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New Books

Henry George's Life as Modern Pioneer in Political Science

HENRY GEORGE: CITIZEN OF THE WORLD. By Anna George de Mille. Edited by Don C. Shoemaker. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. \$3.50.

Only a member of Henry George's intimate family could have written so warm, so understanding, so lucid a biography of the crusading proponent of the "single tax" as has the late Anna George de Mille, his youngest daughter.

Mrs. de Mille did not let her imagination run riot; the study sticks to facts. But she discloses aspects of his character and personality which only one closely associated with him could have revealed.

The works and theories of Henry George — notably his "Progress and Poverty" — have had a profound influence upon the economic thinking of the times, not only in America, but in Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Canada and other areas of the world. They are still having an important effect,

and that influence is being perpetuated and spread by—among other agencies—the Henry George School of Social Science in New York City.

Henry George saw as the great enigma of our times the association of poverty with progress, the unhealthy thriving of want in a world moving steadily forward. As to why that paradoxical and depressing association exists, he gives answer in "Progress and Poverty."

The publication of that volume thrust a theretofore relatively obscure jack-of-many-trades-turned-journalist into a spotlight of international attention and controversy. Perhaps his own often impoverished circumstances induced Henry George to seek the answer to why there should be want in a land of plenty.

What George contended was that the return, or rent, for use of the land should be collected and utilized to meet social needs, but that upon the products of labor itself there should be no tax. If such were done, he

asserted, "Land prices would fall; land speculation would receive its death blow; land monopolization would no longer pay. . . ."

George concerned himself with the welfare of the working man, battled trusts and fought for shorter working hours and better social conditions. It was inevitable that his crusade should draw him into politics. Increasing experience saw an almost chameleon-like conversion from a raw and disappointing speaker to an orator who converted many thousands to his own views.

He espoused, as the author comments, "freedom as against regimentation; liberty as against collectivist restriction." In his first campaign for mayor of New York, he was defeated "by," the author reports, "the simple process of manipulating the returns." He ran again, but died a few days before the election.

But he left his imprint upon a thinking world. He raised questions of concern to millions, and he provided answers which stand today as a monumental tribute to him and to his anxiety for the welfare of mankind.

Henry George was a man of honor, a modern pioneer in political science; and this volume will do much toward furthering an understanding of the man and the principles for which he stood.

—JOHN MEBANE

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