

## P R E F A C E .



They say that in 1848 some communists came to the Francfort Rothschild, and wanted him to divide his fortune with them. "All right;" said the great financier, "How high do you estimate my fortune?" "Forty million florins," was the answer. "Good, that is just the number of inhabitants of Germany, and will give a florin to each. Here is your florin; send along the others!"

How often do we hear this anecdote in Germany to show how small the share of the poor would be, even if all the wealth of the rich were evenly divided among them! So Neumann Spallart, one of the first German statisticians, calculates that, if the wealth of the higher incomes of Saxony was distributed among the total of inhabitants, there would be not more than 54 mark increase of income for each taxpayer. Such calculations mixed with a few extracts from the drugshops of Malthus and Darwin make a soothing syrup with which the rich admirably succeed in calming those unpleasant twinges with which the misery around them occasionally torments even the most hardened of their class.

Eight years ago I, too, was a member of the happy family, who thus succeeded in making life pleasant. If conscience would rebel after all, there was no difficulty in deriving excellent consolation from a whole crowd of white-washing economists of the Atkinson, Leroy-Beaulieu, Giffen, etc. type, who proved, in the most wonderful way, how everything was going on so remarkably well in this best of all possible worlds, and how the progress of science was hastening on the millenium with rapid strides. If all this would not do,

there were the churches which preached to the well-dressed people in the pews, that there was no help for it, for it was the will of Providence that we should always have the poor with us,—a provision intended for the benefit of our souls, as it gave us the chance of being charitable. Furthermore the blessings in another world were going to be in proportion to the misery endured in this.

Of course I did my best to make amends for being well-to-do, and though there were some unpleasant predictions in regard to my future expectations, illustrated by certain difficulties experienced by camels, I thought that I might just as well try, and I therefore did the best I could for the poor fellow beings who were working in my factory, by organising certain beneficial institutions, of which it is not necessary to speak. Men like Owen and Godwin were my models and I thought that the millenium would come on much quicker, if all my fellow manufacturers worked in the same channel. It was about that time I got hold of "Progress and Poverty." It was a new revelation. I saw how deluded I had been, and that the road I was walking in such confidence was sure to end in the worst quagmire the world ever saw. I had never read anything so wonderful in my life, the course of which was to be changed from the day this book got into my hands. I began to spread the new gospel; but the further I got into the subject, the more insurmountable the difficulties I found in my way.

The social question and its relation to land ownership appeared so completely different in Germany from what it was in the United States, or even in England, that I did not see how I could make any headway with George's doctrines. The domination of capital was such a prominent one and its connection with the land question appeared so unsatisfactory when looked at with Henry George's eyes, that I began to investigate, whether, after all there was not a hitch somewhere in his reasonings. The result, which I finally reached after the work of years, is given in the following pages.

The reader will find, that I present the great truth of Land Nationalisation from a side essentially different from

the aspect set forth by Henry George. The success my views have obtained, (best demonstrated by the fact that the thousands of disciples whom the great reform has been gaining among the German-speaking nations, and even among the Dutch, almost without exception, are won over by my writings and lectures), encourages me to try their effect upon a public, which up to the present has viewed our great cause only from the side presented by the great "Prophet of San Francisco."

I do not use this name, by which the Duke of Argyle first designated our great leader, in the satirical and mocking sense attached to it by its inventor. I use it in all reverence, full of a feeling of the truest admiration, looking up to Henry George, as I have looked up to no man before. Yes, he *is* a prophet, he is one of those God-inspired men, whom a great truth lifts above the level of daily life to the sublime height whence they view the future of Humanity. That he could not see the question in all its bearings, that he left something to others who, through the experience of different surroundings and different callings, saw sides of the question which escaped his observation, is not surprising. It is astonishing that he saw so much considering the limited experience he had.

If in the course of this book I have to criticise what I regard as the errors of Henry George, I wish it to be understood, that this in no way diminishes the unbounded admiration I have for his genius. The wonderful poetry with which he succeeded in popularising what before him was with truth called "the dismal science," will win men's hearts before their reasoning is even touched, and it is through the heart that the people is conquered. Its gates once opened by such appeals, cool reasoners may hope to find admission to complete the work of the master. It is only as a completion, an appendix to "Progress and Poverty," that I should wish to have my readers see in these pages. In dedicating them in the first place to the great leader of our cause I clearly indicate in what friendly and even loving spirit they are written.

MICHAEL FLÜRSCHHEIM.