

**THE WRITINGS OF HENRY GEORGE:  
PROGRESS AND POVERTY: AN INQUIRY  
INTO THE CAUSE OF  
INDUSTRIAL DEPRESSIONS AND OF  
INCREASE OF WANT WITH INCREASE OF  
WEALTH: THE REMEDY II**

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The writings of Henry George: Progress and poverty: An inquiry into the cause of industrial depressions and of increase of want with increase of wealth: The remedy II by Henry George

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THE REMEDY

II



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## BOOK VI.

### THE REMEDY.

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CHAPTER I.—INSUFFICIENCY OF REMEDIES CURRENTLY  
ADVOCATED.

CHAPTER II.—THE TRUE REMEDY.

A new and fair division of the goods and rights of this world should be the main object of those who conduct human affairs.—*De Toqueville.*

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When the object is to raise the permanent condition of a people, small means do not merely produce small effects; they produce no effect at all.—*John Stuart Mill.*



## CHAPTER I.

### INSUFFICIENCY OF REMEDIES CURRENTLY ADVOCATED.

In tracing to its source the cause of increasing poverty amid advancing wealth, we have discovered the remedy; but before passing to that branch of our subject it will be well to review the tendencies or remedies which are currently relied on or advocated. The remedy to which our conclusions point is at once radical and simple—so radical that, on the one side, it will not be fairly considered so long as any faith remains in the efficacy of less caustic measures; so simple that, on the other side, its real efficacy and comprehensiveness are likely to be overlooked, until the effect of more elaborate measures is estimated.

The tendencies and measures which current literature and discussions show to be more or less relied on or advocated as calculated to relieve poverty and distress among the masses may be divided into six classes. I do not mean that there are so many distinct parties or schools of thought, but merely that, for the purpose of our inquiry, prevailing opinions and proposed measures may be so grouped for review. Remedies which for the sake of greater convenience and clearness we shall consider separately are often combined in thought.

There are many persons who still retain a comfortable belief that material progress will ultimately extirpate poverty, and there are many who look to prudential restraint upon the increase of population as the most efficacious means, but the fallacy of these views has al-

ready been sufficiently shown. Let us now consider what may be hoped for:

- I. From greater economy in government.
- II. From the better education of the working classes and improved habits of industry and thrift.
- III. From combinations of workmen for the advance of wages.
- IV. From the co-operation of labor and capital.
- V. From governmental direction and interference.
- VI. From a more general distribution of land.

Under these six heads I think we may in essential form review all hopes and propositions for the relief of social distress short of the simple but far-reaching measure which I shall propose.

*I.—From Greater Economy in Government.*

Until a very few years ago it was an article of faith with Americans—a belief shared by European liberals—that the poverty of the down-trodden masses of the Old World was due to aristocratic and monarchical institutions. This belief has rapidly passed away with the appearance in the United States, under republican institutions, of social distress of the same kind, if not of the same intensity, as that prevailing in Europe. But social distress is still largely attributed to the immense burdens which existing governments impose—the great debts, the military and naval establishments, the extravagance which is characteristic as well of republican as of monarchical rulers, and especially characteristic of the administration of great cities. To these must be added, in the United States, the robbery involved in the protective tariff, which for every twenty-five cents it puts in the treasury takes a dollar and it may be four or five out of the pocket of the consumer. Now, there seems to be an evident connection between the immense sums thus taken from the people and the privations of the lower

classes, and it is upon a superficial view natural to suppose that a reduction in the enormous burdens thus uselessly imposed would make it easier for the poorest to get a living. But a consideration of the matter in the light of the economic principles heretofore traced out will show that this would not be the effect. A reduction in the amount taken from the aggregate produce of a community by taxation would be simply equivalent to an increase in the power of net production. It would in effect add to the productive power of labor just as do the increasing density of population and improvement in the arts. And as the advantage in the one case goes, and must go, to the owners of land, in increased rent, so would the advantage in the other.

From the produce of the labor and capital of England are now supported the burden of an immense debt, an Established Church, an expensive royal family, a large number of sinecurists, a great army and great navy. Suppose the debt repudiated, the Church disestablished, the royal family set adrift to make a living for themselves, the sinecurists cut off, the army disbanded, the officers and men of the navy discharged and the ships sold. An enormous reduction in taxation would thus become possible. There would be a great addition to the net produce which remains to be distributed among the parties to production. But it would be only such an addition as improvement in the arts has been for a long time constantly making, and not so great an addition as steam and machinery have made within the last twenty or thirty years. And as these additions have not alleviated pauperism, but have only increased rent, so would this. English land owners would reap the whole benefit. I will not dispute that if all these things could be done suddenly, and without the destruction and expense involved in a revolution, there might be a temporary improvement in the condition of the lowest class; but such