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contents

Fiscal Policy and War-Time Price Control	1
<i>By HARRY GUNNISON BROWN</i>	
Émile Mâle and the Spirit of Medieval Culture	15
<i>By FRANCIS NEILSON</i>	
Some Weaknesses in Federal Farm Price-Raising Programs	35
<i>By HERMAN M. HAAG</i>	
Communism and the World Crisis, IV	49
<i>By FRANZ OPPENHEIMER</i>	
Society and the Masses	65
<i>By RAINER SCHICKELE</i>	
The Christian Basis for a New World Order, III	81
<i>By DONALD A. MACLEAN</i>	
Henry George: The Formative Years	97
<i>By ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE</i>	
A Rebel's Interrupted Autobiography	111
<i>By HARRY WEINBERGER</i>	
Anniversary Note	123
Comment	125
Reviews	131
Contributors	143

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Henry George: the Formative Years*

By ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE

I

Poverty

EVER SINCE HENRY GEORGE had been away from home in Philadelphia, the slowness and uncertainty of communication had been a cause of worry and sometimes agonizing fear to him. Letters cost ten cents and took at best four weeks, from coast to coast. Jennie, his sister, had written:

What would I give if I could fly on the new telegraph to you and have a talk, if it were only for an hour. I wish we could send letters on it, don't you? Just to think a month's space between us. While you are reading this, what I say is a month old. Maybe you have sent a dozen letters, maybe you have told us a dozen important things, *maybe you have decided to come home!* Good-bye! Good-bye! I wish I could grasp your hand while I say it.¹

As late as the summer of 1862, the United States Mail Service was haphazard in its operation. Travellers who crossed via the Salt Lake route had tales to tell of broken mail bags, seen at stations, where letters lay "scattered knee deep,"² and of mail bags that had been lying on the Plains all winter. Besides, west of the Mississippi the service was desperately slow.

Thus it was not until weeks after the short illness and unexpected death³ of his beloved Jennie that Henry learned of it. At first he did not divulge the sad news to his wife. He bore his sorrow alone while he did his day's work. When he returned home in the early morning she could see from his drawn, white face that something was wrong. She asked him about it. No longer able to contain himself, he broke into tears and handed her the letters he had received from Philadelphia. Then he began pacing the floor, muttering to himself: "There is another life! There is another life after this! I shall see my sister again!"⁴

He had discarded much of the creed of his forefathers, the heritage of his Episcopalian low-church upbringing. Had he harbored doubt as to the im-

* Copyright, 1942, by Anna George de Mille. A section of an unpublished ms., "Citizen of the World"; see "Henry George: Childhood and Early Youth," *AM. JOUR. ECON. SOCIO.*, Vol. I, No. 3 (April, 1942), p. 283n.

¹ November 30, 1861. Henry George Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library (hereafter abbreviated as HGC).

² Letter from Henry George to his sister, Caroline, July 5, 1862, HGC.

³ July 26, 1862.

⁴ Related to the writer by her mother.

mortality of the soul? Was that doubt dispelled with the adoption of a new creed of his own choosing, liberal Methodism? If it was not,⁵ then the death of Jennie seems to have opened his mind to the development of a deep and abiding faith in a life beyond this life—a faith that grew stronger as time went on and to which he constantly gave testimony. A message of condolence he sent to his mother some years later, when her own sister died, shows his convictions:

The older I grow and the more I think, the more fully I realize the wisdom and beneficence that pervades the universe and that is impressed on all its laws. . . . As we were born so we die. As there were others here to receive us, so must there be others there to meet us, and the Christian faith promises what the wise and good in all ages have believed, that death is but a new birth. . . . Our little life, what is it, our little globe what is it, to the infinity that lies beyond?⁶

But now the youth of twenty-three had little time for philosophizing; he was acquiring heavier responsibilities. A son, Henry, Jr., had arrived in the George home.⁷ The young father had to turn to other things besides type-setting that would bring in money. At one time he was hired to take tickets at the door of the hall when a young newspaper man, whose nom-de-plume was Mark Twain, came to Sacramento to give a lecture.

Although George was able to pay his debts and to send money to his mother, his investments seemed always to go wrong and any net saving was slight. After he had worked for more than a year on *The Sacramento Union*, he had an altercation with the foreman, John Timmins, and was discharged. Two days later he was back in San Francisco, looking for work. For five days he tried to sell clothes wringers, but, in spite of much walking and talking, he did not make a single sale. At last he got a job as substitute type-setter. He sent for wife and baby to join him.

When *The Evening Journal*, which had continued its starving existence, finally died, George, with his friend, Ike Trump, obtained cash enough to buy some of the type. The two men opened a small job-printing office. Now a dream Henry George had long cherished had come true: he was the proprietor of a shop of his own. But drought brought on hard times in California. Work became so scarce that the partners were almost desperate. When they could, they took out of the till of their business as much as twenty-five cents each, daily, which they spent for food. Mrs.

⁵ " . . . Out of this inquiry has come to me something I did not think to find, and a faith that was dead revives." Henry George, "Progress and Poverty," New York, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1929 (Fiftieth Anniversary Edition), p. 557.

⁶ Feb. 2, 1879. In the private collection of writer.

⁷ Nov. 3, 1862.

Trump was staying with her mother, so Ike took his dinner with the Georges.

At the time of her marriage, Annie Fox's sole accomplishment in the kitchen was the baking of rich, black, English fruit cake. Of this she always kept a supply, so that, when her husband came home from work between two and four in the morning, he could have something to eat before going to sleep. She also had served it when the Wilburs⁸ and the Stickneys⁹ came in to play cards, as they did frequently. Now, however, there was not money for cake. The family got along on milk, corn-meal, potatoes, bread, and the cheapest fish that could be bought.

Usually Henry George went to work without breakfast. He explained that he would get it downtown, but his wife suspected he fasted. She, too, bore their trouble gamely. Although frail and delicately reared, she never complained of their hardships. Secretly she sold off her jewelry, keeping only her wedding ring. With her needle she managed to earn a little money. But with a small child to care for and another coming, she had not the strength to do regular sewing. Things got so bad she could not even buy the few staples they were living on. She would not run up bills. Then, although her husband had failed, at six different lumber yards, to barter printing for wood, she arranged at the grocery and dairy for him to print advertising cards in return for corn-meal and milk.

In this time of bitter want, their second child, a son, was born—Richard Fox George.¹⁰

"Don't stop to wash the child!" ordered the doctor, "She is starving. Feed her!"

The only food in the house for the mother was the loaf of freshly baked bread which their neighbor, the photographer, had just brought. After this kind woman, who had come to lend a hand, and the doctor had both gone, and the weary mother with her new-born son, cradled in her arm, had gone to sleep, the despairing husband left them alone in the house. Taking 2-year-old Harry to a friend's, he went in search of money.

His first stop was at his shop; he hoped that some of the debts owing him and Ike Trump had been paid. But no money had come in. He could not think of a person he could borrow or collect from. Everyone he knew had been hit by the depression.

He left the office. But he could not go home empty-handed. Somehow he must get food for her. She was starving, the doctor had said.

⁸ George Wilbur had married Annie Fox's friend, Mary Kerrigan.

⁹ A. A. Stickney, a printer George had met in Sacramento. He and Mrs. Stickney also came to live in San Francisco, and they and the Georges became good friends.

¹⁰ Jan. 27, 1865.

The girl was *hungry*. And he had brought her to this—from a home of comfort and plenty . . . He paced the streets in panic. The day was gray and damp; there had been a light rain.¹¹ Everyone he passed looked cold and poor. He was growing desperate. At last a well-dressed man appeared. The shivering youth walked straight to the stranger and abruptly stated that he wanted five dollars.

"What for?" demanded the man, studying the gaunt face.

"My wife has just been confined and I have nothing to give her to eat!"

Whether it was compassion for suffering or fear of attack, the man gave the money without further question.

"If he had not" said Henry George, long later, "I think I was desperate enough to have killed him."¹²

The struggle continued. But on some days fifty cents was taken in at the office and on a few, as much as several dollars. When the new baby was less than three weeks old, the family moved from the upper flat of the house on Russ Street, where they had been paying \$18 rent, to a smaller place on Perry street that cost \$9. Mrs. George sewed for her landlady and earned the second month's rent. Her dream was that her husband would manage regularly to make twenty dollars a week!

Intermittently Henry George had been keeping diaries since his days before the mast.¹³ In the entries for that February, mixed with his accounts of his hunt for work and his business disappointments, his resolutions to reform his ways, to waste less time, to work harder and be more economical, appear hints of the black mood that was upon him: "I have been unsuccessful in everything."¹⁴ "Am in very desperate plight. Courage."¹⁵ "Don't know what to do."¹⁶ But on March 3rd, 1865, he was able to write: "At work." The following day he noted a turn in his fortunes: "At work. Got \$5.00 in the evening."

Sporadically he set type. He labored to interest carriage-builders in a new wagon brake. He tried every way he knew to earn money. The lean period was teaching its lesson. Determined to equip himself more completely for the struggle to make a living for himself and his family, he devoted his spare time to study and practise in writing. One of the essays

¹¹ From the records of the United States Weather Bureau (which showed a rainfall of .74 inches for the date), obtained through the San Francisco Public Library.

¹² Incident related by Henry George to Dr. Jas. E. Kelly, in Dublin, in 1882. See Henry George, Jr., "Life of Henry George," New York, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1942, p. 119.

¹³ These are now part of the Henry George Collection in the New York Public Library.

¹⁴ Feb. 17, 1865, HGC.

¹⁵ Feb. 18, 1865, *ib.*

¹⁶ Feb. 19, 1865, *ib.*

that he wrote in this period, "On the Profitable Employment of Time," which he mailed to his mother, shows not only that he longed for leisure and culture, but that he was aware he had wasted opportunity and was decided upon making more of his talents. In it, he wrote:

I am constantly longing for wealth. . . . It would bring me comfort and luxury which I cannot now obtain; it would give me more congenial employment and associates; it would enable me to cultivate my mind and exert to a fuller extent my powers; it would give me the ability to minister to the comfort and enjoyment of those I love most, and therefore it is my principal object in life to obtain wealth, or at least, more of it than I have at present. . . .

To secure any given result it is only necessary to rightly supply sufficient force. . . . It is evident to me that I have not employed the time and means at my command faithfully and advantageously as I might have done, and consequently that I have myself to blame for at least a part of my non-success. And this being true of the past in the future like results will flow from like causes.¹⁷

As he became more facile with his pen, he began sending open letters to the papers. To his delight one discussing laws relating to sailors, and another urging working-men to think about political and social questions, were printed. This encouraged him to send a fanciful sketch, "A Plea for the Supernatural," to *The Californian*, a weekly paper that included Mark Twain and Bret Harte among its contributors.¹⁸ The story was accepted¹⁹ and was later reprinted in *The Boston Evening Gazette*.

Out of the period of dark despair a revelation had come to Henry George. He had learned that he could write.

2

The Reporter

THE ASSASSINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN stirred Henry George profoundly. Vitaly interested in public affairs, the young printer had watched with keenest admiration the course taken by the great Civil War leader. He had come to revere this man for whom he had cast his first vote. While anger and grief over the tragedy welled in him, he raged with Ike Trump and others against the "copperhead" newspapers and decided to lead an attack upon *The News Letter*. But by the time George reached the building Trump was already in command of a party that was flinging the contents of the newspaper office into the street. Seeing the mob in

¹⁷ For the complete essay, see Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 157-9. (The original ms. is in Box VI, HGC.)

¹⁸ *The Californian*, founded in 1864, lasted for three years.

¹⁹ It was published in the issue of April 8, 1865.

action mellowed George. Instead of joining it, he went home and wrote an article of some five hundred words that relieved his feelings. He slipped the copy, unsigned, into the editorial box of *The Alta California* on which he was setting type at the time. The next day it appeared in print.²⁰ A few lines of it show its tenor:

"A man rushed to the front of the President's box, waving a long dagger in his right hand, exclaiming: 'Sic semper tyrannis!'" *ALTA despatches, April 15, 1865.*

What a scene these few words bring—vivid as the lightning flash that bore them! The glitter and glare, curving circle and crowded pit, flash of jewels and glinting of silks—and the blanched sea of upturned faces, the fixed and staring eyes, the awful hush—silence of death! . . . They came to laugh at a comedy, and a tragedy is before them which will make a nation weep. . . .

While the world lasts will this scene be remembered. As a martyr of freedom—as the representative of the justice of a great nation, the name of the victim will live forever; and the Proclamation of Emancipation, signed with the name and sealed with the blood of *Abraham Lincoln* will remain a landmark in the progress of the race. . . .²¹

The editor of *The Alta* sought out the author in the compositors' room and taking him from the case engaged him to write a description of the Lincoln mourning decorations in San Francisco. But reporting the outward signs of the city's grief was not enough to express the pent-up feelings of the young printer. After his office work was finished, he wrote, on the table in his parlor, a eulogy of the dead president that was run as the "leader" on the editorial page. A few paragraphs give its import:

He personified the best, the most general character of the people who twice called him to the highest place they could bestow, and the strength and the virtue of a nation, enriched by the best blood of all races, were his.

He was not of those whom God lifts to the mountain tops and who tell of His truth to ears that will not hear and show His light to eyes that cannot see—whom their own generation stone and future ones worship; but he was of the leaders who march close before the advancing ranks of the people, who direct their steps and speak with their voice. . . .

His was not the eloquence which sways men at will . . . yet in all he said there was the power, eloquent in its plainness and honesty, of a man truer than his pledge, better than his word. . . .

No other system would have produced him; through no crowd of courtiers could such a man have forced his way; his feet would have slipped on the carpets of palace stairs, and Grand Chamberlains ordered him back! And as in our times of need, the man that was needed came forth, let us

²⁰ April 17, 1865.

²¹ Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 162-3.

know that it will always be so, and that under our institutions, when the rights of the people are endangered, from their ranks will spring the men for the times. . . .

He has served in his life; he has served in his death; and his memory is an heirloom of the Republic. Let us thank God for him; let us trust God for him; let us place him in that Pantheon which no statue of tyrant ever sullies—the hearts of a free people.²²

With peace restored at home, eyes in California turned abroad. The State had many sentimental ties with Mexico, the immediate source of much of her culture, and some of her population, and now the neighbor to the south was engaged in a struggle that claimed the allegiance of liberals everywhere. Napoleon III of France, in an attempt to get control of the rich lands of the country, had duped Archduke Maximilian who Hapsburg into setting himself up as Emperor of Mexico. The peons and all freedom-loving Mexicans, under the leadership of Benito Juarez, weary of generations of Spanish overlords, revolted against the Austrian pretender and his imperial army of French mercenaries.

The resistance of the Mexican patriots to foreign tyranny appealed strongly to Henry George and he joined an expedition being organized to aid the fight for liberation. Having been unable to take part in the fight against slavery in the United States, he was especially keen to strike a blow for liberty in Mexico. The editor of *The Alta* was ready to give George a contract for news letters about the expedition and the fact that the paper would pay for the correspondence, decided the printer to go.

Although this meant separation—and, if he did not return, widowhood and poverty for her—the wife, now twenty-one years old, consented to his going. When the time came for parting, the young couple knelt beside their sleeping babies and prayed together. Then, taking leave of his loved ones, Henry George joined the other members of the band of liberators at Platt's Hall.

He was to be first lieutenant of his company and John Hungerford, who later became John Mackay's father-in-law, the colonel. After much delay they boarded the boat selected for them—an old bark, the *Brontes*. To their dismay, they found her to be ill provisioned and equipped with 10,000 condemned rifles, half a dozen saddles and a few casks of water. Some of the men in the group proved to be little less than pirates who were

²² "Abraham Lincoln," *Daily Alta California*, Sunday, April 23, 1865, in Library of Congress, Washington. Typed copy, HGC, Box VI. Quoted in part by Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 161-5.

hatching a scheme to seize a French transport. Luckily the United States Federal authorities got wind of the matter, arrested these plotters and nipped the whole expedition in the bud.²³

That was the nearest George ever came to war. At the time, he was bitterly disappointed that the campaign for Mexican freedom began and ended in San Francisco Harbor. Later he was grateful, when he realized that this particular expedition could have come to no good end. He continued to aid in organizing help for Mexico, however. "I was concerned too," he recalled later, "in the establishment of the Monroe League. We swore in men on the bare sword and the flag of Mexico. The expedition was designed to help the Mexican patriots."²⁴ It also was fruitless: "it came pretty near as futile an ending"²⁵ as the Brontes affair, George admitted.

Now he was to make another decisive move. "Working at this time subbing for the newspapers in San Francisco, I abandoned all thoughts of Mexico and went up to Sacramento, towards the close of 1865, to go on the state work, the printing of laws and documents for the legislature."²⁶ There in the capital he and his family remained for nearly a year, living modestly but comfortably on his small salary. He became a member of a literary society known as the Sacramento Lyceum. At one of the meetings, after listening to a speech in favor of "protection" by means of the tariff, delivered by the Land Agent of the Central Pacific Railroad, George's economic beliefs suffered a right-about-face. As he recounted it later:

I was a protectionist when he began, but when he got through I was a free-trader. When they asked me what I thought of it I told them that if what he said was true, it seemed to me that the country that was hardest to get at must be the best country to live in; and that, instead of merely putting duties on things brought from abroad, we ought to put them on things brought from anywhere, and that fires and wars and impediments to trade were the very best things to levy on commerce.²⁷

Although George was becoming more and more interested in public affairs, he found time, after the day's work at the case, to publish the

²³ Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 166-7. In October, 1897, Henry George dictated autobiographical notes to Ralph Meeker on this as well as other incidents. They are to be found in different places. This particular incident is in *The New York Sunday Journal*, Oct. 10, 1897. HGC, Scrapbook #29, Miscellany.

²⁴ *The New York Sunday Journal*, *loc. cit.*

²⁵ "Meeker Notes," typed, in Box VI, HGC.

²⁶ *Ib.*

²⁷ *The New York Sunday Journal*, *loc. cit.*; quoted by Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 169.

account of the sea burial incident on the *Shubrick*,²⁸ as well as a fanciful sketch, "The Prayer of Kohonah."²⁹

One of the very few advantages of being poor is that moving means little trouble. Work again growing slack in Sacramento, the George family went back to San Francisco, where Henry George found work as a type-setter on the newly launched *San Francisco Times*. He thought of writing a novel. Instead, he turned to the discussion of the vital problems of the day. The editor, James McClatchy, bought and printed in *The Times* several editorials from the young compositor's pen. When McClatchy left the paper after a brief stay, George's latest editorial was shown to the new editor, Noah Brooks. Mr. Brooks later recalled that

the article was written in a neat, regular and small hand, with lines far apart, on sheets of buff paper such as was used for wrapping. It showed a largeness of thought that made me suspect that the young man had been borrowing.

Mr. Brooks searched through the current periodicals. Finding no evidence of plagiarism, he printed George's article. Then he looked up the author of it and saw "a slight young man, rather undersized, who stood on a board to raise him to the proper height to work at his case."³⁰

Later, although "not prepossessed with him,"³¹ Mr. Brooks invited him to write editorials at the regular space rates, while continuing to work at the case. Eventually he engaged George as a regular editorial writer. Henry George, at the time, despite the editor's description, was developing the appearance that was later to command platform attention. He was short and of slight build, but he had broad shoulders and a head of statuesque proportions. He still had a fairly heavy mop of dark auburn hair, although it was thinning. This happened in spite of his wife's efforts to prevent it; frequent admonitions were interspersed in her letters, when they were apart: "Do you take care of your hair? Don't neglect it on any account," and "Have you had anything done for your hair? If you would rub glycerine on your head, it would do you good."³² Evidently he neglected to use the glycerine—he grew steadily balder as time went on, and what hair was left grew steadily darker. His beard was several de-

²⁸ It was published in June, 1866, in *The Philadelphia Saturday Night*, under the title, "Dust to Dust." (Henry George's boyhood printer friend, Edmund Wallacz, was foreman and part owner.) It was reprinted July 4, 1866, in *The Californian*, San Francisco.

²⁹ A short story, subtitled "a tradition of the north-west," written for *The Californian*.

³⁰ Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 174. See copy of interview taken by him, Feb. 14, 1898; in Box VIII, HGC, and the confirmation of this by Noah Brooks, Jan. 3, 1899, in the same box.

³¹ *Ib.*

³² The letters are in the writer's private collection.

grees lighter than his hair and was what the Scots call "sandy." The grey-blue eyes, with their farseeing gaze, were keener than ever. His small hands, with their tapering fingers and pink palms, clumsy with hammer or saw, were capable with ropes and boats and skillful at the case. His feet were small in proportion to his height.

One day he and his wife and their son, Henry, Jr., went together to buy shoes. As they were leaving the store, Mrs. George heard the man who had waited on them remark to another clerk: "Sure not much to be made out of that crowd! Himself has a bye's fut, herself has a gurrl's fut, and as for the child, he has no fut a tall!"³³

3

The Editor

AFTER SEVEN MONTHS as type-setter, reporter and editorial writer on *The San Francisco Times*, Henry George became its managing editor. He held the post, at a salary of \$50 a week, for more than a year. He studied deeply the questions of the day, and discussed many of them in editorials—free trade, paper money, proportional representation, public franchises, privilege in the army, "woman's rights." The excellent schooling in style and clear expression equipped him technically and he was able to begin serious writing. He turned out an essay that shows sharp traces of the original ideas in economic thought that he was to develop later. The 7,000 word article was accepted by *The Overland Monthly*, whose chief contributors were Mark Twain, Bret Harte and Joaquin Miller. It was published under the title, "What the Railroads Will Bring Us." The author received forty dollars for it. It shows that he understood at that time that material progress does not necessarily contribute to the general welfare, and between the lines one can see that, although the transcontinental railroad had not yet been contemplated, Henry George realized that while the road had been deeded vast domains and given a large subsidy by the Government, it was already establishing power for graft and corruption; for seizing more and more of the people's lands; for squeezing out competitors and for controlling votes. "Amid all our rejoicing and all our congratulations," he suggests, "let us see clearly whither we are tending." Then he goes on:

The completion of the railroad and the consequent great increase of business and population, will not be a benefit to all of us, but only to a portion. . . . Those who have lands, mines, established business, special abilities of certain kinds, will become richer for it and find increased opportunities; those who have only their own labor will become poorer, and find it harder to get ahead.³⁴

³³ Related to the present writer by her mother.

³⁴ *The Overland Monthly*, Oct. 1868 (files are in the New York Public Library). Part of the article is quoted by Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 177-9.

George's life had its light moments as well as its periods of serious philosophical questioning. Once Mark Twain, hard up and in debt, delivered a lecture in Platt's Hall, the proceeds of which he hoped would pay his way East. But one of his creditors sent the sheriff to collect the money taken in at the gate, as well as a gold watch that admirers had presented to Clemens at a dinner. Whereupon some of his friends "vamoosed" with the box office receipts while others, including Alec Bell and Henry George, passed the watch from one to the other, keeping just a jump ahead of the Sheriff. All his confederates contrived to meet Mark Twain and give him his belongings when he was out of the county, on the ferry, bound for the railroad train in Oakland.³⁵

During the period of steady work on *The San Francisco Times* the George family had been thriving. A girl was born and christened Jane Teresa in honor of her two aunts—her father's sister Jennie and her mother's sister Teresa. When the baby was a year old and strong enough to stand the trip, Henry George, having succeeded in saving up funds for the purpose, sent his family for the long-dreamed-of visit to Philadelphia. He put them in charge of his brother Val, who had arrived in California some months earlier.

The journey was not an easy one. The Pullman Company had started to build sleeping cars the year before, in 1867, but they were not yet to be found on all trains—even if one could afford them. Sometimes, on the long jumps, Mrs. George had to make a bed for the three children by putting the valises between two seats, with folded shawls for mattress. One night, at a jerk-water station, two tough-looking tobacco-chewing miners boarded the train. Every seat was taken and practically every occupant asleep, even Val. Hurriedly Mrs. George, realizing that her children were using more space than was their right, started to lift them to make places for the newcomers. With his blackened hand one of the miners restrained her. Doffing his towsey hat, he said in a squeaky whisper:

"Why Ma'am, leave 'em lay! Don't disturb 'em. They're the purtiest things we seen since we left home over a year ago."

The men gazed at the sleeping children—Harry, now five years old, with red hair and a sensitive little face, lying on the outside; merry little Dick, with long, almost-white curls, close to the window; and between the two, sister "Jen," her small head covered with ringlets of sun-yellow. After impressing the picture on their minds, the miners clumped down the aisle

³⁵ Related by Alex. D. Bell to his son, Wm. Lewis Bell, who recounted it in a letter to the present writer dated Dec. 14, 1939. (The letter is in the writer's private collection.)

as lightly as their heavy boots would permit, and stood until they reached their destination. Similar chivalry and kindness all along the route diminished the hardships of the journey.³⁶

Upon her arrival in Philadelphia Mrs. George received a gracious welcome from her husband's family. She wrote him:

Father sent Tom to New York to meet us. . . . In Philadelphia they all met us at the door, but Father took me out of the carriage and was the first to embrace me. . . . Harry darling, all is happiness around me, but I am not happy for "my heart is over the sea." Come to us as soon as possible. My heart yearns for you. Mother is aching for her son and Father is constantly wishing for "that boy Henry!" No man was ever loved nor more fervently prayed for than you, Harry. . . . Write to me often darling, it is all the consolation I have.³⁷

A few days later she wrote again:

I told you before that we had no money when we arrived, but I did not explain matters to you. We were obliged to fee the waiters, buy ice, or drinks, warm water, oranges, limes, and a few bananas. It cost 9 dollars to come from New York, besides carriage hire, meals, baggage etc. Between all, we had but a few dollars left. It costs an immense amount to travel. I expected to have almost all you gave me when I arrived.

The folks home here have no idea of our situation. I spoke of getting a new cloak when I first came and Mother wanted to know which I would get "cloth or velvet." I said cloth by all means. It amused me more than a little. They were astonished when they saw my wardrobe. They all dress nicely, have all got silk dresses too, and none of them have any idea of the troubles we have been through.³⁸

It must have been a comfort to Henry, who down the lean years had been straining to send money home to Philadelphia, to be told that "their times are nearly as good as our prosperous ones, so don't worry about them."³⁹

Between Annie Fox George and her husband's father grew up a beautiful devotion. The only barrier between her and her mother-in-law was the matter of creed. Although Henry George and Annie Fox had been married with the Episcopal service by a Methodist minister and subsequently obtained Catholic sanction for their marriage, dogma, as time went on, meant less and less for them both. His mother, however, was less indifferent; she remained rigid in her belief and opposed to other forms. "If I was an Episcopalian I think I would be all she would wish," Henry's wife wrote to her husband. "That I cannot be, I would not exchange my

³⁶ Related to the present writer by her mother.

³⁷ Sept. 15, 1868. In the writer's private collection.

³⁸ Oct. 1, 1868. *Ib.*

³⁹ *Ib.*

liberal opinion for any creed much as I respect it. I go to Church with Mother or Aunt Mary every Sunday but being a Catholic in name is as bad as being practically a Catholic."⁴⁰

With tact Annie helped widen the horizon of the conservative household. Discovering that the boys secretly played cards outside, she managed to get permission to teach the game in the house. Soon she had the family indulging in "Old Maid" and "Casino" and even "Big Bonanza." In the same way she taught her young brothers and sisters-in-law to dance, first with pillows for partners, then with each other. But none of them had been caught early enough and, like their brother Henry, the pupils were never much credit to their teacher. She tried to teach them music and, saving her money, contrived, with the help of Tom, to buy a small melodion on which all the young members of the family practised in turn. Mrs. George commented a trifle naïvely, to her son in California: "When they all become good players I will enjoy it more."⁴¹

With her needle, Annie made a wedding gown of soft muslin for her sister-in-law, Kate, hemming by hand its dozens of tiny ruffles, and superintended or made the rest of the simple trousseau. Kate was married to a young actor, Jared B. Chapman, whose father, William Chapman, had been for years the "low comedian" of the Walnut Street Theatre, in the time of Mrs. Drew and Wallack. In the same company, young Jared was acting small parts when he fell in love with the school teacher, Catherine George, "Kate" of the merry tongue and knee-length braids of red-gold hair. But so great was the consternation in the George household at the thought of their properly-brought-up girl marrying an actor that the young man had to give up the stage and settle down on a sandy place in New Jersey. A good actor became a poor farmer. Sometimes, however, Jerry Chapman yearned so for his lost art that he would steal off, have a session with his make-up box and wigs, and appear again at his own front door as a stranger, to hold conversations with his unsuspecting wife. On occasion, the tenor of the talk became so disturbing that she threatened to call her husband in from the fields to oust the obnoxious interloper, before she discovered who he really was!

During much of her stay in Philadelphia, Annie was in poor health. Her husband's family was deeply concerned for her and gave her loving care. She on her part, was able to fit herself into their lives. A friendship developed that lasted until death.

⁴⁰ Nov. 30, 1868. In the writer's private collection.

⁴¹ June 20, 1869, HGC.

