

Mr. Büscher appeals to history. But history does not sustain the contention that great democratic movements find their origin among the subject classes, or that among them or by them successful revolt has been instituted. Rather is the reverse of this true. It is not too much to say that those in subjection have more often been the last to respond to appeals for their deliverance. The consciences of the comfortable classes are more easily reached than the intelligence of the enslaved. Arguments addressed to the former are by no means so hopeless as Mr. Büscher would have us believe—and our appeal is again to history.

But we repeat that Mr. Buscher's contribution is a valuable one. We leave him and his main thesis to readers of *THE REVIEW* among whom he will find many eager and ready to couch a lance.

Our author on his departure from the United States sailed for Liverpool, and in London and Glasgow met many of those who have succeeded in making the principles for which we stand a force in public life. He is at the present writing in Westphalia, and will ere long visit Russia, and pay a visit to Tolstoi at Yasnia Polviana. Mr. Büscher will not return to his home in Zurich for many months. He will have accumulated an experience already supplemented by wide reading and extensive travel which will help to enrich the contributions he proposes to make to the forces of reform among his co-laborers in the Republic of Switzerland. Among the work that he contemplates, and for which he gathered material while in this country, is a *Life of Henry George*.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW.

WHAT SHALL WE DO TO BE SAVED?

(For the Review.)

By JOHN HARRINGTON.

I was much interested in, and instructed by Mr. Trowbridge's article in the last number of the "*REVIEW*," entitled "What shall we do to be saved?" I have not yet time to conclude whether I fully agree with Mr. Trowbridge, or to what extent I may disagree with him.

I do believe, however, that there is no more important study at the present time than "What to do to be saved;" that is, the best means to accomplish results, to do something tangible. We are all groping for the "path of least resistance."

I do not share the opinion of Tolstoy, nor of Mr. Crosby, that the teachings of Henry George have fallen into neglect in this country. I have never known one converted to the Single Tax belief who ever recanted. Some have become inactive or less active; but they never cease to be Single Taxers. We may say, "once a Single Taxer always a Single Taxer." As the work of propaganda has gone on and is going on, there are always more and more Single Taxers.

The apparent subsidence of interest, it seems to me, is due rather to a sort of "let up" in the study of the Single Tax, and a looking around for something concrete to do. It is like a boy who is busy and enthusiastic in making a bow and arrow; when they are made he straightens up, draws a deeper breath, gathers himself together, and begins to look around for something to shoot at.

We are now at the "looking around" stage. We are taking a few tentative shots. A few of us are doing something in the way of experimentation. Others

are trying to work up within shooting distance ; to get into position to do something. Still others are waiting for an opportunity to help somewhere. We are all seeking the path of least resistance.

Some are watching the political upheaval in England, and its possible outcome in the form of land value taxation. Some are looking with hopeful expectation upon the outcome of the municipal ownership campaigns under Mayor Johnson and Mayor Dunne and others. Others think they see the entering wedge in the Fairhope experiment. Some like the idea of exempting a given amount of homestead improvement, along the lines attempted in Toronto. In this State (Wisconsin) the important step, taken five years ago, is the separate assessment of land and improvements. This reform is being followed in other places with growing favor. In Manitoba, I believe, farm improvements are exempt from taxation. In New Zealand local option is the form successfully followed. Local option is also being pushed in several states in this country. In this little city a two mile street car franchise, running over one bridge, was recently "sold" by the city council for \$1,000 a year for thirty years. Similar cases are occurring in a sporadic way in other places. No member of this city council were Single Taxers, but nearly all of them had learned in some limited way, the good Single Tax lesson, that the value created by the community belongs to the community, and should be taken by the community for public purposes. So we have a vast and rapidly growing number of quasi- Single-Taxers, who would deny that they are Single Taxers in any sense.

It is thus that we are feeling for the path or the line of least resistance.

Still other means that are aiding our cause are the efforts for primary election reform, the initiative and referendum, the mandatory recall, and similar reforms. The Anti-trust and Anti-monopoly agitation are also serving a good purpose. Single Taxers of note are more and more getting into positions where they can "shoot" very effectively, such as Mayor Johnson of Cleveland, Judge Seabury of New York, Hon. Robert Baker of Brooklyn, and many others. It would not be a matter of marked surprise to Single Taxers to find one of their number a presidential candidate in the not distant future.

I think progress is being made along all the lines I have indicated. These lines and fields of action will after a while begin to merge more or less into each other ; and being all parts of the same philosophy, they will aid, supplement and re-enforce each other. When the desired condition arrives it may not be called Single Tax at all. The little snatches that are being accomplished are not commonly called "Single Tax ;" and possibly this is why some of our friends think little or no progress is being made. I think it is the good old Single Taxer of the propagandist order, who was rather a teacher than a doer that at times feels discouraged ; and who thinks nothing is being accomplished, because things are not coming in just the way he dreamed that they would come ; and because the thing done is not labeled "Single Tax." Such reforms always come at an accelerating rate of speed, and usually in unexpected ways ; and some of us may yet live long enough to see more of the promised land than we now think possible.

It is possible, even probable, as Mr. Trowbridge suggests that we insist too strenuously that there is nothing in common between Single Tax and Socialism. I have been very insistent in this respect myself. But have we not also been too insistent on the non-compensation argument, and on the entire-rental-value argument, and on other arguments that have more to do with the means of reaching the Single Tax than with the Single Tax itself?

A good lawyer will grant many things to his opponent to smooth the way and shorten the time to the end he seeks. Why cannot we grant the compensation argument to our opponents who insist upon its justice? I wish to

propose a plan that may not be concretely workable, but that will illustrate how little importance need be attached to the compensation argument by either side of the controversy.

Local option is one of the most strongly urged means to the Single Tax now before us. Suppose some skillful legislator should devise a measure for not only local option but personal option by which a city like Oshkosh, for instance, might not only adopt the Single Tax method for the city, but for the individuals in the city, so that those who desired might continue to be taxed as they are now, and others who so elected might, by filing an option with the register of deeds, for instance, bring his lot or parcel of land under the Single Tax plan. Let the latter have double or treble, say, the rate of taxation of the former; but let it apply to his land value only, his improvements to be exempt. Let it be further provided that when once a parcel of land is placed under the Single Tax system voluntarily by the owner, it shall be irrevocable. Something like this would be a process of adoption of the Single Tax by personal election or individual choice. In this town I think it safe to say that nearly one-half the occupied parcels would be promptly placed under the Single Tax. It would occur in nearly every case where the buildings are materially more valuable than the land; and no compensation would be sought nor expected. Such a lot would soon be more extensively built upon. Vacant lots would be less readily sold except to users, who would in most cases find it good policy to enter them in the Single Tax list. It would be found that in a vast growing majority of instances the Single Tax itself would be a satisfactory compensation, just as Henry George contended it would be. It would be found, too, that compensation is not such an insuperable objection even as many Single Taxers seem to imagine. Let those who insist on compensation have their argument. Let the socialists also have theirs. Let us not argue whether we propose to take the entire rental value or only a part. Let the half-Single-Taxer have his way, if he will only do things to secure that half.

OPIE READ A SINGLE TAXER.*

We have received from Mr. J. L. Caldwell, of Amarillo, Texas, a well known Single Taxer and old newspaper man of that State, a report of an interview with Opie Reed, the distinguished novelist. It will be news to Single Taxers that this most popular writer is not only imbued with the rising spirit of the new democracy, but is, with all his heart and soul and great talents, at one with us in the great reform which Henry George began. After the first greetings, Mr. Caldwell asked Mr. Reed if he knew anything of Tom Johnson:

"The Mayor of Cleveland! Yes, he has been Mayor of Cleveland several terms, and getting more so every year. It is refreshing, too, to know of such a democratic democrat running the Republican town that nurtured Mark Hanna and is now nursing a Rockefeller. Fact is, there are lots of democratic republicans in Ohio and Tom is corralling them. It was Tom's automobile hitched onto Patterson that pulled him into the governorship."

"Yes, Mr. Reed, but Mr. Johnson is afflicted with a special hobby that is catching; has even hobbled me, and I am here to diagnose you. Johnson is a Single Taxer."

*Amarillo (Tex.) Herald.