

## THE INFLUENCE OF COMMUNAL LAND-OWNERSHIP.

FROM ADOLPH DAMASCHKE'S BOOK, "AUFGABEN DER GEMEINDEPOLITIK."

A glance at the conditions prevailing in Austria-Hungary reveals the influence of large communal possessions of land on the preservation of the people. In Südsteiermark and in Siebenbürgen settlements of German peasant farmers are struggling to maintain their nationality. In Südsteiermark they find support in the large German territory behind them; in Siebenbürgen they are surrounded by foreign nationalities. Still in the former locality they are being gradually pushed back; in the latter they are maintaining their ground.

In the former mountainous region the conception of Roman jurisprudence, of "free" private ownership of land, has been adopted almost in its entirety. With what result? Let a German son of those mountains, Peter Rosegger, bear witness. He says:—

"In the towns enough houses cannot be built to meet the demand for shelter; whilst the farms and cottages of the country-side stand empty. The towns are continually threatened with starvation, temporarily relieved by dear American corn; whilst the fields and meadows of the country lie waste, and young woods are springing up on the deserted lands of the peasants—land on which formerly innumerable families worked, lived, and were contented—is to-day given over to wild beasts, and used as game preserves for the rich. So at least it is with us in the mountains. And one hears that in the plains it is also partly the same."

In a debate on the budget in the Austrian House of Representatives, Representative Posch described recent developments in the following words:—"The farms of the peasants are being bought up by aristocrats, financiers, and companies, not for agricultural purposes, but to be used as game preserves. The peasants have to clear out, and with them the village artisans. The progress of this evil must be stopped, or we shall have a second Ireland in our Alpine land."

A very different condition of things prevails in Siebenbürgen. Surrounded as they are by Hungarians, Slavs, and Roumanians, the German settlers have preserved to our own times a goodly portion of the old German conception of land ownership. Of the 227 German communities, 155 have ever been free and independent; the inhabitants of the remaining 72 previously held their land from the local noble. Of the free communities, over 47 per cent. of the total land is held as communal property. Of the others only about 17 per cent. of the land is held in the public interest. As a direct consequence of the large communal possessions, the position of the German communities as far as rates and taxes are concerned is an enviable one. The income from the communal possessions of the 227 communities amounts to about 922,000 gulden (about £92,000), their expenditure to 825,000 gulden (about £82,500). In consequence of this measure of practical land reform, communal taxes are, as a rule, not raised. In passing, it should be remarked that area for area the German settlers keep twice as many cattle as the non-German landed proprietors of Siebenbürgen.

Professor H. V. Meltzl-Hermanstadt summarises the important consequences of these landed conditions in his book, "Statistics of the Saxon Agriculturists of Siebenbürgen," where he says—"The large public possessions have effectually hindered the development of an agricultural proletariat; at the same time they provide the reserve fund of these German agriculturists, as well as a point of support which has helped these peasants over many a crisis."

## MARY'S LITTLE LOT.

Mary had a little lot,  
The soil was very poor,  
But still she kept it firm and fast,  
And to it added more.

She kept the lot until one day  
The people settled down,  
And where a wilderness had been  
Grew up a thriving town.

Then Mary rented out her lot;  
She would not sell, you know,  
And waited quietly about  
For prices still to grow.

They grew as population came,  
And Mary raised the rent,  
With common food and raiment now  
She would not be content.

She built her up a mansion fine,  
Had bric-a-brac galore,  
And still as upward prices rose,  
She raised the rent once more.

"What makes the lot keep Mary so?"  
The starving people cry;  
"Why, Mary keeps the lot, you know,"  
The wealthy would reply.

And so, you see, we all might be  
Wealthy, refined, and wise,  
If we had only hogged some land,  
And held it for a rise. —Fairhope Courier.

If your Pen is not a **'SWAN'** you are not having that complete satisfaction which all its users enjoy. We will make a small allowance for any Gold Nibbed Fountain Pens you may at present possess towards the price of

**THE WORLD'S  
RECOGNISED BEST—**

**'SWAN'**

**EVERY  
PEN A  
PLEASURE.**

Prices from **10/6.**

Sold by all High-class Stationers and Jewellers.

MAY WE SEND YOU OUR BOOKLET?

**MABIE, TODD & CO.,**  
79 & 80 High Holborn, W.C.

93 Cheapside, E.C.; 95a Regent St., W.,  
London; 3 Exchange Street, Manchester;  
and Brentano's, 37 Ave. de l'Opera, Paris;  
and at Brussels, New York, etc.

