

MISS ANNA GEORGE DESCRIBES HER FATHER AS HE APPEARED TO HER IN PRIVATE LIFE.

He Believed in God, But Did Not Attend Church, and Though He Was a Strict Disciplinarian, He Did Not Require Blind Obedience of His Children, for He Respected Their Individuality.

"MY father was my religion, my ideal of a man, the link which drew me nearer to God! My father was not a religious man, but I know he believed in God. There may have been a time when he did not—nearly all of us have to go through that some time in our lives—but toward his last years he did. He did not believe in doctrines. The fatherhood of God was his creed—man his prayers. He taught the religion of humanity—we never go to church. It is hard to tell in a few words the beauty of his character. It seems almost too sacred to show it to strangers, and still so few have any idea of it from his works and from what has been written about him. The first memory I have of my father goes back to the days in San Francisco. I was a mere baby, too young almost to remember, but his tenderness then is so stamped on my mind that nothing can efface it. I was a delicate child, and—well, I don't know just what was the matter with me, but I used to wake up every night about 12 o'clock, screaming.

"Nobody could quiet me but father, nobody could soothe my imaginary fears like him. He was writing 'Progress and Poverty' then. No matter how deep the thought upon which he was engaged, he always left his work to come to me.

"He used to take me in his arms to his study and show me pictures of Mrs. I don't know what kind of birds they were—they seemed to be doves, red and blue doves. I suppose it was their bright colors that attracted me. I was too young to speak, but it seems to me if I could find the books they were in I could turn to the very page. In Dublin, when I was a little child, I was under his care for a

long time. It was while my sister Jennie was ill with typhoid fever, and my mother had to nurse her. Father used to take me for such long walks, and never seemed to tire of answering all my questions and explaining things to me. And I remember so well how he used to buy me little boxes of chocolate cream drops. My father had views of his own upon the education of children. I remember

so well when I was first sent to school, weeping with mortification because I was made the bearer of a note to my teacher telling her I must never bring a school book home with me. I felt disgraced to be treated differently from other girls, but father was very firm, and said that when I left school it was not to study, but to play. He was a most indulgent father, tender and gentle. He never forbade one doing anything without explaining why he did so. He demanded obedience, but not blind obedience. He respected our individuality; he treated us like reasonable beings, even though very small and very young beings, and showed us the reason we should do as he directed. If we disobeyed, we were warned not to do so again. If we disregarded the warning, we were punished. Father was just; he would hurt us for our good, though it would hurt him more than it did us. He had such infinite patience. He would explain things to us, things which must have seemed so trivial to him. I have often wondered at his wide and varied knowledge. Sometimes we have had discussions among ourselves on subjects we never dreamed interested him. He would look up from his thoughts

and join in the conversation, telling us things which none of us thought he knew.

"His memory was like a sensitive plate. It received a lasting impression of all he ever read or heard. He loved poetry, and could quote it as easily as though he was reading it, and still he never committed it to memory. It seemed photographed on his brain.

"A strange fancy, poetry, for one who studied the great, solemn problems of life, was it not? But so characteristic of the man, who was broad enough to sympathize with every feeling, even though not always sharing it. He was not sentimental, but he loved poetry, the rhythm and the harmony delighted him. No matter what the subject he could always call to mind some poem to fit it. He recited with so much feeling. Rabbi Ben Ezra was one of his favorite poems. I never heard any one bring out Browning's meaning as he did.

"They say my father was a self-educated man. I suppose that is true, inasmuch as he sought education, but he had as tutors Shakspeare and the older poets, John Stuart Mill, teachers of all things and all times.

"He read constantly. There was nothing upon which he could not converse intelligently. His mind was fairly kaleidoscopic—every subject showed a new side to it. And it was so well ordered. No matter what thought he wanted, he was always able to put his finger on it at once.

"His life was just as methodical, all work. He rose at 5 every morning, and worked until 11 at night. He never would think of his meals or his clothes but for us. He gave no thought to himself, to his own comfort or pleasures.

"Frequently he sat wrapped in thought at the dinner table, solving some problem of life. When we least expected it he would look up from his reverie and say something for which we had to seek explanation in his eyes.

"He was a delightful teaser. It was impossible to tell whether he was in jest or earnest without consulting his eyes for the answer. They had such a merry twinkle in them then, though his face showed no trace of a smile. In these moods he was fond of the fantastic and humorous in literature, of the weird and imaginary. He delighted then in Stevenson.

"Father was fond of music; music with meaning in it. Folk songs, the 'Marsellaise,' songs with reasons for their being, appealed to him. In the old days, before my sister Jennie was taken from us, he used to sit here where I am and look out at the sea while she sang 'The King's Highway' to him and I accompanied her on the violin."



Recollections

These tender recollections of a youthful daughter of her famous father, Henry George, written only a few weeks after his death, is a poignant commentary on one facet of his character.

Anna Angela George was born on October 2, 1877 at the time Henry George started writing "Progress and Poverty". She had just turned 20 when her then internationally famous father passed away.

We are given a peek into those intimate and precious moments when George the fiery orator, writer and social reformer would put aside the cares of the day and become simply George, the father.

This daughter's eulogy, for it is actually that, is presented to the members of the Henry George Foundation of America and the Center for the Study of Economics. It is reproduced as it appeared in the Sunday, November 24, 1897 issue of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. We hope that our members will enjoy this recollection and show it to prospective members as well.

Anna George de Mille was very active in the affairs of the Henry George Foundation and the movement at large until her death, March 17, 1947, just after having completed a biography of her father.

HGFA/CSE
