

Tolstoy accepts, and proclaims with all his might the philosophy of the world's greatest political economist, Henry George. For, as fast as men of the highest order of intellect examine that philosophy they will per force recognize its truth; and if they be also honest men they will insist upon its practical adoption, as the necessary means to economic justice.

I do not want to be understood as saying that the man of the highest order of intellect who repudiates the Single Tax is necessarily dishonest. But I say that if he is honest, then he spurns the doctrine without knowing what it is.

But it does not require great intellect to comprehend the doctrines of Henry George; it demands, rather, a sincere seeking of the truth. Pilate, the intellectual, could not understand Jesus; but Peter, the fisherman, could!

We have labored long, with little of concrete, tangible fruit to cheer us, but our labors have not been in vain. The task which we set for ourselves was a stupendous one: nothing less than to revolutionize the economic thought and practice of the world! We have struggled over the rocks and through the arid deserts lo! these many years, but now at last we can see the distant shadowy line of trees that mark the border of the waste; we catch, now and again, a breath of sweet air, fresh blown from grassy fields, and soon, very soon, we shall lie down in green pastures, besides the still waters, satisfied—satisfied—with the glory of splendid achievement.

FABLES OF NOMANSLAND AND ITS SOCIAL PROBLEM.

By AN INTELLIGENT CHIMPANZEE.

Translated from the Original Monkey Language by the Garner Method.

(For the Review.)

By J. W. BENGQUGH.

PREFACE.

The following Fables translated from the original Monkey Language, were written by an intelligent chimpanzee in the wilds of Nomansland, beyond the Indian Ocean. It appears that from time immemorial a system of civilization has obtained amongst the birds, insects, animals and fishes of that far country, and that there had grown up as a recognized institution in the community the private ownership of air, sunlight and water, as speculative commodities, in much the same way as the private ownership of land has grown up in this and other countries. It is against this Institution that the fables of the chimpanzee are directed. They are here printed in the hope that they may afford both amusement and instruction to the human inhabitants of the world; we say instruction, because there is really no difference between the private ownership of land as men recognize it in Christian regions, and the ownership of the other Natural Elements, as it existed in Nomansland.

Fable I.

THE BENEVOLENT CROW.

A Crow, who devoted nearly the whole of her time to works of Charity, was visiting the half famished brood of Swallows. "Poor things!" she exclaimed, "how my heart does bleed for your unfortunate condition! Yet, do not despair. See, I have brought you food enough to keep you and your parents alive till to-morrow, and, all being well, I shall come again then." "You are indeed kind," cried the Cock-swallow in a feeble voice, "but I hate to be thus dependent on charity. If I could but afford to fly abroad, I would gladly provide for those dependent upon me, but the Vulture who owns the air hereabouts demands such a rent that it is out of the question." "Hush!" cried the Crow; "Your head is weak through want of food. Cease to talk of such impossible things, and be thankful that you have neighbors who have charitable hearts."

Fable II.

THE CHARITABLE VULTURE.

As the Benevolent Crow departed upon her further mission of mercy, she had scarcely gone one hundred yards when she chanced to meet my lord Vulture, who sat upon a cliff basking himself in the sun. "Good-morrow, Mistress Crow," said he, pleasantly, "Whither away now? On some errand of love, as usual, I suppose?" "Yes, my lord Vulture," responded the Crow with a low courtesy—"I was hastening to the nest of the poor Bullfinch, who is in great distress; and I have just left the dwelling of the Swallows who are also in deep suffering." "Dear me!" cried the Vulture; "how this abounding poverty does go to my heart! Poor things—though I suppose its really their own faults! Yet—here—your work is commendable and deserves support. Please accept a slight contribution." So saying he gave the Crow a few small slugs, and as she went on her way the Vulture rolled his eyes up to heaven and then fell into a peaceful slumber.

Fable III.

THE LABOR BEES AND THEIR LEADER.

The Bee community was in a state of agitation. Signs of poverty were plainly apparent in the cells of the working bees, though the Drones seemed in some mysterious manner to be thriving and getting fatter every day. Perhaps this was owing to the incidental fact that nearly all the honey produced by the workers was absorbed by the Drones as remuneration for the use of the air to which they held legal titles, but there were few of the Bees who could be made to see this. "Starvation, stark, gaunt starvation is what is before us this coming winter, brothers," said a leader of the Labor Bees, at an emergency meeting they held. "We have little honey laid up for our own use; very little, and without that what can we possibly do?" Whereupon there were buzzes of distress, and a famishing Bee in the crowd cried out—

"But the remedy, good leader, the remedy!" "I see none," he responded, "unless we can prevail upon our good and kind hearted friends, the Drones, to open honey-kitchens as they did last winter!"

Fable IV.

THE CRANK BEE.

There arose amongst the Bees a thoughtful, rusty little worker, who had a clear head and a heart full of love and justice. He had long brooded in sadness and anxiety over the condition of things in the hive, and devoted himself to deep study in the hope of finding a solution to the question—"Why does poverty among working bees keep pace with the progress of honey making?" At length he hit upon the answer to the riddle. The Queen Bee, hearing of this, sent for the Philosopher and commanded him to explain the matter to the Court. Whereupon he said: "Your Majesty, the reason is clear, as is also the remedy. You are aware that it is the method of our government to collect from each bee, in proportion to what he possesses, a modicum of the honey he makes each season. This we call the tax, and the proceeds supply our revenue. Now, though it is not really just to compel any Bee to give up any portion of the product of his own industry even for purposes of Government, yet we do it because it seems necessary, and Loyal Bees submit to the injustice for the same reason. And this would not mean impoverishment to the Bees if it were not for another tax of which your Majesty appears to take no notice I refer to the honey which every working Bee is compelled to give each season to the Drones. Why is this payment made? What do the Drones give in exchange for this annual tribute?" Here one of the Drones, a courtier of the Queen, cried out "Anarchy!" "But that does not answer my question," went on the little rusty, clear headed Philosopher, "What do the Drones give in exchange for the honey? They give us permission to use the air, without which it would be impossible to make honey. Our poverty and distress are easily explained, then. After supplying the necessities of the public revenue and the demands of the Drones, we have not enough honey left to live upon." "That sounds rational," commented the queen looking thoughtfully at the Courtier Drone. "But, your Majesty," cried the Drone, "it is the ravings of madness and anarchy! He is calling in question the rights of property, which are the very foundations of your throne! Besides, it is absurd, for Bees do not need air for making honey. They have instinct, and wings, and flowers to work with. I do not see what air has to do with it at all!" "Let us hear his remedy," said the queen, turning again to the Philosopher Bee. "My remedy is simple, your Majesty," he replied. "It is that you cease to impose the tax upon the Bees for revenue, that they be allowed to keep all the honey they make; and that, for revenue, we pay to the coffers of the government the honey we have heretofore paid to the Drones." "Crank! Anarchy!" screamed the Courtier Drone again, "There it is in plain words at last! He would confiscate property!" "Air," said the Philosopher, calmly,

"is not property. It is a natural element essential to the life of Bees, and belongs equally to all, since all have an equal right to life." As the assembly dispersed an aged Bee said, "they may call the little rusty Bee a crank now, but every just, insect will love and reverence him when he is dead, for he speaks the truth."

Fable V.

THE AGED ANT.

"It's a queer state of things, altogether and quite passes my comprehension," said an Aged Ant, as he feebly sat at the door of the ant hill surrounded by the colony of his fellow creatures who were out of work and bore unmistakeable signs of poverty. "When I first came to Nomansland things were very different from what they are now. There was plenty of work for every ant, and a good living for all who worked, though there were but few of our species then in the land. What puzzles my old head is to understand why things have so changed—and they are going from bad to worse, that is plain enough even to my failing sight." One would think he went on, "that the more ants the more work would be done, and the more work the more wealth, and the more wealth the more comfort and ease for all the ant family. That I feel sure of. And yet what are the facts? When I came here there were but a million ants in the country, and good times; not a pauper ant amongst them, and not an over-rich ant either; enough for all and comfort all round. Now there are forty millions at least, just as able and willing to work as ants ever were, but poverty, want, starvation everywhere for the masses on the one hand, and wealth beyond all counting for a small class of ants on the other, and the masses of ants getting poorer all the time while the classes are getting richer. It puzzles my old head to make it out, but thank goodness I'll be gone soon and needn't worry over it much longer." "But, grandad," said a keen looking young ant, "who are these very rich ants? Are they insects who have worked harder and exercised more thrift than ants in general?" "No my son," said the Venerable Ant, "they are the few who own title deeds to the air, sunlight, and water. They are the lucky ones, my lad!" "Then don't you think granddaddy, it throws some light on your puzzle to recall the fact that the good times you speak of were before air, sunlight and water were "owned" by private monopolists?" And a new light beamed in the faded eye of the Venerable Ant.

To be Continued.

(The above is the first of a series which will include thirty-odd fables and which will run through three or four issues of THE SINGLE TAX REVIEW. We regret that want of space in this issue has compelled us to print so small an installment of Mr. Bengough's admirable series. We shall try to present at least ten of the ensuing fables in each issue until the narrative of Nomansland is brought to an end.—Editor SINGLE TAX REVIEW.)