

12 MAY 1906

## MASS AND CLASS.

THE MENACE OF PRIVILEGE. By Henry George, Jr. Cloth, 421 pages. Price, \$1.50 net. The Macmillan Company.

THE argument of this volume from the pen of the son of the famous protagonist of the Single-tax movement may be set forth in a very few words. As circumstances now are Mr. George perceives that wealth in the United States is constantly concentrating in fewer hands and that there is an ever-widening cleavage of society into classes, with the Haves and the Have Nots arrayed in bitterly hostile camps. This situation he ascribes solely to the existence of what he calls "privilege," meaning thereby the enjoyment of special legal rights by individuals or groups. The eradication of privilege thus becomes a first vital need in the reorganization of society deemed by him essential to the preservation of the Republic. And, like his father before him, he has a definite constructive program of reform, having for foundation the "taxing of land monopoly to death" and the abolition of the protective tariff. But his concern in the present book is less with the process of reform than with the awakening of his countrymen to the necessity for reform. To this he devotes almost his every effort.

In detail, his pages contain little or nothing that will be new to the careful observer of prevailing conditions, or the student of contemporary magazines and newspapers from which he has derived most of his abundant illustrative material. But in the aggregate, and



HENRY GEORGE, JR.

in the method of presentation, he draws a picture which reveals, as has seldom if ever been revealed before, the steady growth of the so-called money power in the United States and the evils arising from superabundance on the one hand and grinding poverty on the other. This picture, to be sure, is overcolored by the zeal of the special pleader, and does not take into account the resultant gains to the nation from the very policy of "privilege" which Mr. George condemns. As *The Outlook* puts it: "The difficulty with the book is that its view is both a partial view and a short view." But it must be remembered that the author's frankly declared purpose is to focus attention on the evils which have come in with the era of industrial combination, and as a contribution to the literature of exposure "The Menace of Privilege" must be given high rank. The ills which are attacked are ills indeed, and whether or no Mr. George's readers be persuaded that his is the logical means of effecting reform, he will certainly stimulate the most heedless to a clearer realization of the reasons for reform.

The deep impression his book has made is shown by the comments of our critical journals. *The Arena* describes it as "a book that no friend of republican government can afford to ignore." *The Outlook*, while finding it open to serious objections, believes that "there is much in this volume that is true, much that needs to be said, much that is well said," and for clearness and cogency of presentation rates it as scarcely inferior to "Progress and Poverty." "A book of first-rate interest and importance" is the verdict of the reviewer for the *New York Times Saturday Review*, altho *The Times* editorially asserts that Mr. George's material "is not digested—it is merely strung together," and adds that in his illustrative data he shows little evidence of selection "and none whatever of attempts at verification." The *Chicago Inter Ocean's* conclusion is: "A very timely and suggestive book, worth careful reading by every intelligent man and good citizen." The *Chicago Evening Post*, however, calls it "a popular edition of his father's 'Progress and Poverty,'" and adds that no one who was not converted by that book "will be persuaded by 'The Menace of Privilege.'"

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