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MR. GEORGE'S ADDRESS.

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Let me begin by disclaiming what our chairman has just said. The anti-poverty movement would have come anyhow. (Applause.) In the providence of God, the time has arrived for it; and no matter whether through this man, that man or the other man, it would have forced its way to the front, and no matter who may fall back, who pass one, the movement must go on. (Applause.)

And our chairman must also allow me to say that I, for one, would not have thought less of him if he had had something to do with stopping the sale of chances in the other fairs. What is sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander, and our worthy mayor (hisses), who acted so promptly on an anonymous letter, would doubtless have been much more prompt to act upon a letter signed by the chairman of the executive committee of the Anti-poverty society. (Applause.) And if all the fairs that are yet to be held - and we are now approaching the season of fairs - are subjected to precisely the same restrictions that were imposed upon the Anti-poverty fair in its last days, I think it would be a good lesson.

I think, too, there is a lesson in the opposition, to which Mr. Croasdale has alluded, of the democratic police commissioners to the carrying out of a law intended only to give fair play. What is the reason of that opposition? (A voice: "Robbery!") That and nothing else. (Applause.) They are accessories before the fact to the greatest of crimes. The opposition to the appointment of these inspectors is intended only to make the commission of election frauds easier. (A voice: "That is it!") As Fatty Walsh - now Mr. Warden Walsh (a voice: "The Chatham street fare bank man!") - said at the

beginning of the last campaign: "What are them labor fellows thinking about? Do they suppose they can/carry anything? Why, they ain't got no judges of election or inspectors?" (Laughter.)

And there is a lesson, too, in the fact that a man of the education and social prominence of General Fitz-John Porter (Hisses) is willing to lend himself to such a scheme. (A voice: "Send him back to Jersey!") You might send him back to Jersey and fare no better. (Applause.) The fault lies in a demoralized and debauched public opinion ("Hear!hear!"); a public opinion so demoralized and so debauched that men can even commit crime, and provided they keep out of the penitentiary and the crime is successful, will not meet social reprobation. Our whole political system is rotten to the core. (Applause.) We all know that bribery and fraud and false counting carried the last election in this city (A voice: "Hear!hear!"); we know that such things have been common, and that preparations are even now being made for their repetition at the next election. The colonizing of the wards has commenced. (A voice:"The lodging houses.") Yes, the lodging house business. But it is not merely New York City that is corrupt. I have been astonished while going through the state to see how far the corruption reaches.

I said something to you from this platform last Sunday night about what I had heard of the buying and selling of votes at Elmira, the home of Governor Hill. Up in the nothern part of the state this week a gentleman told me that he had happened to hear incidentally from a well informed man that in the little town of Rouse's Point, just on your frontier, there are 980 votes, if I remember the exact figures, and that 500 of them are regularly sold. In some of those

beautiful little towns they have told me of respectable men - men who own their houses and well to do farmers - who regularly sell their votes on election day. I was told of a farmer and his three sons walking in and selling their votes in a lot. When voters are bought on election day like cattle, is there not real danger to the republic? (A voice: "Hear!hear!") The steel-clad cruisers that we are building, the iron clad forts that some people say are necessary to line our coasts - they never will and never can defend our republic against her most deadly enemies. Her enemies come from within. This rottenness that is eating into our body politic, and to which people are becoming habituated, is demoralizing the public conscience; there is the real danger to the republic.

This is the movement on which the hope of the republic hangs to-day. (Applause.) Here arises the true democracy to do battle with the sham democracy. (Applause.) Ours is the party that holds to the principles on which this republic was founded and really aims at carrying them into effect. (Applause.) Already wherever this movement goes it is arousing the consciences of men; wherever it goes it is bringing forth a public spirit unknown for a long time before in politics. We shall get this year all through this state an enormous quiet vote, largely the vote of men who for some time past have seen no hope in politics, have seen no use of voting, but who in this great principle that we are advocating (applause) at last see something worth working for with all their ability and all their strength.

The great fair which has just been concluded has been to my mind a most significant demonstration of the power of this movement; the devotion that it called for, the willingness of the ladies to work,

their eagerness each to contribute something, show an interest that no other political party within my time has ever succeeded in arousing (cries of "Hear! hear!" and applause); an interest that heretofore has only been brought out by the churches, and which, coming out here and now, is another of the indications that this movement is laying hold on the hearts of men; that it is at the bottom not merely a political, but a religious movement. (Applause.)

We have on the platform with us the senior member of the firm of Atkinson Bros. of Philadelphia, a firm of young men who have been on every occasion active and urgent and generous in their efforts to spread the light; who, besides their contributions to the Anti-poverty fair and a generous check to the campaign fund, have had printed at their own expense, for use in this campaign, one million tracts. (Great applause.) They represent one class who are becoming interested in this movement, and they show how strongly it arouses men, how much it leads them to do. But there are others, too. One of the most touching contributions to that fair was sent by a widow who sews for a living. It was the widow's mite - two little child's frocks and two little caps. In the letter that she wrote she told me something of her history - how being left a widow she had attempted to make a living. She got herself a little place on 125th street - a little store - a place about nine feet square, and she agreed to pay for that forty dollars a month - or forty dollars a quarter, it may have been, I don't know which. But this is the essential point, that she started her little business, and managed by hard work to get along. But by and by her landlord came and told her that the rent would be forty-five dollars. (Cries of "Name him!") Still she managed to

get along until her rent was raised to fifty dollars, and then she had to leave her store, sell off her little stock and go to work sewing for a living. And she said in her letter that she had learned to see the light on this great question, and that she wanted to add to the funds of the Anti-poverty society the widow's mite. (Great applause.)

Thus from the widow sewing for a living to the prosperous business man, those who get into this movement, those to whom the consciousness of the truths for which we are battling are ready to stand for us, ready to work for us, ready to do what they can to carry to others the light they have received. And against the forces of corruption, against the prejudices that interested men seek to arouse we oppose the forces of truth and of conscience, and in the long run we must be victorious. (Applause.)

Everywhere I have been through the state I have met earnest, active men who have only come into this movement within the last few months or the last few weeks. The gentleman who introduced me to a magnificent audience last Monday night at Cohoes said, in introducing me: "A year ago I thought Henry George was a crank and a demagogue (laughter); I supposed I knew all about him. I had never read his books, but I had read what the newspapers had said of him, and that was enough for me. But when 68,000 votes were counted for him in New York (applause) I made up my mind that this was something that I ought to look into; that a doctrine capable of arousing as much enthusiasm, of drawing such a following, no matter how bad or how foolish it might seem, at least needed examination. I examined it, and I at once fell in with the movement, and I am here to-night to

~~to~~ introduce Henry George to you."

And his case is that of thousands, of men throughout this state and all over the country. The main thing is not the vote. That which determines everything, after all, is public opinion, is thought. And the chief reason why we want to poll a big vote is for the purpose of compelling people to think. (Applause.) And just as this vote in the city of New York, last year did compel people to think, so will the vote this year in the state of New York, have even a greater and a stronger influence in that direction.

When I spoke here last a gentleman who met me afterward said: "I went to the Academy to hear something about the anti-poverty doctrines, and I didn't hear much. You ought to explain them every Sunday night (a voice: "Hear!hear!") because there are always strangers there." For my part, when I get before this audience on Sunday night after speaking during the week through the state, it seems to me as though I had got home; and that instead of being among people to whom I have to explain anything, I am among my friends who knew it all before. (Applause.) But nevertheless, there may be some truth in my friends criticism, so let me say what we aim at is the abolition of poverty. We propose to accomplish this by abolishing injustice, and our particular aim is to abolish that fundamental injustice which deprives so many human creatures, - aye, in cities like this, the majority of the population - of their natural rights to the land which the Lord their God has given them. The relation between man and the planet he inhabits is fundamental, and the laws which affect the tenure of land, the relation between man and the land on which all must live, are the most important of all laws. We do not

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mean to say that there are not many other wrongs to be righted, that there are not many other things to do, but we do say that the fundamental injustice which deprives men of their natural rights to the element from which and on which all must live is most important and the one with which we ought to begin. Until we do away with that injustice we cannot abolish minor wrongs or make minor improvements that will affect any permanent good. (Applause.) We do not say that this is the only thing to do, but we say this is the first thing to do. (Applause.) We propose to establish equality between men with relation to the element on which and from which they must live; not by dividing the land up into equal pieces; not by taking land as the formal property of the state and renting it out; not ^Uby from anybody any land that he now has, but simply by so changing our system of taxation as to abolish all taxes now levied upon labor and the products of labor and taking by taxation for public purposes that value which attaches to land by reason of the growth of the community. (Applause.) We do not propose to interfere with the rights of property. On the contrary, we are sticklers for the rights of property. (Applause.) What a man makes by his own exertion, whether of hand or of brain, that we hold to be his as against the world. (Applause.) If a man plows a field and plants a crop, we say that he alone is entitled to reap it. If a man builds a house he ought to have it and all of it (applause); and we say that it is unjust and a violation of the sacred rights of property when our tax gatherers come down and say to a man because he has cultivated his soil, because he has built a house, because he has produced or accumulated wealth, therefore the state demands a certain portion of it from him. We say that such a system is unjust and that not one penny should be taken from a man

because he has been industrious and thrifty. We propose to leave to labor its entire product; we propose to take for the use of the community that value that is produced by no individual, that value which attaches to land not by reason of what its owner does, but by reason of the growth and improvement of the whole community. (Applause.) We say that that is just, that it will give to the community what belongs to the community and leave entirely to the individual what rightfully belongs to the individual (Applause); and being just, we say that it is wise. We say that it is bad policy to tax men for what they add to the common stock of wealth, that he is a benefactor, who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before; that the man who builds a house is doing something not merely for himself, but for the whole community, and that it is stupid to tax men for building houses, or cultivating fields, or erecting factories or building ships, or doing anything whatever that adds to the common stock of wealth; that the state should encourage industry, not discourage it; that no tax should be laid upon the industry that produces or the thrift that accumulates; that in this great fund that comes from nothing that the individual does lies the proper, the intended means, of supplying all public wants. (Applause.) That fund we propose to take by abolishing our present taxes and laying a single tax upon the value of land irrespective of improvements, increasing it as far and as fast as we can until it shall take as nearly as may be the whole value of the land.

Look in whatever direction you choose and see what benefits will spring from this simple change, how much fraud it will prevent, what temptation, to bribery and corruption it will avoid. Look at our

present system of taxation, piling up an enormous surplus in the vaults of the general government that there is really no need for; taking money by the most onerous forms of taxation that cost the consumers, the real taxpayers, certainly more than two dollars, and probably more than three dollars, for every dollar that is put in the public treasury; piling it up there, and then, to prevent the stringency of money, lending it out to bankers and bondholders at no interest at all. (Applause.) Where does this money that is lent in that way come from? It comes from men to whom the use of money is worth six, ten, twenty percent, aye, in some cases one hundred per cent per annum. And it is put into the hands of the banks without interest by being used to anticipate the coupons of the national debt or to buy bonds at a heavy premium. And what is the reason for the accumulation of this surplus? Why, simply the pressure of people who are interested in certain taxes, and who lobby and log roll and spend money and go into politics in order to prevent those taxes being taken off the shoulders of the people. (Applause. Look at the personal property tax throughout this state, where, with personal property increasing enormously every year, the assessment has fallen over \$100,000,000 within some thirteen years. Now the enormous advantage of the system of taxation that we propose is that the tax can be certainly assessed, easily collected, will give no room for much of the fraud that is now carried on, and will not offer the inducement to evasion that now exists. Land can't run away; it can't be hidde; it lies out of doors; its value can be estimated with more certainty than any other value. And in putting taxes upon that sin-

gle item we shall get rid of all these oaths that people in every direction are now required to take, of all the temptations to perjury that our present tax laws give, and shall raise our revenue without imposing any restriction upon production or diminishing it in the least. On the contrary, by imposing our taxes in this way, we shall prevent that monopolization of natural opportunities which everywhere restricts production, and in this broad and rich country is already producing the tramp and the pauper (applause); that monopolization of natural opportunities that makes us, in the midst of abundance and plenty, think of work as something good in itself; which forces upon us even in the best of times the spectacle of thousands and hundreds of thousands of men willing to work, anxious to work, but unable to find the opportunity to work, - (Applause.) There, we hold, is the cause of all labor difficulties; there, we believe, is the cause of poverty. It is not the fault of the Almighty, this horrid, bitter struggle for existence that is the lot of so many thousands to-day; it is not caused by the niggardliness of the Creator. He had placed here enough, and to spare, for all of us. All we have to do is to prevent monopolization; all we have to do is to secure to each one his natural right.

This simple plan of ours will utterly stop the monopolization of land by making it unprofitable. What is the temptation to the monopolization of land? Commissioner Sparks in his last report paints in very vivid colors the manner in which the public land has been appropriated by speculators and grabbers, by stretching grants, by making false entries, by everywhere getting hold of the land ahead of the settler. Why? In order to profit by the value that will be-

gin to attach to the land as soon as there is a prospect of settlement coming. The moment it has made certain that whenever a value shall attach itself to the land irrespective of the value produced by the labor upon it, it be taken for the use of the community, then the temptation to all this land grabbing would be utterly gone - (applause) - and not merely will the temptation to land grabbing in the future be destroyed, but all the land that has been grabbed in the past will be released. (Applause.) Once tax the speculator who holds 160 acres of agricultural land vacant as heavily as the farmer who has plowed his land, has cultivated a farm and made improvements; once tax the holder of a valuable building lot as much when it is vacant as a lot of like quality with a splendid house upon it; once make sure that as the value of land increases the tax upon it shall increase likewise, and the monopolizers who all over this land are holding vacant city lots, untilled agricultural lands and unworked mines from the man who would be glad to use them, will be forced to let them go. (Applause.)

See, how the system would operate here in New York. Our vast population is crowded together, yet one-half the area of this city is not built upon? Why? Not because there is not need for more houses; not because there are not plenty of sites for houses; but that the building sites are held by men who will not or cannot use them themselves, and will not allow those who want to use them to have access to them unless they first pay an enormous price. The simple effect of the change in taxation which we propose would be to compel those men either to build upon those lots themselves or to sell them to somebody else who would. (Applause.) The moment the men who are

holding land without using it are compelled to use it or give it up there will be an abundance of land for all who want to use it. (Applause.) I don't mean to say that under those circumstances every man would go and build himself a house, or that all of these unemployed men throughout the country would take up farms and open mines; but this I do say, that enough could and would make use of these natural opportunities for employment to relieve the glut in the labor market (applause); taking themselves out of the fierce competition for the wages of an employer, they would not only employ themselves, but in doing so - in producing wealth of some kind - they would be creating a demand for the labor of others in production. (Applause.) In that way it would be possible that any man willing to work should be able to find abundant opportunity to work; and the setting this vast force of unemployed men at productive labor would create a demand for commodities that would give new vigor to every branch of business. (Applause.)

These, in very brief outline, are the doctrines for which we stand. I present them in that brief form for those who may happen to be here to whom they are new; and although first statement objections may arise, yet I know that if these things are considered, that if the objections raised are fairly stated, they will disappear; and I know furthermore that without regard to the hope that the reform we seek may be brought about in our lifetime, there is a deep satisfaction to the man or woman who once clearly sees that the poverty and the wrong and the sufferings so common to-day among the great masses of people, even of the most advanced civilized countries, are not due to the injustice of the Creator, but arise solely from the injustice

of man; and that in itself is something that will compensate for every effort that may be required to gain a clear perception of those duties. (Applause.)

I met last week in one of the interior towns Master Workman Fitzgerald of the axe-makers assembly of the Knights of Labor at Cohoes, who said to me: "I am a poor man and twenty thousand dollars would be a fortune to me, but I would not for that amount exchange the satisfaction that these views have given me." And I think that every man who has clearly seen these truths will understand and appreciate that sentiment. (Great applause.) When a man once sees that there is enough here for all, that it is not because of any niggardliness or shortcoming of the Creator that poverty and the vice and the want and suffering that spring out of it exist to-day, then there rises in his mind an idea of the divine order, a perception of the beneficence of the Almighty that enables him to really say, as he never said before, "Our Father which art in heaven." (Applause.) And as there rises in his mind a faith that the recognition of justice in the constitution of human society would really bring heaven upon earth, there arises also within him a faith in heaven beyond - (applause) - and he feels that while it is his duty here to do the best he can, to stand for the right and to fight for the right, to endeavor by all means in his power to hasten the triumph of justice, yet that the results are not his business and that even though in this life he may ^{not} see success, and close his eyes upon what may seem at the moment a falling cause, yet beyond this life there is another life which those who have stood for the good and the true will have their exceeding great reward. (Great and prolonged applause.)

Dated: October 22, 1887