philosophical structure, presented his final views on the subject of legal property rights in land. Its most important single point, probably, is his contention that justice demands the compensation of landlords as a condition of their expropriation. The antithesis of this is the most important single point in George's book. There, then, is where the vital issue between them is joined—over the question of the justice of compensation. On the equities of awarding compensation to beneficiaries of continuing moral wrongs as a condition of abolishing them, George's "Compensation" chapter in this book is as fine an example of reasoning on a high moral plane in support of a high moral principle as may be found anywhere in the language.

George quotes all that Spencer says on this issue as on every other point, and answers it convincingly. It is difficult to conceive how Spencer could have replied effectively, even if he had cared enough about his philosophy in its relation to the land question to read or to allow his secretary to read to him, what had been said against his view by the best equipped and most generally recognized champion of the opposite view. In truth, the personal question, convincingly as that also is presented, sinks into comparative insignificance in George's book.

when contrasted with his presentation of the case against Mr. Spencer's land question views.

George's statement of the facts is full and fair. His interpretations are just. His analyses are rational and clear. His reasoning is rigidly exact. His outlook is comprehensive and his penetration deep. These are not platitudinous adjectives. Every one has its meaning, the full force of which will be verified upon reference to the book. If Herbert Spencer's philosophy, where it emerges into the open plain and challenges common sense controversy over the land question, is worth defending at all, no better opportunity could have come to Mr. Spencer than that which Henry George's book offered him.

III

What did Spencer do? Instead of meeting the issue, he wrote a series of letters to a friend, refusing to meet it and practically forbidding his friends to do so, yet pressing them to respond, not directly as from him, but indirectly as from themselves, to what he denounced as "the calumnious and vituperative passages," as the "two direct falsehoods," and as the "base insinuations," of this Mr. George, whom he thought he could fitly describe only with "one short word not used in polite society."

With what Mr. Spencer calls "calumnious and vituperative passages" and "base insinuations," we have not the space to deal. George's book must be consulted for the answer to that nebulous part of Mr. Spencer's letters, and it will be found sufficient. It is more important to consider here Mr. Spencer's specific charges of falsehood.

The first of these alleged falsehoods consists, according to Mr. Spencer, in George's statement that Spencer has placed himself "definitely on the side of those who contend that the treatment of land as private property cannot equitably be interfered with."

Mr. Spencer denies having done this. He says his "view of the principle" has not changed, but only his "view of the policy." But the chief reason he gives for changing his view of the "policy" is that he has discovered that compensa-

tion to landowners, which he has always insisted upon, would leave no balance of benefit to the community, but on the contrary would be a losing transaction.

Since this explanation itself clearly ranges Mr. Spencer on the side of those who contend that the treatment of land as private property cannot be interfered with, and does so for equitable reasons, namely that equity demands compensation, it is not easy to understand why he should denounce Mr. George's statement as a falsehood. If his own explanation does not express the idea that he is "on the side of those who contend that the treatment of land as private property cannot equitably be interfered with," his words are meaningless.

The second falsehood with which Mr. Spencer charges George is George's statement that—

the name of Herbert Spencer now appears with those of almost all the dukes in the Kingdom as the director of an association formed for the purpose of defending private property in land, that was especially active, etc.

The "etc." in this quotation from Mr. Spencer is unpleasantly suggestive, it must be confessed, of disingenuousness. It stands for the remainder of George's final sentence on page 201 of the original edition of "A Perplexed Philosopher," and page 170 of the Memorial and the Library editions. The complete sentence reads as follows (the part for which Mr. Spencer's letter substitutes the "etc." being by us enclosed in brackets for ease of identification):

The name of Herbert Spencer now appears with those of about all the dukes of the Kingdom as the director of an association formed for the purpose of defending private property in land, that was especially active [in the recent London County Council election.]

It will be observed that the omitted part of this quotation was not so long as to necessitate the "etc." for space-saving purposes. Neither was the omission necessary for purposes of legitimate emphasis. But it did serve the purpose, whether he so intended or not, of enabling Mr. Spencer to speculate as to the possibility of Mr. George's having meant an association which George did not

mean—namely the Liberty and Property Defense League. Membership in this association Mr. Spencer was able to deny, thereby making an erroneous appearance of convicting Mr. George of falsehood.

Having done this, Mr. Spencer proceeded to explain that if Mr. George meant the association which Mr. George did mean, and which Mr. Spencer should have known that he meant, and which readers of Mr. Spencer's letter might have known that he meant if George's full sentence had been quoted by Mr. Spencer instead of being cut off in the middle—namely, the Ratepayers' Defense League,—that in that case Mr. George misrepresented because the Ratepayers' league was "not an association for defending landed property," but was one "for defending the interests of occupiers," and that he, Mr. Spencer, had "joined it as a rate payer to check the extravagant demands on rate payers made by the county council," though "this league took but little part in the last county council election," and further that, "though on its formal council," he, Mr. Spencer, was "not on its executive council."

If, then, Mr. George was guilty of the second falsehood which Mr. Spencer charged upon him, the falsehood must have consisted in saying one or more of these three things: (1) that Mr. Spencer was a "director" of the league, whereas he was only on its "general council;" (2) that the association was formed for the purpose of defending private property in land, whereas it was formed for the protection of "occupiers"; and (3) that it was especially active in the then recent county council election, whereas it took but little part in that election.

The first of these alleged misstatements makes too weak a foundation for a charge so serious as deliberate falsehood. It may, therefore, be ignored.

The second depends upon whether opposition to the taxation ("rating," as local taxation is called in England) of ground values is defensive of private property in land, for that was one of the purposes for which the league in question was formed. Can any one deny that opposition to such

taxation is defensive of that kind of property?

As to the third alleged misstatement by George, that this league was especially active in the county council election of 1892, it is enough to call as a witness the late G. W. Smalley, London correspondent of the New York Tribune, by no means a friendly witness to Mr. George. In his letter from London to the Tribune of March 13, 1892, Mr. Smalley ascribed the defeat of Mr. Spencer's party in the election of the week before in part to the fact, as he stated it, that—

They had too many Dukes. The league which entered upon the work of municipal reform [and by this euphemism Mr. Smalley alluded to the "Moderate" policy which represented Mr. Spencer's side in the contest] was a ducal league. It had too much the air of aiming first of all to perpetuate the existing immunity of ducal landowners in London from those municipal taxes which here go by the name of rates. The rates are paid, as pretty much everything is paid, by tenants, not by landlords, and tenants are after all human beings and have sympathies and would be willing to allow landlords to bear their full share of these burdens. But the landlords are not willing, and it was asking much of the tenants to ask them to vote for a landlord policy.

If Mr. Smalley did not allude to Mr. Spencer's Ratepayers' Defense league, when he spoke of the ducal league which fought in the County Council campaign for continued exemption from rates, pray what league could he have meant? This description fits perfectly. And if that is the league Smalley did mean, then we have his authority for the fact that this league, notwithstanding Mr. Spencer's denial, was especially active in the municipal election under consideration.

So there appears to be as little basis for the second specified charge of falsehood against Mr. George, which Mr. Spencer makes, as for the first.

IV

A remarkable thing concerning the Spencer-George controversy is the fact that George himself can be summoned, from the grave as it were, to reply directly to Spencer's letters. This is made possible by circumstances which we propose now to relate, and which could not be fully related without the aid of Spencer's letters.

George's book, "A Perplexed Philosopher," appeared late in the year 1892—probably about the middle of December.

By the 6th of the following January Mr. Spencer had "read the introduction," his secretary had "gone through the book" and read to him "sundry of the calumnious and vituperative passages," and he had written his first letter to Mr. Skilton. This was speedily followed—January 8th, 10th and 16th—by nervous postscripts suggesting points in reply to George.

Then Mr. Skilton appears to have written Mr. Spencer indicating an intention to publish some sort of reply, for on February 4 Mr. Spencer writes to Mr. Skilton:

If any such letter or article as that which you describe is written for the North American Review or any other periodical, it might end with a fact which alone would dispose of Mr. George's charge. I inclose herewith the documents which explain and verify it. If it is made use of, it is desirable to give a certain preliminary explanation, otherwise there might be pointed out a ground for skepticism which might go some way to cancel its effect. If you make use of it, I think it would be well to put it in something like the form I have appended.

The "form" Mr. Spencer "appended" serves the double purpose of helping along the narrative we are now piecing together from the facts supplied by Mr. Spencer's hitherto unpublished letters, and of throwing further light upon Mr. Spencer's emasculation of his quotation from George which we have described above. He assumes that by the "ducally association" George meant the Liberty and Property Defense League.

Thereupon he proceeds elaborately to state, not in the first person but in the third, with accompanying proofs, how he had declined to be mentioned with the Duke of Westminster as having joined that league. This was afterwards published by Mr. Spencer's American friends, as may be seen in their letter of 1894 to the New York Tribune, quoted fully below. They there adopted it as their own. It is interesting, now to compare it as Mr. Spencer wrote it, according to the Independent collection of his letters, with the manner in which they used it in their letter to the Tribune.

But Spencer's American friends did not publish this third-person

defense of Spencer by himself at the time. Although he thought his refusal to be known as having joined that league along with the Duke of Westminster "rips up Mr. George's balloon from top to bottom and lets out all the gas at once," as he enthusiastically assured them, they evidently did not think so. They appear, instead, to have pushed him for a reply broadly on the merits of George's criticism. But in vain. They only elicited his letter of March 1st, quoted from early in this editorial, in which he refused himself to respond to George's book in any way, and objected to having his friends do so otherwise than with reference exclusively to what he called "the personal question."

Judging from Mr. Spencer's letter of March 23, 1893, in reply to one from Mr. Skilton, the latter gentleman must have been trying to reconcile Mr. Spencer to allowing the whole thing to drop, by assuring him that George's book had been ineffective. It was not, however, until the following June that Mr. Spencer became sufficiently reconciled to that course to ask the return of the documents he had forwarded. Even then he was not reconciled completely, for in his letter of January 19, 1894, seven months later, we find him referring to urgent requests for a defense, made by Americans suspected of being "Georgites" masquerading as Spencerians, and saying:

There are certain reasons for thinking that the absence of a reply will be misinterpreted by very many people. But now the time which has elapsed is so great that, unless there comes some further provocation, a reply will seem strange.

The "further provocation" came about eight months later.

In August, 1894, a lively newspaper correspondence had been going on in London over Spencer's recantation. Mr. Smalley wrote of it to the Tribune. In his letter, which was not improbably inspired by Mr. Spencer, for it has thumb-marks, Mr. Smalley attacked George violently, and in the Tribune of September 30, 1894, George replied.

He said he had no objection to the hard things Smalley said of him personally, for "such things were said of William Lloyd Gar-

ri-son and Wendell Phillips and Theodore Parker; and Mr. Smalley voices the feelings of British landlords, as those who denounced the opponents of slavery as robbers voiced the feelings of American slaveholders." But he recurred to the subject matter of "A Perplexed Philosopher" and in a calm though necessarily brief survey showed that Mr. Smalley was mistaken in thinking he had garbled any utterance of Mr. Spencer's or in any wise misrepresented him. In concluding this letter Mr. George said:

I have printed in "A Perplexed Philosopher" all that Mr. Spencer has had to say on the land question from "Social Statics" to "Justice." In response to inquiries addressed to Mr. Spencer by hitherto warm admirers of that book, he has replied that his friends in New York have in their hands materials for proving that my charges are baseless, and my alleged facts fiction, but that they, knowing me and knowing American opinion, have decided to say nothing. That they have decided to say nothing is undoubtedly true. But not for the reason that Mr. Spencer intimates. Neither Mr. Spencer nor any friend of his will venture to challenge these facts, and their mere collation destroys all confidence in the intellectual honesty of a man whom many people, in this country at least, have been for some time accustomed to regard as the greatest of philosophers.

That letter of George's brought a joint response from five of Spencer's American friends. As their letter did not appear for something like six weeks after George's, it is fairly evident that Spencer was directly consulted about it. As it explains the long silence with a different reason than now appears between the lines of Spencer's letters to have been the true reason, Mr. Spencer's positive refusal to accede to their request for a reply on the merits—the defenders cannot escape the imputation of some lack of candor. It would be unfair to them, probably, to hold them responsible for misrepresentations due to Mr. Spencer's emasculation of George's text. Yet as reputable and responsible men they ought to have read the book they were criticizing, at least attentively enough to detect the garbling.

Since this letter is little more than a polished and somewhat extended paraphrase, a turning into

the third person over their signatures of what Mr. Spencer's letters just published show him to have written in defense of himself, George's reply to it serves the purpose, as we suggest above, of a reply directly from him to the Spencer letters, notwithstanding that these were not published until he had been dead nearly seven years.

This letter of Mr. Spencer's American friends written then on the basis of his letters which appear now in the Independent, and published in the New York Tribune of November 12, 1894, is as follows:

To the Editor of the Tribune.—Sir: When nearly two years ago we sent over to Mr. Spencer a copy of "A Perplexed Philosopher," by Henry George, Mr. Spencer, intimating that he should himself take no notice of its calumnies, sent to us data amply sufficient to dispose of them should we think fit to take the matter up; leaving us to do what we thought best. We decided to do nothing; chiefly because it seemed unnecessary to defend Mr. Spencer against so vulgar and unscrupulous an assault, and partly because to revive Mr. George's waning notoriety by giving him opportunity to bring his name again before the public seemed undesirable. But impunity seems in this case to breed audacity, as is shown by Mr. George's letter published in the Tribune of September 30. Though your London correspondent has pointed out that Mr. Spencer's ill health has for many years past (ever since he was here, in fact) rendered impossible for him that select social intercourse to obtain which he is said to have sacrificed his convictions, Mr. George ignores all this, and deliberately reiterates his allegations as though they were proved facts. Moreover, a letter of his published in England, piling one calumny upon another, implies that nothing has been said in reply to his charges because there is nothing to say. Thus it has become needful that he should now be dealt with.

Any man may be assailed with libelous statements by one whose animosity he has excited, just as any man may have names called after him by a street boy he has offended. Always there are a few who think there must be something in it, but people of the wiser sort ask what is the evidence. Mr. Henry George first insinuates, and then affirms, that Mr. Spencer's change of view on the land question has been prompted by his desire to ingratiate himself with the landed and ruling classes, and so to achieve social distinction of some kind. Where is the evidence? The only relevant facts are

those which will be seen to have diametrically opposite implications.

Before passing, however, to evidence which bears directly on the matter, it should be noted that sundry incidents in Mr. Spencer's life show him to be regardless of private interests in his pursuit of public interests. Note his unceasing opposition to state education, which he condemns early in his career, has repeatedly condemned in the course of it, and condemned most strongly of all in his latest work ("The Principles of Ethics," vol. i., p. 236-37), where its supporters are spoken of in language which is anything but respectful; he being conscious all the while that nearly the whole public of England and America, including the buyers of his books, were strongly in favor of it; and likely to be angered by his denunciations. Note again the still more striking disregard of his own welfare shown by a letter written to the Tribune in 1869 and published some time later, in which, after giving proof by press extracts that the English opinion and feeling—Tory, Whig and Radical—immediately before and after the War of Secession began was unanimously and strongly in favor of the North, he blamed Americans for having caused by their behavior the alienation of England; doing this with the consciousness that he ran the risk of offending his American friends and the American people at large, and saying in a letter to his friend, Prof. Youmans: "I do not know what may be the result of this letter on my personal relations with the American public. But if it should be injurious I am content to bear the injury." Surely these are not the acts of a man who sacrifices his convictions to his interests! There could hardly be a more ridiculous belief than that one who thus insisted on saying what he thought, even at the risk of offending an entire nation which had shown him sympathy, should stand in "abject fear lest he should be denounced through Mayfair!" But now from these indirect evidences let us pass to direct ones.

In "The Study of Sociology," chapter xvii., Mr. Spencer instances Mr. Gladstone as "the exponent of the anti-scientific view" of man and nature, and classes his conceptions with the superstitions of the Greeks. Mr. Gladstone is a large landowner and was at that time prime minister, having benefits and distinctions in his gift. If Mr. Spencer sought to ingratiate himself with the dominant class, this was a strange way of furthering his aim. An incident exactly parallel to this occurred 20 years later. In "The Principles of Ethics," 376 (or in the separately published division, "Justice," 131, from which Mr. George has himself quoted), Mr. Spencer ridiculed the reasoning of Lord Salisbury. Lord

Salisbury, too, is a large landowner, and he, too, was at that time prime minister, and was thus the temporary fountain of good things. Were it true that, as Mr. George insinuates on the title page of his book, "Just for a handful of silver he left us, just for a ribbon to stick in his coat," Mr. Spencer could scarcely have chosen a more absurd way of achieving his aim than to speak disrespectfully of two prime ministers when in office.

But in elaborating his fictions Mr. George pays no attention either to these or to still more conclusive facts, as we shall now see unmistakably. "A Perplexed Philosopher" contains the sentence:

"The name of Herbert Spencer now appears with those of about all the dukes in the kingdom as the director of an association formed for the purpose of defending private property in land" (p. 201).

From a paragraph in Mr. George's recent letter to the Tribune it appears that this passage refers to the Liberty and Property Defense league. It furnishes a test of Mr. George's quality. The facts, as shown by its documents now before us, are that there are no dukes at all among the directors and only one among its members; that the list of its directors does not include "the name of Herbert Spencer;" and that its main business neither was originally, nor has ever been, the defense of landed property, but has been the defense of individual liberties against state aggressions and the defense of other property than landed property against governmental and municipal exactions. Out of the bills it has opposed in Parliament one-third concern the interests of land owners and two-thirds those of people at large threatened with interference and burdens. Moreover, out of the 160 societies affiliated to it, as shown on pp. 15 and 16 of its last report for 1892-94, now before us, only 23 are concerned with the interests of land and house property. It upholds individualism against Socialism; and its watchword is "Self-Help versus State Help."

Supposing it were true that Mr. Spencer is a member of the Liberty and Defense league, or supposing even it were true that he is on the council of the league, what would be the plain inferences? All his life long he has been an asserter of individual liberty not only of each against others, but each against all. This is conspicuous alike in "Social Statics," in "The Man Versus the State," and in "The Principles of Ethics." From his early days to his last days he has also been a defender of the right of private property. There is a chapter devoted to it in "Social Statics;" there is a chapter devoted to it in "The Principles of Ethics;" and in his essay, "From Freedom to Bondage," his argument

against Socialism is an argument in favor of individual possession. What, then, would any sane man infer on finding that Mr. Spencer had joined the Liberty and Property Defense league? Simply that he joined a body which upheld the principles he had been always upholding. Nothing but an insane or unscrupulous animosity could prompt the assertion that he joined it because there were dukes (or rather a duke) among its members. But now, after recognizing the fact that even had Mr. Spencer been a member of the league no such conclusion could rationally have been drawn as is drawn by Mr. George, we come to the fact that Mr. Spencer neither is nor ever has been a member, which we assert on conclusive evidence in our possession. And even further—as Mr. George might easily have learned by making inquiry in proper quarters before writing his book, if he had desired to know the truth—Mr. Spencer has twice definitely refused to become a member or to be identified with the movement; once when he declined an invitation to join the council, where he might have had just those social relations which Mr. George represents him as desiring so much; and again on a later occasion, when he exhibited still more positively the motives which swayed him. Misled by something Mr. Spencer had said or done, Mr. Crofts, on June 26, 1888, wrote him a letter, of which we have now before us a copy written by him on the headed paper of the league:

"7 Victoria street, London, S. W.,
June 26, 1888.

"Dear Sir:—Unless you have any objection I propose to send the subjoined paragraph to the press. I am, yours faithfully,
"W. C. CROFTS,
Secretary."

"To Herbert Spencer, Esq.
"Mr. Herbert Spencer and the duke of Westminster have joined the Liberty and Property Defense league."

Had he been the kind of man Mr. George imagines and asserts, here surely would have been an occasion for eagerly saying "Yes." What the actual result was is shown by the statement of Mr. Crofts, written on this same sheet of headed paper:

"Mr. Spencer replied by postcard, June 27, 1888, to the effect that he could not consent to the proposed publication of his name as a member of the league. He had found that the identification of his name with any political movement tended to weaken his influence in certain directions."

A more absolute proof of Mr. George's misrepresentation of Mr. Spencer and his acts it is impossible to imagine. His statement is in fact a bundle of untruths. His description of the league is untrue. His account of its directing body is untrue. His assertion that Mr. Spencer is on that body is untrue. No less untrue is his statement that Mr. Spencer's name is

"on their lists behind a long row of titled land owners." And more untrue than all, if it be possible, is his assertion respecting Mr. Spencer's conduct; since instead of being led by certain motives to join the league, he was deterred from joining it by opposite motives.

With this example of Mr. George's veracity we leave the whole question to be judged. Mr. Spencer, to whom publication of these personal details is very disagreeable, though now necessary, would not thank us for superfluous disproofs. What credence may be given to the various statements contained in "A Perplexed Philosopher," concerning Mr. Spencer's acts and intentions, the public can now form an opinion. They can also form an opinion of Mr. Henry George. Yours truly,

JOHN FISKE,
W. J. YOUMANS,
DANIEL GREENLEAF THOMPSON,
JAMES A. SKILTON,
LEWIS G. JANES.
New York, November 8, 1894.

It is George's reply to that letter to which we refer as his answer from the grave to Spencer's recently published letters on the subject. George's reply appeared in the Tribune of November 17, 1894. It is as follows:

To the Editor of the Tribune.—Sir: The letter signed by Messrs. John Fiske, W. J. Youmans, Daniel Greenleaf Thompson, James A. Skilton and Lewis G. Janes, published in the Tribune of the 12th, is in no sense a reply to "A Perplexed Philosopher."

The real charge made in that book is that Mr. Spencer's denial of the ethical validity and social expediency of private property in land has been abandoned in ways, times and degrees which show that his change of front has been actuated by the desire to escape the denunciation and ostracism of that influential section of English society dominated by what he himself once aptly personified as "Sir John and His Grace," and which since 1872 has regarded those who hold the opinions he had in his first book so strongly expressed and never up to that time denied, in the same light in which abolitionists were once regarded here. The facts on which these charges are based consist of Mr. Spencer's own utterances on the land question from 1850 to 1892, reprinted in full from the authorized editions of his books and his signed letters to the English press, together with such references to the publications of Appleton & Co., of this city, as show that for years after he had made the English public understand that he had completely stopped the issue of "Social Statics" it was still being advertised and issued here under his authority.

In this letter, which assumes to dispose of the "calumnies" of "A Perplexed Philosopher," to show that "its charges are baseless, and its alleged facts are fictions," the real charges and the real facts are carefully avoided. There are in it only two pretenses of meeting anything that has been said in that book. One of these refers to a poetical quotation and the other to a non-material illustration. The "reply" in the one case is ridiculous, and in the other it is based on the garbling of a sentence.

In the first of these the lines from Browning which appear on the title-page of my book:

"Just for a handful of silver he left us;
Just for a ribbon to stick in his coat,"
are correctly quoted. But with the wooden literalness so comically shown in Mr. Spencer's treatment of the "religious idea" (which in this letter his five American followers seem to have caught, as they have caught his controversial method and style), these lines are taken to mean that he has actually received or sought a pension and a title, and I am "refuted" by being told that Mr. Spencer has within 20 years spoken disrespectfully of two prime ministers!

The second of what I have in courtesy called "pretenses of meeting what is said in 'A Perplexed Philosopher,'" is an elaborate assertion that there are no dukes in the directorate, and only one in the membership of the English Liberty and Property Defense league, and that Mr. Spencer is not a member of that society; which assertion is backed up by a certificate from the secretary of the league that in 1888 Mr. Spencer declined to have his name given to the press as a member.

But how does all this concern the "calumnies" of "A Perplexed Philosopher"? I have never said that there were dukes in the directorate of the Liberty and Property Defense league, or that Mr. Spencer was a member. In the few incidental references that are made in that book to the relation of Mr. Spencer to this society, I merely say that it has been active in pushing his "The Man Versus the State," and that he has been to it "if not an active member, at least a valued ally."

How then do the five American friends of Mr. Spencer make any connection between "A Perplexed Philosopher" and their elaborate statements from "documents now before us" as to the membership of the Liberty and Property Defense league? They do so by the simple device of assuming that in a sentence which has no reference, either expressed or implied, to the Liberty and Property Defense league, I in reality meant that society, and by then disproving, not what I had said, but what these gentlemen assume I had thought.

In "A Perplexed Philosopher," in

closing my comment on Chapter XL of "Justice," I contrast what Mr. Spencer there says of the freedom of everyone in England to use his limbs and move where he pleases, with the passage in "Social Statics," in which he mentions four dukes by name as showing how private property in land permits monstrous denials of such rights. And I conclude with this sentence:

"The name of Herbert Spencer now appears with those of about all the dukes in the kingdom as the director of an association formed for the purpose of defending private property in land that was especially active in the recent London County Council election."

The clear reference here is to the Conservative association that was so active in the heated London County Council election campaign of 1892, where the main issue was the taxation of ground rents. Mr. Smalley, writing to the Tribune of the result of that election, speaks of it not by its official name, but as "A Ducal League" and attributes the defeat of the local Conservatives to the fact that "They had too many dukes." The reason I did not give the name was because I had mislaid the circular, which had come to me with a lot of Liberty and Property Defense matter. The formal name of the association (which I cannot even now give with certainty without sending to London) was, I think, the London Rate-Payers' league or association, but not wishing to trust my memory for the official name, which indeed was of no importance whatever in my reference, I sufficiently designated it by description.

Now, in their letter to you, Mr. Spencer's friends take my sentence, cut off the determining words, "that was especially active in the recent London County Council election," put a period and quotation mark to the mutilated fragment, call it a sentence from "A Perplexed Philosopher," assume that it refers to the Liberty and Property Defense league, and then proceed at great length to show that there is only one duke in the membership of that society; that Mr. Spencer is not a member, and other things (interesting, if true, but which do not concern me), and then triumphantly declaring this an absolute proof of my misrepresentation and a conclusive reply to "A Perplexed Philosopher," tell the public that it can now "form an opinion of Mr. Henry George."

This is pitiful.

I have nowhere spoken of Mr. Spencer except as an exponent of ideas. I have nowhere asked his motives, except where made necessary to explain facts by that fundamental law of the human mind which beneath expression seeks for cause. If I have been unable to entirely restrain the mingled pity and indignation which all men of true impulses must feel on seeing a great

truth repudiated and finally denied, and what might have been a lasting reputation wrecked, yet this is not of the essence of my book. "A Perplexed Philosopher" is not an attempt to point out the frailties of a man. It is a careful and conscientious examination, not only of the question that lies at the root of all the pressing social issues of our day, but incidentally of a philosophy which assumes to explain the deepest problems that vex the mind and soul of man.

Can the five leading exponents, in this country, of the Synthetic or Cosmic Philosophy find no larger objections to that book than such as cannot even be replied to without some sense of degradation?

HENRY GEORGE.

November 15, 1894.

That reply is manifestly conclusive, not only in response to what Spencer's friends published at Spencer's dictation in the New York Tribune in 1894, but also to Spencer himself as he enters the controversy personally through the posthumous publication of his Skilton letters in the New York Independent in 1904.

NEWS

Week ending Thursday, June 9.

The labor conflict in Colorado (pp. 106, 122, 137) has burst into a spasm of violence more disturbing than any previous one since the strike began. Following an explosion on the 6th of an infernal machine at Independence, a railroad station near Cripple Creek, whereby 15 men were murdered (and in a sense resulting from that explosion) a riot broke out at Victor, also in the Cripple Creek district. The region is now under martial law. To understand this deplorable situation it is necessary to consider the origin and progress of the labor conflict from which it has developed.

Two strikes have for several months disturbed business conditions in Colorado. One is in Teller county, near the center of the State and of which the county seat is Cripple Creek. The other is in San Miguel county, which lies on the western border of the State and of which the county seat is Telluride. Both strikes are due to the same cause. They are strikes for an eight-hour day.