

est Reformers would temporarily sink all minor differences and concentrate their efforts to secure the speedy adoption of the Taxation of Land Values, adopting for their rallying cry the motto—Land and Liberty!

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## PRACTICAL SINGLE TAX POLITICS.

(For the Review.)

By ALFRED H. HENDERSON. \*

“Preach the Single-Tax and it alone if you want the Single-Tax.”

Is this true?

“You must keep in the middle of the road if you want to get there.”

Must you?

“Things will have to get a great deal worse before they get better.”

Will they?

In Europe there is a type of public men they call “opportunist.” In America if this term should be used it would be in the nature of a reproach, and yet if properly understood there is packed up in it all of political wisdom. The successful man in private life is he who is alive to opportunities and the same holds true in public life. It may be remarked that there are some men so strong, so resourceful, that they seem to make opportunity, but it is only seeming. The truth is they only see quicker than other men and watching the tide of affairs take it at its flood. To be an opportunist does not mean to be a human weather vane. A vessel that tacks is not floating, it is sailing, using the little wind there is to the very best advantage. It appears to have no course but nevertheless is going to its destination in the best way possible. An opportunist may be a man with a very definite end in view and yet appear to have none to those not wise to his purpose. He is the man who seizes on every opportunity to advance his cause. It may not be the best way to “get there” by keeping in the middle of the road if you are on the wrong road; it may not be the best way if, coming down the middle of the road, is a coach-and-six or if in the middle of the road there is a chasm. Henry George has laid it down as the fundamental proposition of political economy that men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion. So the best course is always that of the least resistance. Fight when fighting is necessary or unavoidable but do not scorn retreat when it is for recruiting your troops or gaining advantage ground for the next encounter. Henry George said: “With the current we may glide fast and far. Against it, it is hard pulling and slow progress.”

Preaching the Single-Tax and it alone is to constitute Single-Taxers a sect. By this method they segregate themselves from the rest of men. They get to be looked upon as “peculiar.” They seem to be wedded to some strange dogma. They are looked upon with distrust, are viewed with suspicion. It is eminently proper that there should be one or more whose particular business it is to work out a theory, to live in a monkish cell, but there must be those, and they are the great bulk, who must keep in touch with their

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\* Mr. Alfred H. Henderson is one of the editors of the Cincinnati *Times Star*. He is among the ablest editorial writers of the west.

fellows. It is a heroic rôle, that of the frank and fearless propagandist, he who preaches the gospel even when wrapped in flames at the post; yet should all assume this rôle, death would still the voice of truth, and liberty float away in a cloud of smoke. Let the Single-Tax be the predominant idea of the Single-Taxer, but it is far better as a practical method to slip it quietly over the plate rather than batter down the door. Be a "mixer." Ingratiate yourself into the good graces of your community. Identify yourself with the people. Acquire prestige. The world loves the man who "does things." It treats with contempt the "fireside patriot." "Make good" at something. Tom L. Johnson by becoming the "best mayor of the best governed city" has mounted a pulpit from which he may preach and be heard of all men. He never denies he is a Single-Taxer, he always proclaims it, but along with it he has demonstrated that a Single-Taxer can be a man of men. Theory appeals to few, practice is preferred by the many. They want a "sign." They are "from Missouri."

It is the fashion of some Single-Taxers to sneer at movements for "good government." They see nothing worth while in the effort to eliminate graft and corruption. Municipal betterments like parks, boulevards, free kindergartens, public baths, neighborhood centres, clean good streets, libraries, playgrounds and all the things that go to make the "city beautiful" and the city healthful are accounted beneath the dignity of those devoted to a "great cause." F. C. Howe has written a book that would well repay any Single-Taxer reading. It is entitled "The City, the Hope of Democracy." Now better municipal conditions, the institution of things that call forth the civic spirit, that throw the people into aggregates for the accomplishment of good for all, that makes them believe that the city in which they live is "their city" and that the government is "their government" is paving the way for "great causes" to get a hearing. Home rule for cities and other political units make it possible for a particular element of the electorate to discuss and dispose of questions uninfluenced by what at the time may be of vaster moment in other sections of a state. Thus it is that "local option" is possible in taxation as well as in enforcing liquor laws or Sunday closing. The so-called "Federal Plan" of municipal government is to be preferred to the "Board Plan," for when a mayor is clothed with great powers and great responsibilities it is possible to get a man of definite, defined principles, and have him work out a systematic and single and harmonious administration of public affairs. So too the "Initiative and Referendum" would allow of the personal equation being eliminated in public matters. Direct legislation would "bring home" to the people all social, political and economic questions. It more than any other is the first step, the clearing of the way to the consideration of any "great cause." None of these things are ends but they are means to an end, and are necessary means. Henry George before taking up the real remedy for economic distress considers a number of proposed remedies and among others the question of good government. On this he says: "The more extravagant government becomes, the more it gets to be a power distinct from and independent of the people, the more difficult does it become to bring questions of real public policy to a popular decision. The most momentous problems are pressing upon us, yet so great is the amount of money in politics, so large are the personal interests involved, that the most important questions of government are but little considered. Anything that tends to make government simple and inexpensive tends to put it under control of the people and to bring questions of real importance to the front." What the Single Tax needs is a forum, to get its case in court. Once there, there need be little doubt of what the verdict of the jury will be.

The bane of political reform is the existence of classes indifferent to government, indifferent either by reason of great wealth or great poverty. If we are to allow things to go on and get worse a revolution may come and the present order be destroyed, but in its place will come a more ruthless despotism. This is the lesson of history. A revolution to be desired is a revolution worked not in passion but in intelligence. Do not let things get so bad that resentment and anger will alone possess the people, but seek to instil a spirit that will be constructive, that will result in the people "knowing what they want and how to get it." Mexico with its great ignorant population is not near so good a field in which to sow the seed of economic betterment as communities where the average of intelligence and comfort is higher. The slums are the wards where heavy majorities are returned for candidates representing the plutocracy. Real democracy gets more votes in the suburbs and the well-to-do downtown districts. Strive then to make things as good as possible if you hope to make them better.

All this is very decent politics and at the same time very practical politics for Single-Taxers.

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## PROGRESS AND POLITICS.

### An Outlook Upon Current Home and World Politics

(For the Review.)

By FRANK C. WELLS.

Just and scientific tax laws and really democratic government can be made actualities instead of theories only through the slow and awkward processes of practical politics. If we shall ever get, in nation, states and municipalities, the legislative majority, the executive and the courts all at the same time on the side of progress as we conceive it, things may go forward fast enough to suit the most impatient; but till that millennial day imperfect victories and sporadic advances are all that can be had. Success in one place will be offset by defeat in another and backslidings will counterbalance conversions.

None the less, the combats of the political gladiators are not without interest even when the success of either side stands for nothing but party spoils. When some real bearing this way or that on the trend of human progress can be read into them the interest deepens into fascination. When England chose her long Parliament, when revolutionary France elected her States General, when the United States smashed Federalism in 1800, when the North defied the slave power in 1860, when Russia sent representatives to her first parliament last year, national sentiment found an expression which involved the most indifferent inhabitants and which reached and will reach generations to come.

#### THE FALL ELECTIONS.

Not with such contests can those of 1906 in the United States be ranked. They have resulted in little besides marking time, and they afford no reason either for jubilation or for discouragement to the believers in progress in general or the adherents of the Single Tax in particular. It has been made clear that President Roosevelt still maintains his extraordinary popularity in the nation. The overwhelming Republican majority in the House of Representatives has been cut in two, but it still remains very large, and the President's person and policy having been made the issue by the Republican managers, the