

Dictated.

Mayville, N.Y.
Feb. 18th 1890.

My dear Sir:

Nothing more pathetic has fallen in my way for a long time than your letter rec'd yesterday. I have often wondered how the missionary in strange lands who thinks of the mighty problem of Man and God, and sees and realizes that mere belief in Christ as a miracle and a miracle-worker, is not enough to cure the woes of humanity, really feels about these things of which he says nothing.

I am grateful indeed that the time is coming when we begin to realize that Christ died for Man, not merely as a disembodied spirit but as the chiefest part of God's creation whose future depends not so much on miracle as on environment and inheritance.

You want to know why I do not advocate the single-tax theory. I was one of those on whom the burthen fell of trying to build a beneficent civilization on the smoking ruins of two centuries and a half of slavery swept away by four years of war. Up to that time, I may have believed in specifics,--I do not know--but that experience, grievous enough in one sense, taught me what I think few men having my views of the function of human institutions ever learn, to wit: first, that evils are never cured by a nostrum, and, secondly, that the thing to strive for is what can be accomplished, not what is impossible of achievement. No nostrum will ever be found that will cure the woes of humanity. The more ~~of that~~ we do, the more there will always be found to be done. *(79ms)*

Mr George's view of the evil is vivid enough, though hardly just. It is not the very poor man to whom the great accumulator is the worst enemy, but the man who is not yet poor. These are being rapidly crushed down into the rank of dependent servitors.

Mr George's view of the remedy is, to my mind, thoroughly impracticable because, well, because among many other things, it implies an army of perfect officials, with no visible ~~or~~ corrective ^{restraint}. The hardest lesson in life is to induce a people to look after their own servants. And, secondly, because it means a tearing up of all the bases of political and economic thought and the laying of new foundations. These things are the result of centuries, and never come in a lump but always little by little.

A thousand little forces--yes millions of them will tend to produce some of the conditions Mr George and Mr Bellamy desire,--not all of them, for human nature, thank God, does not grow towards external control, but towards individual correctiveness and personal decision. The old idea of a republic, was a people who chose wise men to govern. It was a failure. The new idea of a republic, growing out of centuries of experience, is that of a people who create, manage, and watch over their servants. The political wisdom, integrity, and tendency of every constituency is fairly represented by their representatives. Ours is a government by ~~mass~~ of individuals, and such masses are only moved by perceptible, tangible woe. They will never follow nor adopt ^{any} theory of general betterment, but only items of particular relief.

Now, I think it is folly to ^{discuss} ~~pursue~~ method, which may be infinite in its character. One people secures a thing in one way and another in another way. There is no patent on methods of procedure. Either of the methods so earnestly contended for, would put us back a thou-

sand years, if adopted today.

But there is one thing that is immortal, can never do harm, and is sure to yield healthful results, --the general spirit, intent and purpose to carry into effect the outgrowth of the Master's teaching "Bear ye one another's burdens," not by sympathy, but in fact, --the general ingrained, universal desire to do good to our fellows on earth, ^{collectively, as well as individually} and the ranking him highest in our esteem who does the most, --labors most self-forgetfully and earnestly for human betterment. Such ~~schemes~~ schemes as Bellamy's and George's, taken at the best, are only ^{as} pictures of Heaven to those ^{confining} confined in hell. A ladder that will help even one of them to get his nose above the fumes, is a work of ^{far} greater beneficence than a world full of such impracticable visions.

I am trying to say some of these things in a story entitled, "The Church of the Golden Lilies," now running in the ADVANCE, Chicago, as also in "Pactolus Prime," just out, published by Cassell & Co., New York. I think the great fault is with the Church, in thinking that its sole mission is to secure the happiness of disembodied spirits rather than the betterment of incarnate lives.

Let me thank you for your letter. I think we live in one of those times when thought and purpose are revolutionized, and new conditions are established. The extent and character of this work, is easily judged by the comment and inquiries the article you have referred to has awakened. I trust your work in that strange land will be pleasant and profitable to man. There is no doubt but Christianity must be "born again," and it is quite possible that the new birth may come from the Orient of yesterday which is today only the world's farther Occident.

Thanks for the tea leaf and blossom from the "garden." It had the true oriental flavor ^{to the imagination, at least -- as the half-known always has the flavor of reality to the half-informed.}
Sincerely yours,

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY