

Will Germany Lead the Way?

By ALLAN B. HOBBS

Remarkable progress has been made in the Fatherland during recent years by the disciples of Henry George. Why the movement there takes the form of the nationalization of mortgages rather than that of direct Single Tax. How the Imperial Government has adopted municipal measures, taxing the unearned increment. Thanks to a progressive propaganda, nearly one million persons are enlisted in the Single Tax army.

Germany, the land of medieval monarchy, the land of bureaucracy, of cast-iron system from Emperor down to municipal market official — will this be the land to give to the world the first complete illustration of the better social order to be ushered in by the application of Henry George's principles?

Such an expectation may be unduly optimistic, but without doubt many signs of the time would indicate some such future in store for the Fatherland. England has blazed the trail with her Lloyd-George budget and is still in the lead in many respects. But those who know both nations assert that England had better look to her laurels. The Germans are nothing if not logical, and once convince enough of them of the inherent truth of the Single Tax doctrine, and nothing on earth, least of all the doleful cry of pampered privilege, will avail to ward off the new industrial regime of justice. Even the most cursory review of the progress of tax and land reform in Germany must convince one that a great commotion has invaded what was not so long ago a valley of dry bones. How soon the awakening will be complete, and a newly-resurrected army stand erect, ready for conquest, may be left for the present decade to answer.

Barely twenty-five years ago the first feeble plea was heard in Germany that values created by the community belong to the community. This doctrine, which has become accepted as an axiom by so many nowadays, was then regarded as unintelligible as an unknown tongue. Not for long, however, did the advocates of Single Tax remain as the voice of one

crying in the wilderness. The German intellect got to work. Inevitably the teachings of Henry George won an ever-widening way. Opposition, to be sure, closed around the new social creed, but its two-edged sword, keen both for immediate reform and for permanent justice, cut its way through the serried foe. The unthinking opponents were dumbfounded; the thinking ones, converted.

Test Of a Great Truth

Not as a tax reform, primarily, but as a revolutionized land tenure has the doctrine of Henry George taken definite shape in Germany. His disciples style themselves the Bund Deutscher Bodenreformer, or the League of German Land Reformers. The fact that the Single Tax system may be applied in so many different ways to suit diverse local conditions may be accepted as still another proof that it is founded on the bed-rock of absolute Truth. This, indeed, is one of the most searching tests of a great truth, that the unessentials may be modified or held in abeyance, while the basic principle remains constant and retains its vitality. The German Single Taxers have taken their own path. The immediate goal toward which they are pressing is the nationalizing of mortgages, for the Fatherland's worst ills are attributable to the holding and speculating on mortgages, rather than on the land itself.

"Organization" has been the key word of the German reformers. Not the national campaign for political prestige, as has engaged the English labor party, but the less obtrusive work of establishing

local units to serve as centres of education and motive power. Teutons take as naturally to organization as to beer. So much so that a saying has passed into a national proverb, to the effect that if two Germans should meet by chance in the middle of the Sahara Desert, their first act would be to organize a club. Associations of every conceivable kind are formed, and Germans have come to merge their individuality very largely into the life of one or more of these congenial fellowships, banded together for some object with which they are in sympathy.

Blessed With Strong Leaders

Thanks to strong leadership, the local land reform leagues have attained a goodly degree of success. Such men as Adolph Damaschke, Editor of the "Bodenreform" and a voluminous author, Prof. Adolph Wagner, member of the German Upper House and Professor of Political Economy at Berlin for more than forty years, Prof. W. Rein, lecturer in Pedagogy at Jena since 1886, Rev. Ludwig Weber, President of the League of Protestant Workmen, Dr. W. Schramm and J. K. Victor—the sight of these and other men with European reputations in scholarship and social reform throwing off their coats in the work of seeding down Germany with the good seed of equity in taxes and in land tenure has not been without effect. The universities, in particular, are being more and more permeated with the doctrine, for no one has yet been found to measure swords with Prof. Wagner, perhaps the ablest economist alive today.

Not alone in leadership is the Land

Reform League fortunate. The very political constitution of the country favors the propaganda. German communities enjoy almost complete home rule, and they guard this right with the utmost jealousy. Again, national politics are not as a rule injected into the affairs of the local units. Each town and city aims to conduct its internal concerns on the lines of businesslike housekeeping. This explains why the Bodenreformers have thought it best not to enter the wider political arena. From the Imperial elections, for instance, they held themselves strictly aloof, an inactivity which gained them no little criticism from the Single Taxers of other countries. Yet the results which have at length appeared after a long period of patient sowing and barren watching would seem to vindicate the native leaders. After all, they know their own country better than any outsider, and their judgment of what course would prove most effective is very likely to prove correct. Recent success, at any rate, would show that wisdom is justified of her children.

Nearing the Million

The membership of the league has grown to many thousands of active supporters, most of whom would rather convince a doubting Thomas of the truth revealed to the author of "Progress and Poverty" than sit down to an eight-course dinner. But all land reformers in the Fatherland are not so zealous. In addition to the long-wire propagandists there are about six hundred public bodies such as professional associations, labor unions and the like which have joined

Continued on Page 15

The Brother who Failed

By L. M. MONTGOMERY

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The Monroe family were holding a Christmas reunion at the old P.E. Island homestead in Blythwood. It was the first time they had all been together under one roof since the death of their mother, thirty years before. The idea of the Christmas reunion had originated with Edith Monroe the preceding spring, during her convalescence from pneumonia among strangers in an American city, where she had not been able to fill her concert engagements, and had more time to feel the tug of old ties and kindred than she had had for years.

When she recovered she wrote to her second brother, James, who lived at the homestead; as a result there was a gathering of the Monroes under the old roof-tree. Ralph Monroe laid aside the cares of his millions and his railroads in Toronto; Malcolm Monroe journeyed from the western university of which he was President; Edith came, flushed with the triumph of her latest and most successful concert tour; Mrs. Woodburn, who had been Margaret Monroe, came from the Nova Scotian town where she lived a happy, busy life as the wife of a rising young lawyer. James, prosperous and hearty, greeted them warmly at the old homestead whose fertile acres had well repaid his skilful management.

They were a merry party, casting aside the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, and harking back to joyous boyhood and girlhood once more. James had a rosy family of children; Margaret brought her two little girls; Ralph's dark, clever-looking son accompanied him, and Malcolm brought his, a young man with a resolute face and the eye of a keen, perhaps a hard bargainer. The cousins were the same age to a day, and it was a family joke among the Monroes that the stork had mixed the babies, since Ralph's son was like

Malcolm in face and brain, while Malcolm's boy was a second edition of his Uncle Ralph.

To crown all, Aunt Isabelle came, too—a talkative, clever, shrewd old lady, young at eighty-five, thinking the Monroe stock the best in the world, and beamingly proud of her nephews and nieces who had gone out from this humble little farm to destinies of such brilliance and influence in the world beyond.

I have forgotten Robert. Robert Monroe was apt to be forgotten. He was the oldest of the family and lived on a sandy little farm down by the shore. He had come up to James' place on the evening when the guests had arrived; they had all greeted him warmly, and then did not think about him again, in their laughter and conversation. Robert sat back in a corner and listened with a smile. Afterwards he had slipped away and gone home, and nobody noticed his going. They were all too busy recalling what had happened in the old times, and telling what had happened in the new.

Edith recounted the successes of her concert tours; Malcolm expatiated on his plans for developing his beloved college; Ralph described the country through which his new railroad ran, and the difficulties he had had to overcome in connection with it. James, aside, discussed his orchard and crops with Margaret, who had not been long enough away from the farm to lose touch with its interests. Aunt Isabelle knitted and smiled complacently on them all. The Blythwood school teacher, who boarded with the James Monroes, and was an arch-eyed, red-mouthed bit of a girl, amused herself with the sons. All were enjoying themselves hugely, so it is not to be wondered at that they did not miss Robert, who had gone home early because

his old housekeeper was nervous if left alone at night.

He came up again next evening. From James, in the barnyard, he learned that Malcolm and Ralph had driven to the harbor, that Margaret and Mrs. James had gone to town, and that Edith was walking somewhere in the woods on the hill. There was nobody in the house except Aunt Isabelle and the teacher.

Robert went across the yard and sat down on the rustic bench in the angle of the front porch. It was a fine December evening, as mild as autumn; there had been no snow, and the long fields sloping down from the homestead were brown and mellow. The distant hills were feathery grey with leafless hardwood, but on the hill behind the house was a sturdy green grove of spruce and fir.

Robert rested his chin on his hand and looked across the vales and hills. He was a tall, bent man, with thin, grey hair, a lined face, and deep-set, gentle brown eyes. He felt very happy; he loved his family clannishly, and he was rejoiced that they were all again near to him. He was proud of their success and fame; he was glad that James had prospered so well of late years. There was no canker or envy or discontent in his soul. He heard indistinct voices in the hall window above the porch, where Aunt Isabelle was talking to the teacher. Presently Aunt Isabelle moved nearer to the window and her words came down to Robert with startling clearness:

"Yes, I'm real proud of my nephews and nieces. They're a smart family; for they hadn't any of them much to begin with. Their father met with so many losses, what with his ill-health and the bank failing, that he couldn't help them any. But they've all succeeded except Robert... and he's a total failure. He's

been a failure since the time he was born. He's the first Monroe to disgrace the name that way. I'm sure his brothers and sisters must be dreadful ashamed of him. He has lived sixty years and he hasn't done a single thing worth while."

Robert Monroe stood up in a dizzy, uncertain fashion. Aunt Isabelle had been speaking of him. He (Robert) was a failure, a disgrace to his blood, of whom his nearest and dearest were ashamed! Yes, it was true; he had never realized it before; he had known that he could never accumulate riches or win power, but he had not thought that mattered much. Now, through Aunt Isabelle's eyes, he saw himself as the world saw him... as his brothers and sisters must see him. There lay the sting. What the world thought of him did not matter; but that his own should think him a failure and a disgrace was agony. He moaned as he started to walk across the yard, only anxious to hide his pain and shame, and in his eyes was the look of a gentle animal stricken by a cruel and unexpected blow.

Edith Monroe, who, unaware of Robert's proximity, had been standing at the other side of the porch, saw that look as he hurried past her unseeing. A moment before her dark eyes had flashed with anger at Aunt Isabelle's words; now the anger was drowned in a sudden rush of tears. She took a quick step after Robert, but checked the impulse. Not then... not by her alone... could that deadly hurt be healed. Nay, more, Robert must never suspect that she knew of any hurt. She stood and watched him through her tears as he went away across the low-lying shore fields to hide his broken heart under his own humble roof. She yearned to hurry after him and comfort him, but she knew that comfort was not what Robert needed now: