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ANTI-POVERTY

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These eulogiums of myself to which I have sometimes to listen are embarrassing and almost painful to me, kindly meant though I know them to be. This movement is not a matter of men. It is higher and more sacred. It means, as an eloquent speaker has just said, "Peace on earth and good will toward men." The old fire is beginning to burn again in truth; that spirit that sent out through Europe the missionaries of Christianity, that spirit that, against all that was powerful, once conquered the world, is to-day coming to the front again. Such crowded meetings as this; such crowds as those that beset the doors as I came in; such meetings as are now being held nightly all over the state, mean something more than politics as we have been accustomed to think and speak of politics. They mean a movement that has in it more of the nature of a religious revival - more of the devotion of a crusade. These meetings are really an effort to fit men not so much for heaven as for earth, and to do that by so improving the condition of mankind as to give virtue an opportunity to grow, and to repress vice and crime.

I have been during this week through the state and have been much impressed, wherever I have gone, with the readiness of the people for this movement; with the avidity with which they are coming to the front in the support of our principles. I have no doubt about the result of this campaign. I am confident that on the 8th of November we shall win a moral victory that all over the country and all over the world will mark the beginning of a new era that will bring to the front a party which shall everywhere aim at re-

storing to men their natural and unalienable rights. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Applause.)

If we but base our laws upon justice; if we but do right as between man and man, there will come to us things to which we at present give little thought. Once secure the primary right, the right of man to the use of the earth, the right of labor to the element without which it cannot be exerted, and in all directions difficulties will disappear; in all directions improvements will become possible; the one great monopoly gone, the little monopolies will soon follow. (Applause.)

Mr. George then described a trip which he had taken that day to Sea Cliff, where he had addressed a meeting. He described the present aspect of the city as he viewed it while passing in the steamboat along the East river front, and spoke earnestly of the strange contrast between what New York might be with its wonderful advantages of location, and what it was.

"What a beautiful site for a city! There is not in the civilized world, so far as I know, a more magnificent site than this island, washed by two great rivers, with its beautiful bay in front. And yet what a miserable, unsightly city New York is, as compared with what it might be. The chief official of the city declares its thoroughfares to be an utter disgrace. And yet New York is rich enough. The land values of this city, taken for public use, could make this the most beautiful city in the world; and consider how just and right it is that the expense of improvement should be borne that way. One of our great papers (the New York Herald) is now advocating the taking of Blackwell's island for a public park. That

chain of islands, Blackwell's, Ward's, and Randall's, would make a magnificent group of parks, that would give us a pleasure ground finer and better than any city in the world that I know of possesses. But under our present system the money for the improvement of these parks and for making the necessary changes would be levied upon all species of property. And just so if we were to go to the expense of improving our river front, of taking and removing the unsightly houses, and opening up alongside of the river a broad boulevard, the expense under our present system must be borne by property of every kind. That is clearly unjust, for the one species of property that these improvements would increase the value of is property in land. Were taxes placed, as we propose to place them, upon the value of land, then such expenses would be borne by the value that would be added to the land. Under such a system the cost of opening a street, or of making any improvement would involve but little more expense than the buying and tearing down of the buildings."

Mr. George then drew attention to the difficulty placed in the way of any honest expression of popular opinion by the existing electoral system. "The platform adopted at Syracuse by the united labor party (applause) contains a provision asking for the adoption of the Australian system of voting. (Applause.) Under that system the names of all candidates are printed together upon an official ballot that is handed to the voter as he goes to the polls. He takes it into an apartment where he is concealed from observation and makes a mark against the name of the candidate he desires to vote for; he then folds it and takes it to the proper officer; and it is deposited in the box. Under that system, in the first place,

much of enormous expense of elections is done away with; the necessity now resting upon political parties of spending large sums for the printing of ballots is avoided; ticket peddlers are entirely done away with; and the absolute secrecy of the ballot prevents intimidation and prevents bribery - for no one will pay a man for a vote unless he can obtain some security that the vote for which he pays will be cast according to agreement.

"Here is a reform in the interests of political honesty, in the interests of good government, in the interests of everything that is right and just; and I sincerely hope that it will be agitated, talked about as much as possible, during this campaign, that the good men of all parties, of all preferences, no matter what they think of us politically, will endeavor to pledge candidates for the legislature and to arouse public opinion to this great reform; so that at the next session of the legislature it may be embodied upon the law book of our state. One prominent republican; Allen Thorndike Rice, editor of the North American Review, has already drafted a bill for that purpose, and the measure so commends itself to all right-thinking people that it has but to be brought to the front to arouse in its favor a force of public opinion that will surely press the next legislature into passing it.

"As I said, I have been in the country during the past week. I start to-morrow morning to speak again for the week. Everywhere I find that the enthusiasm which has made these New York meetings so distinctive is beginning to appear in other places. I find that the doctrines we are advocating and the principles that we profess are making their way. It is as Major Calhoun has said, a certain thing, that if we can get a man who is not entirely blinded by self interest to consider the matter, we make a convert and an ally,

and when we once get a man or a woman on our side we keep them there."

Speech: Henry George.

October 1, 1887.