

**WILLIAM II AND HENRY GEORGE.**

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*(For the Review.)*

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**By POULTNEY BIGELOW.**

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The SINGLE TAX REVIEW has paid me the compliment of requesting a few lines regarding the revolutionary doctrines of Henry George and their first practical application in China in the reign of His Majesty William II. by the grace of God King of Prussia and Emperor of Germany.

We live in a world of paradox—I had almost said, in a world of lies—largely because the so-called organs of public opinion are frequently more interested in selling the advertising spaces of their papers than in telling truths which do not flatter the intelligence of their readers. The people are educated from childhood in certain pre-conceptions regarding China and these are strengthened by many of those who draw salaries from the churches of the United States and who are trying to convert the Chinese from one set of unsupported dogma to another. Many of these so-called missionaries to the heathen are inferior mentally and morally to the people whom they insult by their attentions and when they find that they are treated with merited contempt by the educated, God-fearing section of the community, the best they can do is to send home lurid pictures of alleged cruelty, vice and debauchery—just the sort of stuff that a Chinese resident of any American city could send home to Canton or Shanghai had he come to us as a missionary with a Buddhist salary.

My first visit to China was in 1876 and my fourth was made two years ago. I drew no salary for what I did and used my ears and eyes as any wide-awake traveller might when going abroad in search of information. No one not blinded by strange prejudice could fail to see that China represents a thousand years of self-government superior to anything ever attained in this country. Our Bible says, "Honor thy father and thy Mother," but we Christians obey this rule in a manner that would seem strange to an Oriental and our laws permit if they do not encourage, the disintegration of family life. The word "China" means to me millions of self-governing communities, each headed by its family patriarch and each managing its internal affairs according to family tradition. I venture to hold the opinion that family life is as pure on the banks of the Yang-tse as on those of the Hudson; that the Chinese are as well protected in their life and liberty as we of the ballot box; that crime is less common among them than among us, and, if my experience counts for anything I have travelled alone in different parts of China with less apprehension for my safety than in several sections of my own country, both East and West.

The Chinaman, as merchant, banker, contractor, artisan, shopkeeper, and practical philosopher, has no superior in the world, and as for personal

honesty, there is more pilfering by servants in one hotel of New York than in all the treaty ports of China put together.

What of it?, I hear you say. Only this, that there are no surprises in history for those who study the steps in historical development. The Chinaman who today astonishes the world by proclaiming a republic in the land of bandaged feet, pig-tails, pagodas and other emblems of official backwardness is the same Chinaman whom we in our conceit exclude from citizenship and whom we have alternately shuddered at as a monster or sneered at as a pitiful survival of pre-historic helplessness. For a whole generation missionaries, merchants and diplomats have seen nothing but the surface or the scum of Chinese life, and our press has published and re-published the stale yarns which seem to grow spontaneously in the hotels and club rooms where globe-trotters resort and write their naive impressions of the world's mightiest Empire.

The German Emperor is a Chinaman in so far as he has successfully deceived the world regarding his true character. On the surface he appears a mediæval knight with cuirass, helmet and threatening sabre in his "mailed fist." He publicly repudiates allegiance to any law save that of God Almighty who has called him to the sacred task of ruling Germany. The press knows him as a War-lord, impatient at any constitutional limitation and muttering to his ministers "*Sic volo sic jubeo*." His last sensational appearance in our press is one whose background setting would be a Court of Impeachment if not a guillotine had we in mind England or France. Germany has elected to her Imperial Parliament a very large proportion of Socialists who, but a few years ago, were regarded with horror as outcasts of society. The Emperor had publicly branded them as tramps, vagrants, men without a country, and their chief illustrated organ "*Simplicissimus*" was forbidden at every railway stall in Prussia. Today a Socialist is elected to occupy the Speaker's chair of the Imperial Parliament and the Constitutional Head of the State repudiates him, and in appearance gives public notice that he may nullify the organic law of the Empire if it suits his personal mood.

All this has to do with the external Emperor, and if we deal with externals only, we may be led astray—as we have been about China.

William II. is a Socialist—he is the greatest socialist on earth. He has no quarrel with socialism, but he very properly resents the mixing up of socialism and politics. Socialism has to do with the welfare of one's country—possibly of all countries. Politics has to do only with success at the next election. Roosevelt is a politician—William II. is a patriot.

About forty years ago, when I lived in a German family, fitting for an American college, I saw something of "young Prince William" as he was then called. Boys are not easily fooled by one another, and the impressions of childhood are apt to be not only lasting but remarkably accurate. The Emperor is no demagogue. He loves the applause of the world almost as much as our two competing Presidents. Yet, closely as I have sought to follow his public career both before and since coming to the throne, I have never

caught him playing the demagogue or deceiving by false promises. He has made mistakes of judgment, or rather he has been the victim of time-serving Ministers who had not the courage to oppose him, but throughout his quarter-century of Imperial rule he has been not only faithful to his pledges regarding the maintenance of peace, but he has never forfeited the highest title in my vocabulary, that of gentleman.

Now then, compare the real China and the real Germany, and you have in each case an outward shell of monstrously mediæval monarchy, but beneath it all a people of high family ideals, self-sacrificing loyalty towards those in authority and throughout the masses the basic elements of local self-government and love of personal liberty.

The German Emperor has been reared in a political atmosphere where the great problems discussed by Henry George are solved not by an appeal to party expediency or interested bosses, but by a cold scientific study of what is good for the State for all time. William II. has, I believe, read and pondered Henry George's monumental "Progress and Poverty," and it is no small credit to him and to the administration of which he is the head, that the first practical application of Single Tax principles should have been made in the Province of Confucius when Germany organized Kiao-Chow in 1897.

To say that Germany is fifty years ahead of this country in what is best in Socialism is to state the matter with great moderation. While New York deliberately destroys the fish which once swarmed in the Hudson river; while it even burdens the tax payer in order to waste the most precious asset of the farmer, the fertilizer of his fields, Berlin utilizes all its sewage and street sweepings by enriching farm after farm in the suburbs and in keeping the river which flows through its streets so clean that all may drink from it with impunity, and fish are so abundant that the people profit enormously from this source alone. The most beautiful river in America is now little more than a national sewer. The cadets at West Point are no longer permitted to swim in our filthy waters; typhoid fever is endemic in nearly every town of the Hudson valley; many of her cities fill their reservoirs from this tainted source and wonder that even filtration does not protect them from the disease that follows naturally in the wake of organic filth. In a State ridden to death by medical fads, Boards of Health, butchers of the appendix and pseudo-scientists who torture God's human creatures and escape the gallows because they have bought a degree or permit to murder—in this State our streams are everywhere so foul with sewage that even the cattle refuse to quench their thirst as once was customary, and the only industry still flourishing in spite of persistent pollution is that which fills gigantic ice-houses with frozen sewage and peddles it about the streets of New York as pure ice from imaginary mountain lakes.

Germany has solved a dozen vital questions about which our highly paid politicians are pretending to wring their hands in despair; and moreover the reforms which Germany has made since my boyhood are nearly all socialistic in the best sense and conducive to the happiness of the whole people rather than for the enrichment of a favored few.

The Kaiser's government gives the people better railway service, better postal service, better telegraph service, better trolley and tram-car service, and above all furnishes a national express or "parcels post" very much more efficient than anything we know in America, and at about one-tenth the cost in this country. These are all a species of partnership between the Government and the people. The list could be lengthened to include most admirably conducted municipal markets, municipal laundries, municipal street-lighting and in fact nearly every form of enterprise which with us tends to become a trust or monopoly very profitable to a few, but unjustly burdensome to the people at large. The spirit of Henry George is abroad throughout Germany and while we are not of those hero-worshippers who look for salvation to any one man alone we yet recognize the propriety of giving credit to Napoleon for the French Code which bears his name. We cordially assent when the venerable William I. is called "the founder of the German Empire," and therefore, to the same degree, we deem it right that in any future record of the phenomenal progress made in our times by humanitarian ideas such as those for which Henry George lived in poverty and died in the agony of social crucifixion—I repeat that if credit is due to any one man for progress if not revolutionary legislation, precious in the highest degree to the man in the workshop and on the farm, that man is the one who now rules over the most scientifically governed State of modern times.

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## LAND HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

*(For the Review.)*

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By THOS. L. BRUNK, B. S., M. D.

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### CHAPTER III (Continued).

But what were the beneficial effects of this land division upon New England society? Was the results such as we should emulate at this time when the enormous holdings of the Weyerhaeusers and Morgans and Guggenheims and Rockefellers and Millers and Ryans and Hills with all their vast corporations and syndicates, are crumbling the last vestige of freedom inherited from these sturdy sons of liberty? Had these shrewd forefathers possessed a keener insight into the serious defect in their land transfer plan and less of religious intolerance they would have prohibited the private sale of lands and introduced some such system as is in vogue in New Zealand to-day. Evidently their hearts and purposes were right and sound, but as with many zealous peoples who have earnestly sought a panacea for poverty and its attendant evils, this long approved custom of private ownership prevailed in a modified form and to them seemed to forbode no ills to society.

To this system can be accorded, first, the triumph of a citizenship of