

progress and poverty

*An inquiry
into the cause
of industrial depressions
and of increase of want
with increase of wealth
... The Remedy*

Henry George

ROBERT SCHALKENBACH FOUNDATION
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Marginal notes

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former president of the New York Typothetae,
and such other funds as may be donated to it,
for the purpose of spreading among the people
of this and other countries
a wider acquaintance
with the social and economic philosophy
of Henry George.*

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To those who, seeing the vice and

misery that spring from the un-

equal distribution of wealth

and privilege, feel the possibil-

ity of a higher social state and

would strive for its attainment

San Francisco, March, 1879.

Make for thyself a definition or description of the thing which is presented to thee, so as to see distinctly what kind of a thing it is, in its substance, in its nudity, in its complete entirety, and tell thyself its proper name, and the names of the things of which it has been compounded, and into which it will be resolved. For nothing is so productive of elevation of mind as to be able to examine methodically and truly every object which is presented to thee in life, and always to look at things so as to see at the same time what kind of universe this is, and what kind of use everything performs in it, and what value everything has with reference to the whole, and what with reference to man, who is a citizen of the highest city, of which all other cities are like families; what each thing is, and of what it is composed, and how long it is the nature of this thing to endure.

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

There must be refuge! Men

*Perished in winter winds till one smote fire
From flint stones coldly hiding what they held,
The red spark treasured from the kindling sun;
They gorged on flesh like wolves, till one sowed corn,
Which grew a weed, yet makes the life of man;
They mowed and babbled till some tongue struck speech,
And patient fingers framed the lettered sound.
What good gift have my brothers, but it came
From search and strife and loving sacrifice?*

—EDWIN ARNOLD

*Never yet
Share of Truth was vainly set
In the world's wide fallow;
After hands shall sow the seed,
After hands, from hill and mead,
Reap the harvests yellow.*

—WHITTIER

HENRY GEORGE'S PREFACE TO
THE FOURTH EDITION

THE views herein set forth were in the main briefly stated in a pamphlet entitled "Our Land and Land Policy," published in San Francisco in 1871. I then intended, as soon as I could, to present them more fully, but the opportunity did not for a long time occur. In the meanwhile I became even more firmly convinced of their truth, and saw more completely and clearly their relations; and I also saw how many false ideas and erroneous habits of thought stood in the way of their recognition, and how necessary it was to go over the whole ground.

This I have here tried to do, as thoroughly as space would permit. It has been necessary for me to clear away before I could build up, and to write at once for those who have made no previous study of such subjects, and for those who are familiar with economic reasoning; and, so great is the scope of the argument that it has been impossible to treat with the fullness they deserve many of the questions raised. What I have most endeavored to do is to establish general principles, trusting to my readers to carry further their applications where this is needed.

In certain respects this book will be best appreciated by those who have some knowledge of economic literature but no previous reading is necessary to the understanding of the argument or the passing of judgment upon its conclusions. The facts upon which I have relied are not facts which can only be verified by a search through libraries. They are facts

of common observation and common knowledge, which every reader can verify for himself, just as he can decide whether the reasoning from them is or is not valid.

Beginning with a brief statement of facts which suggest this inquiry, I proceed to examine the explanation currently given in the name of political economy of the reason why, in spite of the increase of productive power, wages tend to the minimum of a bare living. This examination shows that the current doctrine of wages is founded upon a misconception; that, in truth, wages are produced by the labor for which they are paid, and should, other things being equal, increase with the number of laborers. Here the inquiry meets a doctrine which is the foundation and center of most important economic theories, and which has powerfully influenced thought in all directions— the Malthusian doctrine, that population tends to increase faster than subsistence. Examination, however, shows that this doctrine has no real support either in fact or in analogy, and that when brought to a decisive test it is utterly disproved.

Thus far the results of the inquiry, though extremely important, are mainly negative. They show that current theories do not satisfactorily explain the connection of poverty with material progress, but throw no light upon the problem itself, beyond showing that its solution must be sought in the laws which govern the distribution of wealth. It therefore becomes necessary to carry the inquiry into this field. A preliminary review shows that the three laws of distribution must necessarily correlate with each other, which as laid down by the current political economy they fail to do, and an examination of the terminology in use reveals the confusion of thought by which this discrepancy has been slurred over. Proceeding then to work out the laws of distribution, I first take up the law of rent. This, it is readily seen, is correctly apprehended by the current political economy. But it is also seen that the full scope of this law has not been appreciated,

and that it involves as corollaries the laws of wages and interest— the cause which determines what part of the produce shall go to the landowner necessarily determining what part shall be left for labor and capital. Without resting here, I proceed to an independent deduction of the laws of interest and wages. I have stopped to determine the real cause and justification of interest, and to point out a source of much misconception— the confounding of what are really the profits of monopoly with the legitimate earnings of capital. Then returning to the main inquiry, investigation shows that interest must rise and fall with wages, and depends ultimately upon the same thing as rent— the margin of cultivation or point in production where rent begins. A similar but independent investigation of the law of wages yields similar harmonious results. Thus the three laws of distribution are brought into mutual support and harmony, and the fact that with material progress rent everywhere advances is seen to explain the fact that wages and interest do not advance.

What causes this advance of rent is the next question that arises, and it necessitates an examination of the effect of material progress upon the distribution of wealth. Separating the factors of material progress into increase of population and improvements in the arts, it is first seen that increase in population tends constantly, not merely by reducing the margin of cultivation, but by localizing the economies and powers which come with increased population, to increase the proportion of the aggregate produce which is taken in rent, and to reduce that which goes as wages and interest. Then eliminating increase of population, it is seen that improvement in the methods and powers of production tends in the same direction, and, land being held as private property, would produce in a stationary population all the effects attributed by the Malthusian doctrine to pressure of population. And then a consideration of the effects of the continu-

ous increase in land values which thus springs from material progress reveals in the speculative advance inevitably begotten when land is private property a derivative but most powerful cause of the increase of rent and the crowding down of wages. Deduction shows that this cause must necessarily produce periodical industrial depression, and induction proves the conclusion; while from the analysis which has thus been made it is seen that the necessary result of material progress, land being private property, is, no matter what the increase in population, to force laborers to wages which give but a bare living.

This identification of the cause that associates poverty with progress points to the remedy, but it is so radical a remedy that I have next deemed it necessary to inquire whether there is any other remedy. Beginning the investigation again from another starting point, I have passed in examination the measures and tendencies currently advocated or trusted in for the improvement of the condition of the laboring masses. The result of this investigation is to prove the preceding one, as it shows that nothing short of making land common property can permanently relieve poverty and check the tendency of wages to the starvation point.

The question of justice now naturally arises, and the inquiry passes into the field of ethics. An investigation of the nature and basis of property shows that there is a fundamental and irreconcilable difference between property in things which are the product of labor and property in land; that the one has a natural basis and sanction while the other has none, and that the recognition of exclusive property in land is necessarily a denial of the right of property in the products of labor. Further investigation shows that private property in land always has, and always must, as development proceeds, lead to the enslavement of the laboring class; thus landowners can make no just claim to compensation if society choose to

resume its right; that so far from private property in land being in accordance with the natural perceptions of men, the very reverse is true, and that in the United States we are already beginning to feel the effects of having admitted this erroneous and destructive principle.

The inquiry then passes to the field of practical statesmanship. It is seen that private property in land, instead of being necessary to its improvement and use, stands in the way of improvement and use, and entails an enormous waste of productive forces; that the recognition of the common right to land involves no shock or dispossession, but is to be reached by the simple and easy method of abolishing all taxation save that upon land values. And this an inquiry into the principles of taxation shows to be, in all respects, the best subject of taxation.

A consideration of the effects of the change proposed then shows that it would enormously increase production; would secure justice in distribution; would benefit all classes; and would make possible an advance to a higher and nobler civilization.

The inquiry now rises to a wider field, and recommences from another starting point. For not only do the hopes which have been raised come into collision with the widespread idea that social progress is only possible by slow race improvement, but the conclusions we have arrived at assert certain laws which, if they are really natural laws, must be manifest in universal history. As a final test, it therefore becomes necessary to work out the law of human progress, for certain great facts which force themselves on our attention as soon as we begin to consider this subject, seem utterly inconsistent with what is now the current theory. This inquiry shows that differences in civilization are not due to differences in individuals, but rather to differences in social organization; that progress, always kindled by association, always passes into retrogression as inequality is developed; and that even now,

in modern civilization, the causes which have destroyed all previous civilizations are beginning to manifest themselves, and that mere political democracy is running its course toward anarchy and despotism. But it also identifies the law of social life with the great moral law of justice, and, proving previous conclusions, shows how retrogression may be prevented and a grander advance begun. This ends the inquiry. The final chapter will explain itself.

The great importance of this inquiry will be obvious. If it has been carefully and logically pursued, its conclusions completely change the character of political economy, give it the coherence and certitude of a true science, and bring it into full sympathy with the aspirations of the masses of men, from which it has long been estranged. What I have done in this book, if I have correctly solved the great problem I have sought to investigate, is, to unite the truth perceived by the school of Smith and Ricardo to the truth perceived by the school of Proudhon and Lasalle; to show that *laissez faire* (in its full true meaning) opens the way to a realization of the noble dreams of socialism; to identify social law with moral law, and to disprove ideas which in the minds of many cloud grand and elevating perceptions.

This work was written between August, 1877, and March, 1879, and the plates finished by September of that year. Since that time new illustrations have been given of the correctness of the views herein advanced, and the march of events— and especially that great movement which has begun in Great Britain in the Irish land agitation— shows still more clearly the pressing nature of the problem I have endeavored to solve. But there has been nothing in the criticisms they have received to induce the change or modification of these views— in fact, I have yet to see an objection not answered in advance in the book itself. And except that some verbal errors have been corrected and a preface added, this edition is the same as previous ones.

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INTRODUCTORY **THE**
PROBLEM

*Ye build! ye build! but ye enter not in,
Like the tribes whom the desert devoured in their sin;
From the land of promise ye fade and die,
Ere its verdure gleams forth on your wearied eye.*

MRS. SIGOURNEY

THE INTRODUCTORY PROBLEM

The present century has been marked by a prodigious increase in wealth-producing power. The utilization of steam and electricity, the introduction of improved processes and laborsaving machinery, the greater subdivision and grander scale of production, the wonderful facilitation of exchanges, have multiplied enormously the effectiveness of labor.

At the beginning of this marvelous era it was natural to expect, and it was expected, that laborsaving inventions would lighten the toil and improve the condition of the laborer; that the enormous increase in the power of producing wealth would make real poverty a thing of the past. Could a man of the last century—a Franklin or a Priestly—have seen, in a vision of the future, the steamship taking the place of the sailing vessel, the railroad train of the wagon, the reaping machine of the scythe, the threshing machine of the flail; could he have heard the throb of the engines that in obedience to human will, and for the satisfaction of human desire, exert a power greater than that of all the men and all the beasts of burden of the earth combined; could he have seen the forest tree transformed into finished lumber—into doors, sashes, blinds, boxes or barrels, with hardly the touch of a human hand; the great workshops where boots and shoes are turned out by the case with less labor than the old-fashioned cobbler could have put on a

During the present century, technological advances have much increased labor's productive power.

If an 18th - century man had foreseen these increases,

he would have expected that inevitably everyone's material needs would be met.

sole; the factories where, under the eye of a girl, cotton becomes cloth faster than hundreds of stalwart weavers could have turned it out with their hand looms; could he have seen steam hammers shaping mammoth shafts and mighty anchors, and delicate machinery making tiny watches; the diamond drill cutting through the heart of the rocks, and coal oil sparing the whale; could he have realized the enormous saving of labor resulting from improved facilities of exchange and communication—sheep killed in Australia eaten fresh in England, and the order given by the London banker in the afternoon executed in San Francisco in the morning of the same day; could he have conceived of the hundred thousand improvements which these only suggest, what would he have inferred as to the social condition of mankind?

It would not have seemed like an inference; further than the vision went it would have seemed as though he saw; and his heart would have leaped and his nerves would have thrilled, as one who from a height beholds just ahead of the thirst-stricken caravan the living gleam of rustling woods and the glint of laughing waters. Plainly, in the sight of the imagination, he would have beheld these new forces elevating society from its very foundations, lifting the very poorest above the possibility of want, exempting the very lowest from anxiety for the material needs of life; he would have seen these slaves of the lamp of knowledge taking on themselves the traditional curse, these muscles of iron and sinews of steel making the poorest laborer's life a holiday, in which every high quality and noble impulse could have scope to grow.

A golden age

And out of these bounteous material conditions he would have seen arising, as necessary sequences, moral conditions realizing the golden age of which mankind have always

dreamed. Youth no longer stunted and starved; age no longer harried by avarice; the child at play with the tiger; the man with the muck rake drinking in the glory of the stars. Foul things fled, fierce things tame; discord turned to harmony! For how could there be greed where all had enough? How could the vice, the crime, the ignorance, the brutality, that spring from poverty and the fear of poverty, exist where poverty had vanished? Who should crouch where all were freemen; who oppress where all were peers?

would seem
to him
inevitable.

More or less vague or clear, these have been the hopes, these the dreams born of the improvements which give this wonderful century its preëminence. They have sunk so deeply into the popular mind as radically to change the currents of thought, to recast creeds and displace the most fundamental conceptions. The haunting visions of higher possibilities have not merely gathered splendor and vividness, but their direction has changed—instead of seeing behind the faint tinges of an expiring sunset, all the glory of the day-break has decked the skies before.

But that's
not how
things
worked out.

It is true that disappointment has followed disappointment, and that discovery upon discovery, and invention after invention, have neither lessened the toil of those who most need respite, nor brought plenty to the poor. But there have been so many things to which it seemed this failure could be laid, that up to our time the new faith has hardly weakened. We have better appreciated the difficulties to be overcome; but not the less trusted that the tendency of the times was to overcome them.

Up to now,
there were
plausible rea-
sons why we
hadn't yet
reached the
golden age.

Now, however, we are coming into collision with facts which there can be no mistaking. From all parts of the civilized world come complaints of industrial depression; of labor condemned to involuntary idleness; of capital massed and wasting; of pecuniary distress among businessmen; of

But now we do
not understand
why economic
conditions are
worsening.

This worsening is seen in various places, under varying fiscal and financial systems, social and demographic conditions.

It is seen in democracies and dictatorships, under "free trade" and protection, hard money and fiat money, and evidently cannot be attributed to such local causes.

The problem is caused by material progress, or something closely related to it, because it is worst where progress is greatest.

want and suffering and anxiety among the working classes. All the dull, deadening pain, all the keen, maddening anguish, that to great masses of men are involved in the words "hard times," afflict the world today. This state of things, common to communities differing so widely in situation, in political institutions, in fiscal and financial systems, in density of population and in social organization, can hardly be accounted for by local causes. There is distress where large standing armies are maintained, but there is also distress where the standing armies are nominal; there is distress where protective tariffs stupidly and wastefully hamper trade, but there is also distress where trade is nearly free; there is distress where autocratic government yet prevails, but there is also distress where political power is wholly in the hands of the people; in countries where paper is money, and in countries where gold and silver are the only currency. Evidently, beneath all such things as these, we must infer a common cause.

That there is a common cause, and that it is either what we call material progress or something closely connected with material progress, becomes more than an inference when it is noted that the phenomena we class together and speak of as industrial depression are but intensifications of phenomena which always accompany material progress, and which show themselves more clearly and strongly as material progress goes on. Where the conditions to which material progress everywhere tends are the most fully realized—that is to say, where population is densest, wealth greatest, and the machinery of production and exchange most highly developed—we find the deepest poverty, the sharpest struggle for existence, and the most of enforced idleness.

It is to the newer countries—that is, to the countries where material progress is yet in its earlier stages—that laborers emigrate in search of higher wages, and capital flows

in search of higher interest. It is in the older countries—that is to say, the countries where material progress has reached later stages—that widespread destitution is found in the midst of the greatest abundance. Go into one of the new communities where Anglo-Saxon vigor is just beginning the race of progress; where the machinery of production and exchange is yet rude and inefficient; where the increment of wealth is not yet great enough to enable any class to live in ease and luxury; where the best house is but a cabin of logs or a cloth and paper shanty, and the richest man is forced to daily work—and though you will find an absence of wealth and all its concomitants, you will find no beggars. There is no luxury, but there is no destitution. No one makes an easy living, nor a very good living; but every one can make a living, and no one able and willing to work is oppressed by the fear of want.

But just as such a community realizes the conditions which all civilized communities are striving for, and advances in the scale of material progress—just as closer settlement and a more intimate connection with the rest of the world, and greater utilization of laborsaving machinery, make possible greater economies in production and exchange, and wealth in consequence increases, not merely in the aggregate, but in proportion to population—so does poverty take a darker aspect. Some get an infinitely better and easier living, but others find it hard to get a living at all. The “tramp” comes with the locomotive, and almshouses and prisons are as surely the marks of “material progress” as are costly dwellings, rich warehouses, and magnificent churches. Upon streets lighted with gas and patrolled by uniformed policemen, beggars wait for the passer-by, and in the shadow of college, and library, and museum, are gathering the more hideous Huns and fiercer Vandals of whom Macaulay prophesied.

This fact—the great fact that poverty and all its concom-

In newly-settled countries, productivity is low and no one is rich, but every one can make a living.

In more developed countries, productivity is high and some people have great wealth, but poverty and unemployment are serious problems for many.

That poverty appears as communities progress shows that social difficulties are somehow caused by progress.

It is undeniable that increasing productivity does not reduce poverty, but in fact worsens it.

The lowest class do not share in the increased wealth,

itants show themselves in communities just as they develop into the conditions toward which material progress tends —proves that the social difficulties existing wherever a certain stage of progress has been reached, do not arise from local circumstances, but are, in some way or another, engendered by progress itself.

And, unpleasant as it may be to admit it, it is at last becoming evident that the enormous increase in productive power which has marked the present century and is still going on with accelerating ratio, has no tendency to extirpate poverty or to lighten the burdens of those compelled to toil. It simply widens the gulf between Dives and Lazarus, and makes the struggle for existence more intense. The march of invention has clothed mankind with powers of which a century ago the boldest imagination could not have dreamed. But in factories where laborsaving machinery has reached its most wonderful development, little children are at work; wherever the new forces are anything like fully utilized, large classes are maintained by charity or live on the verge of recourse to it; amid the greatest accumulations of wealth, men die of starvation, and puny infants suckle dry breasts; while everywhere the greed of gain, the worship of wealth, shows the force of the fear of want. The promised land flies before us like the mirage. The fruits of the tree of knowledge turn as we grasp them to apples of Sodom that crumble at the touch.

It is true that wealth has been greatly increased, and that the average of comfort, leisure, and refinement has been raised; but these gains are not general. In them the lowest class do not share.¹ I do not mean that the condition of the

¹It is true that the poorest may now in certain ways enjoy what the richest a century ago could not have commanded, but this does not show improvement of condition so long as the ability to obtain the necessaries of life is not increased. The beggar in a great city may enjoy many things from which the backwoods farmer is debarred, but that does not prove the condition of the city beggar better than that of the independent farmer.

lowest class has nowhere nor in anything been improved; but that there is nowhere any improvement which can be credited to increased productive power. I mean that the tendency of what we call material progress is in nowise to improve the condition of the lowest class in the essentials of healthy, happy human life. Nay, more, that it is still further to depress the condition of the lowest class. The new forces, elevating in their nature though they be, do not act upon the social fabric from underneath, as was for a long time hoped and believed, but strike it at a point intermediate between top and bottom. It is as though an immense wedge were being forced, not underneath society, but through society. Those who are above the point of separation are elevated, but those who are below are crushed down.

This depressing effect is not generally realized, for it is not apparent where there has long existed a class just able to live. Where the lowest class barely lives, as has been the case for a long time in many parts of Europe, it is impossible for it to get any lower, for the next lowest step is out of existence, and no tendency to further depression can readily show itself. But in the progress of new settlements to the conditions of older communities it may clearly be seen that material progress does not merely fail to relieve poverty—it actually produces it. In the United States it is clear that squalor and misery, and the vices and crimes that spring from them, everywhere increase as the village grows to the city, and the march of development brings the advantages of the improved methods of production and exchange. It is in the older and richer sections of the Union that pauperism and distress among the working classes are becoming most painfully apparent. If there is less deep poverty in San Francisco than in New York, is it not because San Francisco is yet behind New York in all that both cities are striving for? When

and such gains as they have made are not due to increased productive power. In fact the tendency of material progress is to make them worse off, as if a wedge were driven between the affluent and the poor.

This tendency is not apparent where the lower class was already at bare subsistence, but it is evident in the U. S. that material progress does not merely fail to relieve poverty—it actually produces it.

San Francisco reaches the point where New York now is, who can doubt that there will also be ragged and barefooted children on her streets?

This association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our times. It is the central fact from which spring industrial, social, and political difficulties that perplex the world, and with which statesmanship and philanthropy and education grapple in vain. From it come the clouds that overhang the future of the most progressive and self-reliant nations. It is the riddle which the Sphinx of Fate puts to our civilization and which not to answer is to be destroyed. So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent. The reaction must come. The tower leans from its foundations, and every new story but hastens the final catastrophe. To educate men who must be condemned to poverty, is but to make them restive; to base on a state of most glaring social inequality political institutions under which men are theoretically equal, is to stand a pyramid on its apex.

All-important as this question is, pressing itself from every quarter painfully upon attention, it has not yet received a solution which accounts for all the facts and points to any clear and simple remedy. This is shown by the widely varying attempts to account for the prevailing depression. They exhibit not merely a divergence between vulgar notions and scientific theories, but also show that the concurrence which should exist between those who avow the same general theories breaks up upon practical questions into an anarchy of opinion. Upon high economic authority we have been told that the

This association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our times. Real and permanent progress cannot be achieved until the riddle is solved.

But it has never received a satisfactory answer, as evidenced by the

prevailing depression is due to overconsumption; upon equally high authority, that it is due to overproduction; while the wastes of war, the extension of railroads, the attempts of workmen to keep up wages, the demonetization of silver, the issues of paper money, the increase of laborsaving machinery, the opening of shorter avenues to trade, etc., are separately pointed out as the cause, by writers of reputation.

contradictory explanations presented by authorities.

And while professors thus disagree, the ideas that there is a necessary conflict between capital and labor, that machinery is an evil, that competition must be restrained and interest abolished, that wealth may be created by the issue of money, that it is the duty of government to furnish capital or to furnish work, are rapidly making way among the great body of the people, who keenly feel a hurt and are sharply conscious of a wrong. Such ideas, which bring great masses of men, the repositories of ultimate political power, under the leadership of charlatans and demagogues, are fraught with danger; but they cannot be successfully combated until political economy shall give some answer to the great question which shall be consistent with all her teachings, and which shall commend itself to the perceptions of the great masses of men.

Dangerous ideas, propagated by charlatans and demagogues, can be effectively combated only when political economy develops consistent explanations.

It must be within the province of political economy to give such an answer. For political economy is not a set of dogmas. It is the explanation of a certain set of facts. It is the science which, in the sequence of certain phenomena, seeks to trace mutual relations and to identify cause and effect, just as the physical sciences seek to do in other sets of phenomena. It lays its foundations upon firm ground. The premises from which it makes its deductions are truths which have the highest sanction; axioms which we all recognize; upon which we safely base the reasoning and actions of everyday life, and which may be reduced to the metaphysi-

Political economy is not a set of dogmas. It is the explanation of a set of facts. It starts from an assumption that everyone accepts:

People seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion.

It then proceeds by logical steps.

In this way I will, in the following pages, seek to explain why poverty is associated with progress.

cal expression of the physical law that motion seeks the line of least resistance—viz., that men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion. Proceeding from a basis thus assured, its processes, which consist simply in identification and separation, have the same certainty. In this sense it is as exact a science as geometry, which, from similar truths relative to space, obtains its conclusions by similar means, and its conclusions when valid should be as self-apparant. And although in the domain of political economy we cannot test our theories by artificially produced combinations or conditions, as may be done in some of the other sciences, yet we can apply tests no less conclusive, by comparing societies in which different conditions exist, or by, in imagination, separating, combining, adding or eliminating forces or factors of known direction.

I propose in the following pages to attempt to solve by the methods of political economy the great problem I have outlined. I propose to seek the law which associates poverty with progress, and increases want with advancing wealth; and I believe that in the explanation of this paradox we shall find the explanation of those recurring seasons of industrial and commercial paralysis which, viewed independently of their relations to more general phenomena, seem so inexplicable. Properly commenced and carefully pursued, such an investigation must yield a conclusion which will stand every test, and as truth, will correlate with all other truth. For in the sequence of phenomena there is no accident. Every effect has a cause, and every fact implies a preceding fact.

That political economy, as at present taught, does not explain the persistence of poverty amid advancing wealth in a manner which accords with the deep-seated perceptions of men; that the unquestionable truths which it does teach are unrelated and disjointed; that it has failed to make the pro-

gress in popular thought that truth, even when unpleasant, must make; that, on the contrary, after a century of cultivation, during which it has engrossed the attention of some of the most subtle and most powerful intellects, it should be spurned by the statesman, scouted by the masses, and relegated in the opinion of many educated and thinking men to the rank of a pseudo science in which nothing is fixed or can be fixed—must, it seems to me, be due not to any inability of the science when properly pursued, but to some false step in its premises, or overlooked factor in its estimates. And as such mistakes are generally concealed by the respect paid to authority, I propose in this inquiry to take nothing for granted, but to bring even accepted theories to the test of first principles, and should they not stand the test, freshly to interrogate facts in the endeavor to discover their law.

I propose to beg no question, to shrink from no conclusion, but to follow truth wherever it may lead. Upon us is the responsibility of seeking the law, for in the very heart of our civilization today women faint and little children moan. But what that law may prove to be is not our affair. If the conclusions that we reach run counter to our prejudices, let us not flinch; if they challenge institutions that have long been deemed wise and natural, let us not turn back.

I will not defer to the wisdom of "authorities," since they have failed to provide a consistent explanation which makes sense.

This is an urgent and important task. Its result may challenge conventional wisdom.

