THE
SOUL OF THE WORLD

By

ESTELLA BACHMAN [Brickaw]

> The natural effort of every individual to better his own condition, when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle, that it is alone, and without any assistance, not only capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but of surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions with which the folly of human laws too often encumbers its operations.
>
> —*Adam Smith*

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Hopefully yours,
Estella Bachman

Pasadena, Cal.
May 31, 1909.

To the Memory
of
PATRICK EDWARD DOVE
and
HENRY GEORGE

182028

Whenever the negative state of non-interference has been departed from, and the equilibrium of equity destroyed, justice furnishes rules for positive interference, whereby the negative state may be restored, and the equilibrium of equity re-established.....Let all society be in the negative state of non-interference, and it would remain so forever were the rules of justice attended to.

—Patrick Edward Dove.

I propose to beg no question, to shrink from no conclusion, but to follow truth wherever it may lead. Upon us is the responsibility of seeking the law, for in the very heart of our civilization today women faint and little children moan. But what that law may prove to be is not our affair. If the conclusions that we reach run counter to our prejudices, let us not flinch; if they challenge institutions that have long been deemed wise and natural, let us not turn back.

. . . . .

The tenure of land is the fundamental fact which must ultimately determine the conditions of industrial, social, and political life.

—Henry George.

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CHAPTER 1.

COMING TO CALIFORNIA.

"Hello, Grant! Don't you remember me?" exclaimed an alert passenger, in cordial tones, as he sprang from his seat and caught the arm of a tall, pre-occupied looking man, who was passing down the aisle of a car on the Santa Fe, as the overland pulled out from a station on the desert.

The man addressed paused and glanced at the speaker with a perplexed air, which quickly gave place to a look of pleased recognition, and the hand that had grasped his coat sleeve was given a hearty shake.

"Why, Ernest Wynn, to be sure! Where did you come from? It's a good ten years since we were in the Burlington office together. Still pounding brass?"

"No, I quit the road about five years ago. I've been traveling about and doing some newspaper work. And you?"

"Oh, I'm still at it." He dropped comfortably into the seat beside his old friend. "I've been taking a lay-off and came out here to look after some mining property in which my wife has a considerable interest. We are located in the City of the Angels. You going there?"

"Yes, or to that section. I have not decided yet just where to settle. You know I always wanted more sunshine, and now I have come to the land of sunshine prepared to look over the country and locate somewhere."

"Well, you can find almost any sort of place you want—and can pay for. The real estate boom has just passed the top notch now and all sorts of property is on the market. Real estate dealers are almost as thick out here as fleas on the beach—tho they don't bother me any."

Ernest Wynn smiled: "Which, the dealers or the fleas?"

"Neither. I'm not speculating to any extent in real estate, and I've never yet been touched by a flea on any of our many trips to the beach. They don't seem to fancy me. But, say, Ernest, if you are thinking of ranching in a small way, I may be able to help you to a good bargain. It is a place belonging to a friend of mine, an Englishman. He most unexpectedly inherited the family title and estates a few weeks ago, and has gone back to England to live. The ranch is a fine place."

"Oh, I'm not so anxious to farm as I used to be, tho I would not object to owning a small ranch, if not too far from the city. One that could be made into a real home, you know."

"Mighty few people seem to care for real homes, these days," observed his friend. "They have not evolved far enough along to do more than scramble and struggle with each other for temporary footholds. But if you really want a permanent thing, my friend's place may just suit you. It's a good location and in first-class shape."

"I'll be glad to look at it, but I'm in no hurry to buy. I want to look over the ground first. I've planned to stop in Pasadena, and——"

"Oh, interrupted the other, "then you must meet our friend, Miss Harding"—His tone took on a touch of enthusiasm—"She is one of the great ones of this era. Religious fellow as you are, I'll venture that Glen Harding can tell you a lot that you never dreamed of—about the old Bible days."

Grant Norwood had not noticed the quick start that his companion gave at the mention of Miss Harding, but was pleased to note his evident interest in the subject, and continued:

"You see, I have been studying the Divine Wisdom the past five years. It is mighty fine and explains everything."

"You mean theosophy? I have looked into it somewhat, but cannot say that I am at all favorably impressed by its claims."

"Which only proves that you have not gone far enough into it, Ernest, to understand it," was the prompt retort. "When you once grasp the philosophy involved in reincarnation and karma—the basic stones of the system—and see how it explains all the seeming problems around us——"

"The industrial problem, for instance," interjected Ernest Wynn.

"Certainly. You would be convinced of that if you could hear Miss Harding talk on the subject just once."

"What Miss Harding? Who is she?" Ernest Wynn's start of surprise was again unnoticed by his companion, who glanced at the nearby passengers and then bent toward his friend, as he replied, in lowered tones:

"Glen Harding is one of those rare beings who know that reincarnation is a fact because they can remember all their past incarnations. Of course, to such there can be no question about it; while we who have not yet attained to those far heights can at least see the force of such evidence and be sure that we are on the right road."

Ernest Wynn had turned from his companion and was looking out over the wide stretches of sand, sparsely covered with sage brush and cacti, to the desolate, tumbled hills—but it was with unseeing eyes. A wave of disappointment and disgust surged thru his mind and formed a veil that hid all the outer world for the moment from his thought. Then his brain revolted and incredulity took the place of shocked surprise. He turned suddenly:

"Grant, are you sure that Glen Harding actually believes in all that theosophical nonsense?"

Grant Norwood turned on his questioner a look of mingled indignation and tolerance. The tolerance triumphed, and he smiled as he answered quietly: "Of course I am. Did I not just tell you that she remembers? But what do you know of Glen Harding?"

"I have had some correspondence with her in relation to our single tax work. The subject of theosophy was not mentioned."

"Certainly not! How could you expect it? Miss Harding would never write or talk on Divine Wisdom to one with such an antagonistic spirit as you show!"

"We'll see about that when I talk with her," retorted his friend. "Miss Harding's letters, and her papers on the single tax, show her to be too good a worker to be spared from the great movement for human freedom. I shall not let her go without an effort to win her from such a delusion as theosophy seems to me."

"Oh, come now, Ernest, you don't know what you are undertaking. Did I not tell you she is One who Knows! She will convince you all right, if you give her half a chance. Better not ask any questions, tho, they have no place in the Divine Wisdom. If you are able to receive it you will accept it without question. If you cannot do that, you leave it until you have worked out that karma of ignorance and are ready for higher things. But, I say, old man, don't tell Miss Harding I said anything to you about her memory of the past. She might not like it; but she's so glorious when she gets started on it that I could not help telling you, only——"

"Don't be alarmed," broke in Ernest Wynn, disgustedly. "I make no promise as to questions, but I will not give you away, so rest easy on that score."

Grant Norwood looked relieved. "You always were a good fellow, Ernest, and you'll come around all right."

"Hardly! If you expect me to accept such stuff without argument or evidence. To merely repeat the formulas and await results!"

His friend looked serious. "Try that plan, Ernest, and you will be led on gradually higher and higher."

"That is the way to propagate dogmatism, but not the truth. The truth can endure the fullest experiment, research and argument."

"Don't worry about that, Ernest! If Miss Harding does not fetch you, Arthur Tremont will. He is the finest teacher of Hindu occultism I know anything about, and a royal good fellow, too," he ended, with almost a show of enthusiasm.

His friend smiled. "I'll certainly have to read up on the subject pretty thoroly if that's the sort of people I'm likely to run into. Is this Tremont holding forth in Los Angeles?"

"Yes, he has classes there, and I'll give you a note to him if you like. But if you stop in Pasadena first you are pretty sure to meet him at Arroyo Vista—the Dennison place, you know. He is there pretty often and I think"—here Grant Norwood leaned toward his companion and lowered his voice—"it is going to be a match; they are so splendidly suited to each other."

"They?" Ernest Wynn was all attention.

The other glanced around and then replied, in a tone that did not go beyond his seatmate's ear: "I mean Miss Harding and Tremont. There is no doubt about his desires. Anybody can see that he is in love with her, for all his calm, quiet ways."

Ernest Wynn had apparently become absorbed in viewing some object in the rapidly changing landscape visible from the car window, and his companion failed to note the glint in his blue eyes and the sudden compression of his lips, which marked a firm determination of some sort. He turned again with the question—

"How about Miss Harding?"

"I don't know. I am sure Tremont is just the sort of man she ought to marry; but she bewilders me sometimes and I cannot understand her; yet she is surely too sensible—she must be too sensible—to throw herself away on the Jap."

"A Japanese? Good Lord! Grant, what are you talking about?"

"About an oriental who is after Miss Harding. He is some sort of Japanese official, over here to investigate our ways and learn things. He came over last year with a lot of other functionaries, and there was a big reception and dinner for them in Los Angeles. Dennison presided at the latter, it's his element. Motora went on east with the rest, but soon came back and appears to have settled down to study among us—with Miss Harding as his teacher."

"And you don't like that?"

"Not a little bit! Motora's too attractive in some ways, and I want Miss Harding for Tremont." His face took on a dreamy look. "Such a Teacher and such an Adept! It is karma; nothing could be better for the great cause——I say, Ernest;" his tone suddenly changed, "when you are there won't you help me head off that Japanese?"

"Certainly, Grant, certainly. You can count on me for all the help I can give you in that line."

The intense heartiness with which those words were uttered was not lost on Grant Norwood, and he looked sharply at his companion, but the gaze that met his held in it only friendly interest and abundant resolution, and he went on: "When you see them together, Ernest, you will realize that it is their karma to pass this life as husband and wife. Working together in that way they can spread a marvelous light. It cannot be otherwise."

"Oh, well, if you are so sure about their karma, why worry over the Japanese? By the way, Grant, you have not told me how you come to be so well acquainted with Miss Harding and her affairs."

"Haven't I? Why, Daisy, that's my wife, and Mrs. Dennison, Miss Harding's sister, you know, were great chums from childhood up. They lived close together for years, till Mrs. Dennison married and came out here. Later she had Daisy make her a long visit. I first met Daisy while she was visiting friends at Kewanee on her way home from that trip. About a year later we were married and nothing would suit Daisy but California. Dennison helped me get a job on the Santa Fe and I've held it down ever since. Mrs. Dennison is a thoroly charming woman and the big gulf between the size of my income and Dennison's does not make a particle of difference in her. She and Daisy are as good chums as ever; and so, when Mrs. Dennison's sister came out here about three years ago, we soon became well acquainted. Daisy had known Miss Harding slightly back east—the sisters were not brought up together, being orphans. Maybe that's one reason Mrs. Dennison feels so strongly about orphans—I had not thought of that before. She goes in for charity, especially the Children's Aid Societies, playground movements, and such things."

"I'll make a note of that," said Ernest Wynn, "and may get her interested in the truth I have found, thru her concern for the children. I like the little things a lot myself."

"She will talk about the children, no end, but you cannot get her to listen to the single tax. Why, Ernest, neither Daisy nor Mrs. Dennison takes any interest in the Divine Wisdom and they will not even try to understand cosmic justice."

"Sensible women! I shall like to meet them," ejaculated Ernest Wynn.

"You don't understand, Ernest, but I can tell you it is a real comfort to me to talk to one who appreciates the wise things of old as Miss Harding does."

"Doubtless! But don't you ever talk anything else? You used to be interested in the single tax, Grant; and I am quite sure that Miss Harding was once an enthusiastic worker in the Henry George movement."

His friend smiled tolerantly. "That's all right, Ernest, and I am as much of a single taxer as ever; and so is Miss Harding, when there is anything doing in that line. We had the national single tax lecturer out here last fall, and Miss Harding and Dennison worked like anything to help get out a crowd, and I did what I could."

"What came of it?"

''Oh, a pretty fair turnout, and several good notices in the papers.''

''I don't mean that. Did it add any members to the Single Tax Club? I hope you have a live Club, for I have something to say to them myself. I have found something——''

''I have not heard anything of the Club lately,'' interrupted his friend, ''better talk to Dennison about that. He's president, or was, of the Club. Don't bother Miss Harding about the single tax, Ernest.''

A smile flickered for a moment about Ernest Wynn's eyes. ''Don't worry about that, Grant.'' Then his tone became serious, tho eager: ''But I want to tell you, Grant, I'm sure I have found a way by which the whole social problem can be settled and real freedom secured, within a very few years—it is only a question now of getting enough people to see it to tell it to the rest.''

''There was no answering light in the face of the man beside him. ''Better not be in such a hurry, Ernest, but learn patience thru the Divine Wisdom. You will see the uselessness of all such struggling when you realize that we can each work out in this particular life only the karma laid down for it. It is all planned out for us by the Lords of Karma; and that makes it so much more necessary to attain to a higher place that I am not inclined to divert Miss Harding from that pursuit by discussing the sordid things around us today. I hope you will not try to take her mind from those higher things on which she is now engaged. The last few months she has been busy over such a revelation of the past as you never dreamed of. It is perfectly fascinating to hear her tell of those far away ages of time. Just set her going, Ernest, only be careful, you know, and see for yourself. You will be convinced of the truth of every word she says. She and Tremont, working together, will be a tremendous force in getting the Divine Wisdom into its rightful place in this western world.''

There was a look of serious determination in Ernest Wynn's face, and his thoughtful eyes showed a touch of perplexity, as he said: ''Miss Harding is certainly a born propagandist, and whether she will throw away that power on metaphysics remains to be seen. I tell you, Grant, a year ago she understood the land question better than any other woman, and as well as any man in the single tax movement—she fully grasped its importance—and I cannot understand how she came to be diverted from it into theosophy.''

Again his companion smiled, with the quiet tolerance of the pledged theosophist. ''Don't get excited over it, Ernest. She is as much a single taxer as ever, I have no doubt, just as I am myself. As for her knowledge of the Divine Wisdom and memory of the past, I don't know just when or how she attained to it all. We lesser ones cannot see the heights until we, too, arrive. I know that she has been studying with an old professor for a long time. I have met him, but had no talk with him. He is not a member of our society and it is only since Tremont has become so interested in her that I have had hopes of getting Miss Harding into prominence as an active worker in the great cause. You see, Ernest, Dennison and his wife are the strictest sort of orthodox Presbyterians, and of course their influence counts; but Miss Harding has attended some of Tremont's classes and now I feel pretty sure of the result—if only he can get ahead of that Japanese. You will help me in that, Ernest?" His voice was almost pleading. "You cannot have any interest in seeing her go off to Japan?"

"Of course not," was the prompt response. "I will help you—if I can—to keep Miss Harding in this country. But, Grant, how long have Tremont and this Japanese—what did you call him?—been in the field?"

"Inazo Motora! He has been back here about three months. It is something over a year since Tremont came to Los Angeles, but he did not meet Miss Harding until a couple of months ago, when she addressed a meeting at our Club rooms. The talk she gave us that night was wonderful in its vivid picturing of the far away past. I have her promise to give us another such treat soon. Why, Ernest, she remembers things belonging to thousands of years ago as easily and clearly as you or I can remember what happened last week!"

"And you believe all that?" There was some pity mingled with incredulity in the look Ernest Wynn turned on his old friend.

"I have not a doubt of it," was the emphatic response. "Test her yourself the first chance you have and you will be convinced. Don't mention me or head her off by talking against reincarnation or memory, but just lead her on to talk of the past, the beginning of things, and judge for yourself. When you see them together you will agree with me that a match between Miss Harding and Arthur Tremont will be a fine thing. She must not go to Japan."

"No indeed, she must not," agreed Ernest Wynn. "Now, Grant," he turned back to the car window, "do look out and tell me something about these places we are coming to. It looks as tho we were entering paradise! There is such a riotous abundance of bloom and color!"

"Isn't it gorgeous!" assented his friend. "You struck us at the right time to see our very finest clothes—tho they are all good. An extra lot of rain the past season has brought out all the possible greens on the mountains and this wealth of flowers on the foothills and in the valleys."

CHAPTER 2.

FACING THE SITUATION.

Ernest Wynn had plenty to think about the next morning, as he sat in a plainly furnished bedroom in one of Pasadena's innumerable rooming houses. A little pile of open letters were spread out before him on a small stand, beside the open window at which he sat. What if he did almost know those letters by heart—they would bear another reading. His face wore a look of thoughtful study as he took up the letters, one by one, and slowly reread them. Anyone looking over his shoulder would have seen the clearly written signature, "Glen Harding," at the end of each. As he read Ernest Wynn's expression became brighter and more hopeful.

What did those letters tell him? As he laid them down, one by one, there rose in his mind the vision of a nature childlike in its open truthfulness, yet womanlike in its strength of devotion to a great cause; a mind broadening, deepening, expanding in its outlook and outreach for knowledge, for the great truths on which life—a life worth living—must be built up.

Surely, he thought, a woman who wrote in that earnest, clearheaded way about the single tax and its propaganda could not be a believer in the nonsense of reincarnation or "Divine Wisdom." as these were taught by such adherents of the faith as he had chanced to meet. He recalled various articles by Glen Harding, that he had read from time to time in magazines and single tax papers, and he could remember nothing in any of them which agreed with the sort of irrational thinker and dreamy visionary Grant Norwood had made her out to be.

He thought of the women he had met—and they were many, for his work during the last five years had taken him into many homes in several States. Yet among them all there was not one who had appealed to him as the woman in these letters did. Yes, she had written herself into them. She seemed to have no idea of self-sacrifice and yet she appeared never to be thinking of herself. It did not seem to be anything like the so-called sacrifice of self for the supposed good of others.

Then a new idea dawned on him. Was it possible that Glen Harding had such a complete conception of the necessity for unity of action in securing and maintaining equal freedom, that she so thoroly identified her interests with the universal interest as to make that seem dominant for the time and gave this effect of thinking always of others?

His eyes brightened at the thought. If she could realize that, she would understand his new message. He would question her and learn her views before telling it. He must write it out more fully.

He took up again the last letter, and reread a portion—an outline for propaganda. What better working plan could they hope for? It was simple, practical and economical. Behind it there seemed to burn an enthusiasm quite equal to his own.

Yet Grant Norwood had told him this woman believed in theosophy—was even possessed by a strange delusion—it did not seem possible. But he had already met so many unexpected mental states among single taxers that it was wise, at least, to be prepared for another. He looked at the last letter; it bore a date eight months before. He had not realized how long the time had been. Much could happen in eight months to change Glen Harding—if she could be changed in such a way! As he recalled the talk of the night before, he remembered that both the Japanese and the teacher of occultism had come actively into Glen Harding's life in that time.

Well—the slight form straightened in an involuntary movement, as a look of determination came into the blue eyes and showed in the firm line of the lips, unshaded by the slight mustache—he would be an active factor in Glen Harding's life for awhile himself—and abide by the results.

He refolded the letters at last and tied them in a neat packet, which he placed carefully in an inner compartment of his suit case. This done, he went to the window and looked out—looked out on the glory of a perfect spring morning in Southern California. The sky overhead was cloudless; the grass and flowers and trees were still drenched with the moisture of the early fog, now rolling away along the foothills and up the mountain sides. His room was in the rear of a house on the eastern rise of what seemed like a wide, irregular depression, in which the heart of the city—its places of exchange—

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was situated. There, spread out below him, was all the tawdry jumble of backyards, railways, lumber piles, tall buildings and one story blocks, sheds and rubbish, and all the other chaotic elements which marked the business portion of the city. Looking beyond this he saw, on the western rise, many trees, and among them caught glimpses of stately homes and beautiful gardens. It seemed like a peep into a fairy land of beauty as compared with the unkempt ugliness immediately below him.

Somewhere over there—for he had already located her address on the city map—was the home of Glen Harding; and Ernest Wynn felt that he must face the situation squarely and think it out as clearly as might be before he tried to see her.

To begin with, he frankly admitted to himself that his main object in coming to California was to become better acquainted with Glen Harding, and—if she proved to be the sort of woman her letters appeared to show—to win her for his life companion, his wife. In all the range of a rather wide acquaintance he had never come in contact with any woman who had inspired in him such a hope of true comradeship as he had felt when reading Glen Harding's letters and articles. If they fairly expressed her real thoughts and desires—and he could not doubt it as he now recalled the thoughts just read, and felt the earnest, burning zeal they showed—then such a lifemate was well worth striving for. How they could study and work together!

He had not expected to find her a member of a wealthy family, for she had mentioned, in connection with propaganda plans, that she was self-supporting and had a very limited income. That was probably still true. Now he thought of it, Grant had said it was Glen Harding's brother-in-law who was wealthy; and president of the Single Tax Club—that was an item worth knowing. If he could get a wealthy single taxer to see the new light that had come to him, and interest him in the propaganda plans Glen Harding had suggested for the single tax—success was sure.

He must try to get thoroly acquainted with this man, Dennison, and get him to see the truth he had found. By preparing the ground carefully and leading up to the subject so as to bring it out most clearly and forcibly he might get a hearing without encountering the rebuffs he had already met with from some single taxers. He felt sure of the results if he could secure a fair hearing and an unprejudiced study of the find he had made. A single taxer, or any other person, with means to carry on the work, who once saw the new light that had dawned on his own mind, would be a power for good in the world.

He must be careful, he felt, and get both Miss Harding and her brother-in-law to grow towards the light as he had done. Then they were sure to work for it. In the meantime he would carry out his resolution to write out the whole idea more fully than he had yet done.

Then his thoughts reverted to Glen Harding. He knew that she had been a public school teacher in Pennsylvania, and had assumed that she was now such a teacher in California. To be sure, she had not mentioned the nature of her work since coming west, and he had given that matter little thought. Now the idea struck him with a sudden chill. Could she have become one of those self-deluded teachers of the "New Thought" school, in which Eastern and Western mysticism was mixed in an indescribable tangle of vague beliefs and catch phrases? No, that simply could not be!

That Glen Harding might have other lovers had occurred to him as likely enough, and for that he was prepared. But he had never dreamed of finding his own one-time most intimate friend engaged in trying to have her marry a teacher of oriental occultism, and claiming that Glen Harding was herself a high-up Adept in the mysteries of the ancient Hindu faiths. That any one believing in a cult whose teachers allowed no questions from pupils and whose adherents refused to argue on matters of vital importance, could enter as heartily as Glen Harding had done into plans for a propaganda which necessitated constant discussion, seemed preposterous, absurd! It was so contradictory that he could not believe it.

But, hold, he had not heard from her during all those months, and this belief in reincarnation and her supposed memory of the past—for he could not make himself regard it as a fact—might be a recent development due to her acquaintance with that Tremont and the oriental. He felt that this idea did not fit in with his own conception of her character, but perhaps it might be possible for even such a bright woman as Glen Harding to be temporarily deluded.

Now he thought of it, was not Grant Norwood a striking example of the embodiment of contradictory beliefs? This old friend was thoroly sincere. He could not doubt that for a moment. He recalled their years of daily companionship, and smiled as he remembered how that constant association and their very striking difference in height had led office and trainmen to dub them "the long and the short of it."

No, whatever mystery there might be about Glen Harding's beliefs, Grant had not intentionally deceived him.

How should he treat those beliefs? He felt like going straight to her and asking direct questions. But would that be wise? Would it not be better, at least until he had met those other men and could judge something of their influence with her, to avoid all mention of theosophy and kindred topics, and put all his energy into an effort to arouse in Glen Harding the old enthusiasm for the greatest of all causes—the speedy attainment of human freedom thru the settlement of the land question? Assuredly, that was the better plan, for when her whole mind was given to plans and work for equal freedom, all delusions into which she might have fallen would necessarily fade away, and disappear—just as the fog he had been watching for sometime had vanished before the rays of the morning sunlight that now brightened the western hills and flooded the city with warmth.

He was glad Grant had told him about Tremont and the Japanese. Knowing these details of the difficulties before him made it possible for him to start in thoroly prepared to meet them. Whatever sort of men they might turn out to be, he felt that, in order to win, he must make himself more suitable—in personality and character—than either of them could be for this particular woman, else there could be no success for him.

Ernest Wynn felt that his wife must not be a mere echo of himself, nor yet a beautiful plaything. Even a thrifty housekeeper—merely as such—had no charms for him. His wife must be a friend, companion, comrade, and withal, one not afraid to argue with him on any subject that might come up, looking at all things from her own individual viewpoint. Glen Harding's letters and articles had appeared to show her as eminently capable of all this—and more! With such a woman as his wife, Ernest Wynn felt they would be real lifemates, working and studying and making a true home together.

Then there was the all-important question of successful work for equal freedom—the highest freedom possible for human beings. Since Henry George had pointed out the way and inspired him to take up the work, the one great desire of his whole being had been the securing of freedom—equal freedom for all people. Ernest Wynn admitted to himself that—until it was gained—this was the chief object of his life. In this work he had felt sure that he could find no better helper than such a lifemate as he believed Glen Harding would be, if he could win her. She was still doing single tax work. He remembered that Grant had spoken of her active interest in the lecture effort. He recalled hopefully the fact that it was thru their mutual interest in single tax propaganda that they had become acquainted; and it was that work on which their correspondence had centered.

The longer he thought about it the more determined Ernest Wynn became that, whatever obstacles he might have to overcome, he would win the object for which he had come to California.

He looked across the city again and wondered which of those trees might shade her home. And how did she look? He remembered now that he had not the remotest notion as to her personal appearance.

Well, he would see her that afternoon—perhaps she already had the note he had sent her the night before—and learn if there was any real ground on which to base his hopes. In the meantime he might as well go out and see something of the city that was famed as one of the attractions in the "Garden of the World."

He closed and locked his suitcase, remembering the precious packet it contained, then picked up his hat and went out into the bright spring sunshine.

He spent the remaining hours of the morning in wandering about the eastern section of the city, noting the beauty and luxuriance of the many gardens; but seeing, too, how the overcrowding of houses and the amazing frequency of "For Sale" and "For Rent" signs tended to destroy the effect that had once caused Pasadena to be called "the city of homes."

As he passed along a street bordered, for the most part, with rather large new houses having a well-to-do air, and fronted by freshly made and neatly kept flower beds, he paused before a vacant lot in their midst—a lot given over to a rank growth of weeds and two or three forlorn looking fruit trees that might once have formed part of an orchard—and had sufficient curiosity to read and count the sign boards set in an irregular row along its sixty-five feet or so of frontage. Sixteen different real estate firms were represented on the ugly wooden posts, and Ernest Wynn turned away marveling at the long blindness of presumably intelligent human beings.

CHAPTER 3.

GLEN HARDING.

"Anything for me, Will?" Glen Harding put the question, on that cloudless spring morning, as she stepped out onto the wide, long, upstairs pergola, where her brother-in-law sat at a broad table, sorting a pile of letters and papers a maid had just placed before him.

The pergola was already warmed by the morning sunshine that flooded it thru its open eastern end, where the vines were allowed to twine around the light colored pillars and catch at the white crossbeams overhead; but no wandering tendrils might riot in the way of the early morning sunshine.

Will Dennison looked up, smiling. "Yes, Glen. most of them seem to be for you," and he pushed a pile of papers and several letters across the table. "Here's a letter Birdie will be glad to get," he added a moment later, "where is she?"

"At the phone, ordering some things for this afternoon. A few of the young folks are to be here for an informal afternoon tea, in honor of Daisy Norwood's sister. Here comes Birdie, already!" as a very pretty woman appeared in the doorway. She was leading a plump little toddler, and two older children followed her out. They took the little one and went at once to the eastern end of the pergola, where a low railing marked off their special domain—well protected on its outer edges.

"Oh, Birdie," her sister suddenly exclaimed, looking up from a long letter in which she had been absorbed for some time, "Helen Osmond is going out to Japan in a few weeks. Her husband has an important position in the new university, and she is going to stay—to live over there."

"We must have her here to visit you first, Glen," was the prompt and cordial comment from Mrs. Dennison. "Find out just when she expects to sail and have her plan to stop here as long as she can, on the way. She will like to meet Mr. Motora, too. You remember he said the other day that he and Mr. Fujita had known each other for years but that he had not seen his friend's wife, as she was away from home when he visited Washington last winter."

"Yes, and thank you so much, Birdie. I'm sure you will all like Helen. I'll write her at once. It will be splendid to have her here. It does not seem possible that I have not seen her since her wedding day, and now she has a child about Carol's age," and she glanced at the youngest of the group now absorbed in their play.

"The children will enjoy having a little guest," said their mother. "Tell Mrs. Fujita we will all be glad to see her, and to be sure to give you all the time she can."

"Will, here is something to interest you," said Glen Harding a little later, as she held out an open note. "You remember, Birdie,"—she turned toward her sister—"that I told you about Ernest Wynn, the single taxer with whom I had some correspondence a good while ago, about the chance of organizing a national propaganda? He is in town and will call here this afternoon."

Mrs. Dennison smiled indulgently. "Of course he will be welcome, but you and Will must entertain him if you expect to discuss single tax."

"Now, that's too bad! That it should be just this afternoon," exclaimed Will Dennison. "Here is a letter that makes it necessary for me to go to Long Beach this morning, and I may not be able to get back before night. I'm determined to sell our property there before the bottom drops out of the boom, and this looks like a good chance, for it's a company thinking of putting in a factory. But Glen can take care of Wynn today and I'll see him later. It is not likely he will go right off again."

"I think not," replied his sister-in-law. "I remember he once expressed a desire to come to California to live. Perhaps he has come to stay."

"Do you know what sort of a man he is? I mean, how old is he and what does he look like?" Mrs. Dennison glanced from her sister to her husband and back again, as the former promptly replied:

"I have not the remotest notion, Birdie. All that I know about him is that he appears to be a most energetic and enthusiastic follower of Henry George, and that he writes in an exceptionally clear manner on all sociological topics. I have wondered a little about his age. He shows too much fire to be very old and too much knowledge for a mere boy." Then she laughed: "I have somehow received the impression that he is a rather stout, middle aged man, with a full beard, who habitually wears a pepper and salt business suit. However, you will see him for yourself this afternoon,'' and there was a pleased look in her eyes as she refolded her note.

''Didn't I ever tell you I had a glimpse of Wynn in a crowd at the Chicago single tax conference in 1893?'' asked Will Dennison. ''If my memory is correct he was very tall and slim and dark—sort of typical Kentucky mountaineer style, you know, Birdie. He might be my age, or older. He was then, as Glen says, an enthusiast, but a remarkably clear-headed one; an unusual combination.''

''I have not heared from him for several months,'' volunteered Glen Harding, ''so I don't know what he is doing now; but during our correspondence he struck me as being a born propagandist. All his letters were full of plans for some sort of live national organization to take up and carry to a finish the great work for which Henry George lived and died.''

''In that case he may be able to put some life into the single taxers here in Los Angeles county,'' said Will Dennison. ''Our Club used to be very active—it really was, Glen,'' he emphasized, as he noticed a peculiar smile on his sister-in-law's face and caught a hint of incredulity in her eyes. ''Why, we had at one time at least two hundred outspoken single taxers on the Club rolls—but I'll have to admit that I don't know what has become of most of them. Tell Wynn I want to talk to him about that. Maybe his coming among us will set us going again.''

"It will if anything can," commented Glen Harding, decisively.

"I will make him welcome and then leave him to you this afternoon, Glen, for of course it is you he comes to see, anyway," said her sister. "Then if he is to stay in town any time I can get up a little dinner later on and have just the right people to meet him."

"A good plan, Birdie. That will fix us out. Glen, you learn all you can of his plans and tell him I had to go off. I must hurry to catch that Beach car. Good bye, tots!" he called out to the little group playing in the corner, and then snatched a hasty kiss from his wife as he took the hat she held for him. "If I get thru I'll come back early, but don't look for me before seven."

The tall "Grandfather's clock" in the wide hall struck two that afternoon as Glen Harding passed out at the front door onto the broad pergola that extended along the entire lower front of the house and on into the garden northward for a little distance, then turned and extended westward to a point commanding a fine view of the Arroyo Seco. This pergola was in daily use during the greater part of the year as a reception and drawing room; the little south porch and the wide upstairs pergola, on the south and west sides of the large house formed the living rooms of the family when they were not driven into the house by the infrequent rains.

Glen Harding made a pleasant picture as she stood a moment at the main entrance in the pergola, where passion flowers and the delicate wire vine mingled their tender leaves and beautiful blossoms in a living frame about her, as they climbed and twined and swayed from pillar and beam. The day was still cloudless and very warm; it was, in fact, one of the days of a "hot spell" such as are almost sure to occur in Southern California in April; days when the air is that of midsummer and the bloom and color—in garden and on foothills alike—still has the riotous luxuriance of a California spring.

"Oh, it's a glorious day!" Glen Harding exclaimed aloud, as she breathed in the delicious air and the sweet odors of the flowers about her. She was herself good to look upon, all in white to match the purity of the day. Her abundant, rather dark brown hair, was brushed back and coiled on top of a well poised head. Her gray eyes were bright with an anticipated pleasure. All who knew her well called Glen Harding a thoroly charming woman, tho they admitted that she had not the beauty of her sister, the fair haired, hazel eyed Mrs. Dennison. Glen Harding's chief charm lay in the bright helpfulness and hopeful cheer that seemed to radiate from her like an inspiring influence, and whose source lay in the mind which controlled the brightness of her eyes and the firm curve of her lips.

"I do hope Mr. Wynn will come early before the crowd gets here," she thought, as she glanced across the lawn to the broad sidewalk, along which a man was approaching. He looked at the name, "Arroyo Vista," swinging from the entrance pillars, and turned quickly into the grounds, coming directly toward her. A flash of surprise crossed her mind and then she thought, "It cannot be Mr. Wynn for he is not a bit taller than I, and I'm only five feet three. That's not a Kentucky mountaineer, either." She had only time to note the slightness of his figure and that his hair and small mustache were brown. when the man had reached the steps and a pair of clear blue eyes looked up at her as their owner said:—

"I am looking for Miss Glen Harding. My name is Ernest Wynn."

"I am Glen Harding and I was watching for you," she said, frankly and heartily as she gave his extended hand a cordial clasp and then led the way to comfortable seats in the pergola.

"I am so glad you came early, Mr. Wynn. My sister will be out presently, and by brother-in-law, who could not be here this afternoon, said I should tell you he wanted to see you about waking up the Single Tax Club here in the county."

"Are Mr. and Mrs. Dennison active single taxers?" Ernest Wynn questioned, eagerly.

"My sister is not a bit interested in the subject and never has been; but Will, Mr. Dennison, was active in the cause some years ago. His marriage and absorption in business and social life turned his attention from it and now he is not doing anything in particular to advance the movement, tho his belief in the justice of the single tax is as firm as ever."

"That seems to be the story everywhere. Actually, Miss Harding, I have spent the last three months in travelling about this country in search of live single taxers, and I have found nothing more animated yet than is shown by active interest in work for municipal ownership of street railways or water works or other so-called 'public utilities,' and the making of speeches on child labor legislation and an occasional single tax talk. Even the single tax lecturers don't seem to do more than keep the name alive."

Glen Harding smiled. "That is true! We had one out here last winter and Will and I helped work up a crowd to listen to him, and had reports of the lectures in the city papers. But nothing came of it—absolutely nothing—no one seems a bit more alive or interested than before; and it costs such a lot, too."

"Yes, measured by results, that is one of the most expensive forms of propaganda. But, Miss Harding, something must be done to wake up the single taxers thruout the country. It cannot be possible that only ten years after the death of Henry George, single taxers have become so apathetic that the cause to which he gave his life will die out thru lack of active workers."

"No, that cannot be, I am sure not, Mr. Wynn. There must be plenty of them left who will turn in and work when they see something definite to work for. I feel sure there are embers enough, smoldering here and there, to make a big fire of enthusiasm if they can only be stirred up again—and they shall be!" Her eyes flashed!

"You seem alive enough!" and there was a glad ring in Ernest Wynn's voice. "What are you doing? Can you suggest a plan? Something at which we could go right to work?"

Glen Harding smiled in sympathy with his eagerness. "The propaganda plan of which I wrote you still seems to me the best I can suggest. I have nothing more definite in mind, but I do feel more than ever like going ahead and making another determined effort to either rouse single taxers or get a new lot of people interested in the settlement of the land question. The need is so terribly pressing!"

"That's the way I feel about it, too, Miss Harding. It has brought me out here in my search for helpers."

"I have been trying to find a few, also! Some months ago I wrote to quite a number of single taxers about propaganda work, but I must confess that their replies were anything but encouraging—most of them. They are so busy or so poor or else so satisfied with the rapid progress being made that they don't want to join in any special effort."

"Satisfied! What can you mean?"

"I mean, Mr. Wynn, that prominent single taxers have actually written me they thought the cause was going forward fast enough and they did not care to encourage my efforts to stir things up!" She smiled as she added, "That was before the new national association was formed."

Ernest Wynn looked thoughtful. "I don't understand how they can be so blind. The power of property in privileges is growing stronger every day. There is no apathy about the work of those who own that sort of property," he added, grimly, "and they are growing more open and bold every year, every month, indeed."

"The exposure literature, which has deluged this country of late is largely responsible for that greater boldness, Mr. Wynn."

"How do you mean? Of course," he added hastily, "I know the thought was, that if people really understood how corrupt politics and business had become, they would speedily put a stop to it; hence some persons gave themselves seriously to the work of exposure, with the hope of doing some good."

"Yes, Mr. Wynn, and at first people were horrified or scared. But no one told them any way out, and, as the exposure stories were sensational and sold well, a lot of people began to write in that line for the sake of the returns—there is only too abundant material. The result has been that the people have become so familiar with such horrors that they take them as a matter of course, and no more connect them with their own daily worries and struggles, than they would so connect the story in a sensational novel, or a new play at the theatre. Seeing this, the 'captains of industry' know they need no longer trouble much to hide their moves—the people are too dazed and blind to see their real meaning, anyway. What can we do, Mr. Wynn, to get rid of that blindness on the part of educated, intelligent people?"

"I hope I——" began Ernest Wynn eagerly, then checked himself, and asked: "What can any single taxer mean by being satisfied with the 'rapid progress' of the movement? In comparison with the giant strides being made by the owners of property in privileges, I fail to see any real advance whatever toward the settlement of the land question. Can you?"

"No, I cannot. But I chanced to be looking over the Life of Henry George the other day, searching for a date I wanted, when I happened on a sentence I had not specially noticed before, but which struck me now as throwing light on this strange attitude of mind among single taxers."

"What was it?" came the quick inquiry.

"It was in the account of that last, that fatal campaign. His son reports that Mr. George was confident of success, but showed only flashes of enthusiasm, which Mrs. George noticed and spoke of to him. 'No,' he answered, 'little of the old-time enthusiasm. Perhaps it is that with success, such as has come to our cause, the mind advances to the contemplation of other things.' I was astonished for a moment when I read those words, Mr. Wynn. Then it suddenly dawned on me that Henry George had said that he felt that his task was accomplished when his great book, Progress and Poverty, was finished. All the after work and enthusiasm of the delivery of his great message to the thousands who flocked to hear him in his tour around the world, as well as thruout this country and in his New York campaigns, was undreamed-of success. Don't you see, Mr. Wynn? Henry George felt that his own personal task—his mission in life—was accomplished in delivering to the world the message he had to tell. He had no thought of seeing the results realized. That the land question could be settled as easily by the present generation of human beings as by any later people never dawned on his mind. He was willing to die, if need be, in pointing out the way, but others must carry on the work of applying the message to actual life.''

''I never thought of that, Miss Harding! Yet single taxers generally seem to me to be drifting away from the land question—in spite of the spasmodic movement now being made in the east.''

''That is exactly what the Single Tax Review and my own correspondence has shown me! I cannot believe, tho, that Henry George ever dreamed that any of his followers would accept the thought of everlastingly delivering the message, with no application of it. Yet what else can we make of the suggestion of a well-known New York single taxer, when discussing propaganda methods in the Review, that single taxers should so word their wills that the interest on the property they left could be used as a perpetual fund for single tax work!''

''I did not see that! It seems incredible! I always supposed I was working to obtain freedom right now.''

''So did I, Mr. Wynn. I never even thought of such a thing as success in the single tax cause being anything short of the complete and permanent settlement of the land question. It seemed so obvious to me that, if this could be done by a simple change in the tenure of the land, people today could and would surely understand it and make the necessary change. For the last few months I have been rather absorbed in the study of the past. Searching out certain great truths has taken about all the time I could spare from my daily work. But it has been well worth while!'' The enthusiasm of a great hope shone in her eyes and sounded in her voice. ''I now see clearly the fundamental truths of that early time, and they throw a wonderful flood of light on sociology, and that will be such a help to us in the propaganda. Mr. Wynn, I trust that you—oh,'' she broke off suddenly, ''there is my sister,'' as Mrs. Dennison appeared in the doorway, and advanced with cordial greetings.

''I am sorry my husband could not be here to meet you,'' she added, ''but he may get home before our guests have gone.''

''Your guests,'' exclaimed Ernest Wynn, ''I hope I am not intruding on a party. I have had no time to learn society ways.''

''Intruding? Not at all,'' replied Mrs. Dennison, heartily. ''But I hope you play tennis? The affair is only an informal tennis match on nearby grounds, and tea here afterwards in honor of—why, here they are now. Please excuse me a moment,'' and she turned to welcome two stylish-looking women as they entered the pergola.

''They are Mrs. Grant Norwood and her young sister, Grace Knight, whom the party is for,'' explained Glen Harding in an aside to Ernest Wynn; and the latter looked with much interest at the wife of his old friend, deciding that she seemed more given to society than to study.

"Do you play tennis, Mr. Wynn?" Glen Harding questioned. "Miss Knight is something of a champion at the game and our Club relies on me to play on the other side."

"I have never had time for it, but perhaps I'll enjoy watching the game all the more on that account—as a novelty! Don't bother about me."

"I don't play very often now—in fact, this is to be my final game as a member of the Club. I learned to play while teaching, for the sake of the exercise. Out here my work gives me that, and I have not time for play. I feel strongly that if more of us would work seriously, for a while, in the right way, all would then be free to thoroly enjoy living and learning and growing. Lately, as I said, I have been absorbed in my newer studies."

"My husband told me about meeting you on the train yesterday, Mr. Wynn," said Mrs. Norwood, after the introductions had been made. "You must come over and see us soon. Cannot you come next Sunday? Grant will be home then."

"I'll come, with pleasure," replied Ernest Wynn. Then, seeing an expression of surprise in Glen Harding's eyes, he added, "Grant and I were playmates as children, and later worked together for years in a railway telegraph office back in Illinois."

"It is strange Mr. Norwood never mentioned that to me," she said.

"I suppose he never thought of me," returned Ernest Wynn, lightly. "Grant was never given to overmuch letter writing and we only kept up a correspondence for a short time after I left the Burlington for the northwest. We had not seen each other for ten years or more, but we used to be firm friends."

"It will do him lots of good to have you renew that friendship," said Glen Harding, with a serious significance in tone and smile that Ernest Wynn felt, but did not understand. He had no chance to say more at the moment, for a merry group had arrived and he found himself trying to remember a dozen new names at once.

As it was a part of Ernest Wynn's purpose to become acquainted with all sorts of people and to make himself agreeable among them, he threw himself heartily into the environment of the present moment; with an enjoyment that surprised himself and a success that caused Mrs. Dennison to observe, later, to her sister:—

"Mr. Wynn is so quick to learn and knows so well how to adapt himself to the people he is with that he will do anywhere! I should never have dreamed that this was the first time he ever really watched a game of tennis, if he had not told me so. He showed such an intelligent interest in the play and in my explanations. Then he likes little children so much, and we had a splendid talk about them and things to do for them—and he never once mentioned the single tax!"

"Mr. Wynn, are you interested in the occult?" questioned Grace Knight, when they chanced to meet as the tennis players gathered again in the pergola at Arroyo Vista.

"Not a great deal, I admit. Still, I have wanted to learn more about it since I find Grant so taken up with metaphysics."

"Then you will come to our meeting next Thursday evening," she urged. "Miss Harding is going to talk about the past, and we will have Mr. Tremont, too. He's just splendid, you know. And maybe Mr. Motora will be there. I have not seen him yet. Grant says he is a Christian now, but of course he was a Buddhist first and knows a great deal about these subjects. We want to get up a good meeting, for Grant says that Miss Harding's talks are wonderful," and she looked with some awe across the lawn to where Glen Harding was at the moment in animated conversation with a group of young people. "Grant says Miss Harding is like two persons who are as different as can be. Can I tell him you will be at the meeting? It is to be at the Hall of the Metaphysical Club," and she handed him a card.

"Certainly, tell Grant I'll be sure to be on hand."

When the others began to leave, Ernest Wynn also rose to go, and Glen Harding did not seek to detain him. Instead, she said frankly: "I have some work that ought to be finished this evening, Mr. Wynn, but I can give you several hours tomorrow afternoon, and I would like so much to learn more of your plans."

"I will be glad to come, but at what time?"

Mrs. Dennison heard the question and turned quickly toward them. "Come to lunch with us at one o'clock, Mr. Wynn, and then you can see the children, and I hope Mr. Dennison can be at home, too."

"Thank you, I will gladly come."

Ernest Wynn returned to his plain little room with his head in something of a whirl. First, there was Glen Harding, herself. She was surely all and more than he had hoped to find. How graceful and strong she had seemed on the tennis ground! How her eyes had flashed when they had talked of waking up the single taxers! He must think over the new ideas she had given him. How quick she was in catching a suggestion! She would certainly understand his new find at once, and he smiled as he remembered how near he had come to telling it the first thing. Should he do it? No, it was better to wait as he had planned—until he had met and sized up those other men.

Ernest Wynn felt that their little talk gave him ample evidence of Glen Harding's live interest in the work for human freedom. And she was thoroly in earnest about it. He could not doubt that now. Then there was that rich brother-in-law. A wealthy single taxer could do so much to advance the cause he had at heart, and he must have that talk with Dennison at the first opportunity.

All looked favorable, except—and the thought made him feel gloomy for the moment, as well as puzzled—what was all that nonsense about the occult and Buddhism? How could Glen Harding be mixed up in such beliefs? Still, he admitted to himself, he knew very little about them; and he concluded to put in the next forenoon at the tempting Public Library he had passed that morning, when it was too late to stop, and post himself somewhat on the subject before he saw Glen Harding again.

CHAPTER 4.

IN THE DAWN OF THE MORNING.

Ernest Wynn was neither very young nor very romantic, so he slept well in spite of the confused state of mind in which he had retired. When he woke it was not yet daylight, but the moon, getting low in the west, sent a flood of light into the room, thru the uncurtained window. He had opened the window as widely as possible to let in the air, and forgotten to pull down the shade.

As he was not in the habit of getting up unnecessarily early, he turned over uneasily, putting himself out of range of the bright shafts from the moon. Still, he found himself wide awake and with a problem to solve. What was it? His mind went back to the afternoon before. Now he had it! Was Glen Harding one of those "New Thought" teachers whose writings had sometimes come to his attention and made him tired? It could not be—and yet what else could Miss Knight have meant when she urged him to come to their metaphysical meeting to hear Miss Harding?

There was no use staying in bed. He rose and glanced from the window at the still sleeping city. It was a clear morning, without fog, and he dressed quickly and went out. The moon had dropped behind the western hills, and the dawn was slowly advancing up the eastern sky.

Some one had told him the view of the mountains was fine from points toward the north on Raymond and Fair Oaks avenues, so he crossed to Raymond and started northward. Toward the east the trees and houses stood out in dark silhouettes against the yellowing sky, their beauty of outline broken here and there by the stiff ugliness of a telephone of electric light pole. On the north the Sierra Madre range was sharply outlined against the white dawn sky, which seemed to melt into the upper heaven of deep, pure blue as the light grew brighter.

Stopping on a corner, Ernest Wynn glanced at the street sign, and found himself on Orange Grove Avenue. Instinctively, he turned toward the west, following the curve of the street until he saw the low range of the Verdugo hills, still resting in the darker shadow, save where the dawning light gave them a rose-hued glow, like that of the sky above them. He walked quickly out Arroyo Terrace, enjoying the wide view of the old river bed and the tempting summits on the other side.

Very well, he decided. He would go over there and take a look at the city from the point he had noticed opposite Arroyo Vista. Glen Harding had mentioned that the rounded height was called Jumbo Knob, and that it afforded a fine view of the city. He wondered if she liked to climb hills as well as he did. Perhaps they would soon be climbing about among the mountains together. He glanced at the distant peaks, now dark against the brightening sky, and longed to clamber up their steep sides and wander along those fascinating ridges

—with Glen Harding beside him. Then he gave himself a mental shake and called a halt on such fancies. What was he thinking about, anyway, to imagine that he could step in and win such a woman as Glen Harding? Surrounded as she was by friends—and with two lovers besides—what need had she of him? The thought braced him up and the look of determination came back to his eyes. He would show her that she needed him as he needed her. They were necessary to each other for more than the mere enjoyment of life. Together they could work for the greatest of all causes —the cause of human freedom. Together they could see it won!

He walked on more briskly, out along Grand Avenue, and then down the hill to a point where two roads diverged. He stood a moment in doubt as to which road to take; and pausing there, enjoyed the new view of the Arroyo until the rose light of the dawn faded over the western hills and the clear light of day took its place. Then he stepped forward, about to take the nearer road to Jumbo Knob, when suddenly, as he gave a side glance toward the south, he found himself looking at the back part of Arroyo Vista. Turning quickly, he thought he saw a figure he knew standing at the top of a bank, high above the road. He turned down the hill, keeping his eyes on that figure. Yes, it was surely Glen Harding. But what in the world was she doing out there at that time of day? A nearer approach showed him she was digging with a spading fork along the top of the steep slope. As he stood watching her she paused a moment to look up and down the Arroyo and off over the hills. Then her glance, returning to her work, encountered the watching gaze in the road below, and immediately a cheerful voice called, tho softly, in keeping with the quiet of the early hour:

"Come up here, Mr. Wynn, the view is better. Go on around the bend," as he glanced at the inaccessibly high wall before him, "and you will find our path."

A few steps farther down the hill he saw a steep path, winding slightly as it led upward between stately rows of eucalyptus trees. Glen Harding met him at the top with a cordial hand clasp and bright "Good morning!"

"There used to be a stairway there," she added, "but it looked so artificial that I begged my sister to have it taken away. The path is so much more real and woodsy that even my sister likes to see it now, tho she rarely uses it herself. The children get lots of pleasure and exercise out of it. But come over here, Mr. Wynn, it is the best place from which to see the Arroyo," and she led the way to a rustic platform and seat, roofed by vines, at the extreme point of the bend.

Ernest Wynn gazed about at the more extended view, and his face showed his delight as the full beauty of that natural park was disclosed. North and south he saw the deep gulch of the Arroyo Seco, the white sand and boulders showing the winding way of the stream bed, and disappearing among the tall trees far below him. Opposite Arroyo Vista the green hills rose and rolled away toward the western horizon. On the north the mountains now showed in blue and purple against the white light of the morning sky, itself changing, higher up, to the indescribably beautiful blue peculiar to a cloudless Southern California day.

Glen Harding noted the pleasure in his face. "Stay here as long as you like, Mr. Wynn, I want you to see it all. But I have some work up there that I must finish. You will excuse me?"

"Certainly. Don't let me interrupt you. I started out to walk over to the hills and see the city, but this is vastly better."

"Yes," she answered over her shoulder, as she went a few steps away and renewed her work, "it is better to look away from the city than toward it."

"Then you do not love the city?"

"No!" Her tone was positive. "I do not love cities, even tho this particular city ranks high among the fairest. We are too crowded, too artificial, too afraid of each other! There are times when I wish that I could get away from it all and live in a cabin on the mountains," and her gray eyes turned in a momentary longing toward the giant heaps, now showing bright patches of sunlight along their summits. "But I realize that the work I have to do for freedom cannot be done from such a location. even if I could secure it, and so I stay here and work on." She gave the spading fork an extra vigorous jab into the ground, then she looked down on Ernest Wynn and smiled. "I don't mean to be savage, but sometimes I feel almost desperate over the blindness of professedly intelligent people, and the worthless sort of lives we lead!"

"So you sacrifice your own pleasures for the sake of working for others, and—"

"Please don't misunderstand me, Mr. Wynn," she interrupted, eagerly. "I have no great admiration for what is ordinarily called self-sacrifice. To do without things for the sake of others—other adults, I mean—is not always wise, for either giver or receiver."

"Yet some of your letters gave me the distinct impression that you never think of yourself—you are always thinking of others!"

She laughed softly. "The not thinking of myself is only seeming, Mr. Wynn. I want freedom. I want it with a longing that is measured only by my realization of what true freedom would mean to me, and to ALL others. But I know that I cannot have this highest freedom except as one with ALL others. My individuality is quite distinct—I know it does not loom large, tho I assure you I never lose sight of it myself—but it is lost sight of in the mass of other distinct individualities which go to make up the whole—in this nation, or the world. The thought of the whole—the oneness of all—must necessarily dominate until equal freedom is won. Then—and not till then—can we each work out in life the best and highest of which we are capable. Each will then be visibly distinct as we all move freely onward—each in a self-chosen path. I mean" —she smiled brightly at the evident interest of her listener—"as we work and study whatever we like,

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all standing on the secure foundation of equal opportunities. We could neither hinder each other nor have any occasion for seeming self-sacrifice—whether one chose to live in a cabin on a mountain or be a merchant in town."

"I understand your meaning," and Ernest Wynn felt his pulses throb faster as he looked up an instant into the bright eyes of the woman who now wielded the spading fork with renewed vigor. "Yet you have a beautiful home, even now." He turned in his seat and glanced about, from the stately house, showing yellow and white among the trees, to the long, vine-covered pergola, and then around the bloom-filled garden. He caught a glimpse of the lawn, and of pleasant, shady nooks, now brightening here and there as the long rays of the early sunlight searched them out.

Glen Harding followed his glance. "It is lovely," she said, "and my sister and brother make me feel that it is truly my home as long as I choose to stay with them."

"But you would prefer a home of your own?"

"Surely! Do we not all long for homes in which we can be our very own selves? Where we can plan things our own way? Tho," she added, thoughtfully, "I find few people, even in their own homes, who act in a really natural, sincere way, or whose surroundings are an expression of the individuality of their owners. It's all a part of the artificial, unjust conditions in which we live, and no one of us can get out—entirely out—alone."

"You must see a good deal of society life here," his mind going back to the gathering of the day before, and the snatches of talk he had heard, bringing out a phase of life hitherto outside of his experience.

"Not so much as you imagine. I have neither the time nor inclination for it, and I could not stand the late hours. I do not share my sister's merely society life, tho I have to see quite enough of it to know that there is little of real satisfaction or happiness in it. I go about a great deal with my sister among the poor people, whom she likes to help, and it is so hard to endure it all when I feel that it could be so easily and quickly changed. I simply cannot help thinking of all the other people who ought to have homes as pleasant as this is to Birdie and Will, and their children. But, really, Mr. Wynn, I am keeping you from enjoying the view. I'll keep still a bit and work." She had been gradually spading her way farther from him as she talked.

Ernest Wynn kept his place a moment longer, looking toward the scene before him, and yet hardly conscious of it. His vision was filled by the image of the woman at work in the garden behind him. He had noticed her costume with exceeding approval when she met him at the top of the path. A plain, short skirt, and pink and white blouse, and low shoes with broad soles and low heels. Her head was covered only by its beautiful brown hair. "She is an extra sensible woman in many ways," he thought, exultantly, "and what a power for freedom such a woman can be."

He could not sit still any longer, and stepped back to the higher level, where he found Glen Harding spading up a narrow border along the edge of the slope. He stood watching her a moment, when she said: "Excuse my keeping on. I want these plants to be in before breakfast. We can talk as I work." She stuck her fork in the ground and took up a rake, beginning to pulverize the earth already broken.

"And I have hindered you," exclaimed Ernest Wynn. "You must let me help now to make up for it." He hung his hat on a bush, to free his hands, and, taking the spading fork, began turning the soil quickly with a practiced steadiness that Glen Harding at once noticed.

"Thank you, I see you know how." There was a note of satisfaction in her tone that was not lost on her hearer. "But lay off your coat and you can work more comfortably. It is cool now, but you will find it very warm as the sun gets higher—and you are just from the east. It always seems warmer to newcomers at first."

He did as he was bid, and both worked diligently as they talked.

"You see, this is the hurry season of the year," she explained, "and my sister wants this border to be a mass of bloom in time for a garden party early next month. A lot of other things have to be rushed on that account, too."

"And you like to do this work for her? It is good exercise, I know, but I supposed such a place must require a regular gardener."

Glen Harding laughed. "Yes, I like to work for Birdie better than I would for anyone else—except myself—at gardening, I mean." Then she straightened up and faced him a moment, still smiling. "But, Mr. Wynn, I am not doing this for exercise, nor just for love of the work, or of my sister. I am doing it for cash! I am the 'regular gardener' of Arroyo Vista, myself."

Ernest Wynn stopped spading a moment in his surprise. "Do you mean to say that you attend to all this?" He glanced about the large, well kept garden, with its luxuriantly blooming borders and beds, the well trimmed trees, the vines climbing about house and arbor and pergola, and noticed the quiet harmony and homelike air of it all.

"Yes," the reply came a little proudly. "I have had sole charge of these grounds for over two years, and I planned a lot of the work while studying under the gardener they had the year before. He knew just how to make things grow out here, but almost nothing of getting the right effects. Jake Harris, our negro helper, does the heavy lifting under my direction, and I have an assistant whom I am training, but she is out of town just now."

A sudden thought struck Ernest Wynn, and he put the question: "Then that is why you are up so early?"

They were working close together at the moment, Ernest Wynn wielding the spading fork while the gardener followed his quick, dexterous breaking of the ground with an equally rapid and skilled raking smooth.

"I like to get up early on such mornings as this was," she said. "I don't really have to. But you must be an early riser yourself," and she smiled. "to be over here at such an hour!"

"I am not fond of early hours, I must confess," then he laughed. "The truth is, the moon woke me and I couldn't sleep again, so I started out for a walk."

"Was not the moonlight perfect!" Glen Harding exclaimed, her face all animation, as tho lighted by the radiance of a remembered glory. "Don't you think people miss a great deal by staying shut up so late in the morning?"

"I don't know. I never thought of it that way, Miss Harding." Then he looked at her quizically. "Please tell me what I missed this morning. It was daylight by the time I was out on the street—but I noticed a rare purity in the air."

"Yes," she said, appreciatively. "It is delicious before the city chimneys and stores wake up and spoil it!"

"But what did I miss?" he insisted, smilingly. "I really want to know." He had caught the look of doubt on her face.

"I happened to be out at half past three—don't shake your head," she broke off, laughingly. "I'm not always so early as that. I woke up, and the glory of the moonlight was too perfect to let me stay in the house. I came out into the garden. The sky was cloudless, not a trace of moisture anywhere, and the moon almost full. Our orange trees—you must notice them, Mr. Wynn—showed their masses of waxen white blossoms, odorously sweet in the pure night air. The 'Mother Mountains' stood out distinctly against the clear sky, showing dark shadows that marked the canyons, and, higher up, white patches here and there where the rocks are as bare as castle walls—they give its name to Castle Canyon. Over there on the west the line of the Verdugo hills and San Rafael Heights showed their softly rolling outlines against the pale sky. Down in the Arroyo the sand and boulders shone silvery white in the moonlight, while the trees and bushes cast strange shadows. All about me the trees which hid the sleeping city rose in dark, shapely masses against the light of the sky—you must notice the delicate tracery of the tops of the eucalypts against a moonlighted or early dawn sky the first chance you have, Mr. Wynn. Some of 'the friendly stars' were still visible; the big dipper, with Deneb, Vega and Altair, showed a faint brightness in the brighter light of the moon. I even caught a glimpse of Job's Coffin, faint in the glorious light, yet quite distinct. Oh, Mr. Wynn, we live in a marvelously beautiful world, and peace and friendship and enjoyment is surely the normal life for ALL people!"

"Most decidedly it is," came the ready acquiescence. "Really, Miss Harding, you make me wish I liked early rising! I don't know what possessed me this morning, tho I'm not sorry now," he laughed. "I always liked garden work. I learned as a child and youth in father's garden in Illinois."

The gardener smiled. "I had no experience in eastern gardens. I never really did any such work till I came out here. But I enjoy it. I'm like those Hindus who hold that in order to have perfect health each adult needs to do enough physical labor to provide the necessities of a simple life. Under truly free conditions I believe we would all naturally live up to that idea—some working in one way and others taking different ways; but all the ways alike in necessitating some outdoor activity each day—if only a walk.''

''I would decidedly enjoy that sort of life,'' said Ernest Wynn. ''But I thought you were a teacher, from the way you wrote in an article on education.''

''You saw that? Yes, I was a teacher then. I taught for twelve years in Pennsylvania public schools. I enjoy teaching, but not in that way. Our public school methods wear out too many teachers and destroy too many children. I saw it all plainly, but was helpless to alter the system. Then my sister gave me the chance to come out here and I came. I had learned before that time that the school problem was only a part of the great social problem in which we are all involved. Studying the works of Henry George convinced me that the only way to really benefit the children, or give them a fair chance in life, was to have the land question settled first of all. Since then I have been trying to do what I could by writing and talking whenever I have had the opportunity; and making such opportunities as I could, but such work is far too desultory to accomplish anything. It is not encouraging to notice how utterly apathetic so many single taxers have become of late years, as you said yesterday."

"I think one cause of that apathy is lack of clearness in their ideas. Tho all agree in wanting the single tax, they are divided on many other things; as money, transportation, the interest question, and so on; and even over what they could do with the surplus funds which some say the single tax would give the government. Besides, a lot of the old-timers have gone over to the socialists, and others are heading that way."

"I am positive of one thing, Mr. Wynn," and the gardener gave an extra hard pat to the soil she was putting about a little plant—for both were now busy rapidly setting out the seedlings from a flat that rested on the ground between them—"and that is that there can never be any surplus revenue when the land question is actually settled. There must be an exact balance between revenue and expenditure or the system cannot meet the requirements of a science. You know Patrick Edward Dove called politics 'the science of equity.' There cannot be a condition of equity where there is a surplus revenue. A surplus is itself evidence that someone has given something for nothing in the transaction, and the scales are unbalanced. Hence, there must be an exact balance, an 'equilibrium of equity,' in a just land tenure."

Ernest Wynn looked startled for an instant and his eyes grew very bright. The gardener, bending low over her work at the moment, did not notice this, and only heard the words: "Then you have read Dove?"

"Yes. I confess, tho, that his Theory of Human Progression was hard reading at first, and sometimes seemed deadly dull; but afterward, when I began hunting up bits in it for use in argument, I found it a veritable treasure house. Now I begin to appreciate the book at its true worth, and I find it wonderful in its clearness on many points."

"My own experience with that book was somewhat similar," Ernest Wynn admitted. "As to the need of an exact balance, I have been studying the how and why for years, and I believe that I—well, I'm writing out my new ideas. I am sure there is a direct connection between the cost of maintaining the highways and the rise of the rent of the land. Would you care to read my article when I have it done?"

"Very much! I am so glad you are working out that idea. I will show you a paper I wrote some months ago on the same subject, tho it is not finished. I could not get it worked out to suit me, and laid the paper aside. Then I became too busy getting my ideas of the past in shape to take it up again."

"Oh, Miss Knight invited me, and I promised, to go to their hall next week to hear you talk on that subject." He looked at her keenly, but she only smiled brightly as she replied:—

"Of course you are interested, for it is a matter of great importance, and——"

"Auntie Glen, Auntie Glen," a merry voice called, and a bright faced child came running down the walk. "Breakfast is most ready and Fay has found a new insect, such a queer one. Won't you please come and tell us what it is before it gets away?"

"In a moment, Merwyn. I must show Mr. Wynn where to wash his hands. There"—she rose from the ground—"the whole border is done," and she led the way toward the side of the house. "The lavatory is at the end of that porch," pointing to a door overhung with blooming honeysuckle vines, "and you can go right on thru to the porch where I will join you in a few minutes. Of course you will take breakfast with us."

"Thank you, but your sister——" he hesitated.

"My sister will be delighted. She is the soul of hospitality, and an unexpected guest is a pleasure to her. Besides, Will wants to see you and he said last night that he will have to be away again this afternoon, so it was a special providence that led you to walk in this direction this morning."

"Then I will gladly stay, for I very much wish to talk with Mr. Dennison," and the guest disappeared under the honeysuckle vines, while Glen Harding followed the eager child pulling at her hand.

The spacious, high ceiled dining room at Arroyo Vista seemed a very pleasant place to Ernest Wynn that morning. There were flowers on the breakfast table and a great bunch of pink and white roses on the sideboard. Flowers peeped in at the wide open windows, and beyond lay the sunny garden, while thru the trees he caught glimpses of the delightful Arroyo Vista that gave its name to this pleasant home. His host gave him a most cordial welcome, and Ernest Wynn noted with inner satisfaction how well the polished manners and frank friendliness of the man were set off by his tall, well built figure and handsome face. "He has just the sort of personality," was the guest's thought, "to exert a strong influence in the work for freedom, if only he can be won to take a thoroly active interest in the cause." Mrs. Dennison's greeting was as friendly as her husband's, and the children were introduced as Merwyn, Fay and Carol, by their proud mother.

"It is a pleasure to see such a group of healthy, happy children," said the guest.

"How often I wish that all children could have as good a start in life as these little ones here are getting," observed their Aunt, gravely, as they took their places at the table.

"They could have as good, or better, under equitable conditions," said Ernest Wynn. "No matter how well cared for they may be, children cannot have the best possible environment while obliged to grow up in the midst of the ugliness and sham we call civilization. Even the best cared for children have to see and hear so much that is not well for anyone—that ought not to exist at all."

"I think I understand you," Mrs. Dennison spoke graciously. "But we cannot make the world different, so the best way I can see is for each of us to do all we can for our own little ones and be kind to all others."

"I firmly believe—in fact, I know—that the world can be made better, as far as the adjustment of human association is concerned; and I am convinced that active, energetic work could bring about a startling revolution in a very few years," asserted the guest.

"Oh, Mr. Wynn, please don't talk of revolutions," exclaimed Mrs. Dennison, with a shiver. "Surely you do not believe in murder and bloodshed?"

"Most emphatically not," was the prompt response. "What we all need is equal freedom—the condition in which each person has freedom to do all that va wills, provided va infringes not the like freedom of any other—in which to grow. It is not, and cannot be, possible to win this freedom otherwise than thru entirely peaceful methods. Our weapons must be words, spoken and written, not swords and guns."

"Oh, then I don't care how soon you bring on the revolution," Mrs. Dennison smiled brightly as she turned to attend to the wants of the child beside her.

"You are right, Mr. Wynn, in saying we can hope for freedom only thru entirely peaceful methods of propaganda. But—" Glen Harding hesitated, and there was a shade of perplexity in her face—"would you mind saying over again the law of equal freedom?"

Ernest Wynn smilingly repeated the words.

"It's a new word, Glen," her sister put in quickly. "You used that word several times yesterday, Mr. Wynn, and it sounded so much like 'they' that at first''—she laughed—''I thought there was something the matter with your grammar.''

Glen Harding looked interested. ''Where did you get it? Why do you use it?'' she asked.

''I found the word in one of the Ralston books. The long a makes the word sound so like 'they' that many persons do not notice the difference when I am talking with them.''

''I noticed it right away,'' said Mrs. Dennison. Please tell us why you use it.''

''It is a new pronoun, common gender, third person singular,'' explained the guest. ''I use it to avoid the awkward phrase 'he or she,' or the still worse, and utterly ungrammatical, use of the masculine pronouns when speaking of women. This misuse of the masculine pronouns has now become so common that the pronoun 'he' often refers to the word 'woman:' while all persons, adults and children alike, are rapidly becoming masculine—even with some of our so-called best writers and speakers. In stories for children the birds and beasts are also becoming masculine—if the pronouns used are any indication of their sex,'' he ended, disgustedly.

''I never thought of that, Mr. Wynn,'' said Mrs. Dennison; ''tho now you call my attention to it I remember a momentary sense of the absurdity of some remarks I recently heard in which a woman was referred to as 'he' and again as 'him.' ''

''It is worse than absurd, Mrs. Dennison,'' the guest said, gravely. ''The words used, in speech or writing, react powerfully on the mind of the user—as well as influence those who hear or read them—and this constant use of masculine pronouns has the unavoidable effect of making women appear inferior to men, mere adjuncts or appendages. No one who has a true, a thoroly clear, conception of equal freedom, can so misuse language. 'Va' is an eminently fitting addition to the vocabulary of the equitist, and I adopted it gladly. It is a great help to accurate and grammatical speaking and writing."

"I always thought the use of the masculine pronouns was merely a convenience, Mr. Wynn," said his host, "but there may be something in your idea."

"You are certainly right, Mr. Wynn, as to the effect on ourselves, and others, of the words we use," said Glen Harding, thoughtfully. "The constant repetition of peace suggestions will tend to make it easier for people to see that true freedom can come only thru the friendly discussions which will lead to a complete understanding of the land question and how to settle it."

"That was one of the things Dove did not see, in spite of his clearness on some important points," said Ernest Wynn.

"Yes," agreed Glen Harding. "Dove's most serious blunder lay in his failure to see that truth, and the consequent waste of his time, money and energy in the study of war methods and in preparations for war."

"What we have to do is to get people to see the peaceful and easy way out of the present chaos," said Ernest Wynn. "When enough of them see it to create an overwhelming public sentiment in that direction, nothing can stop its peaceful and thoro application.''

''But will not that take several generations, at least, to accomplish?'' asked his host.

''No, indeed!'' Ernest Wynn's eyes were shining. ''I know a plan by which we can get the subject before all the people of the United States, in a thoroly effective way, in a very few years, and make it the leading question thruout the nation.''

''The plan we discussed sometime ago?'' Glen Harding spoke eagerly.

''Yes, I mean your plan, Miss Harding. The first thing needed is to get single taxers, and all others who care for freedom, waked up enough to set the plan going.''

''We used to have a strong single tax Club here in Los Angeles county, Mr. Wynn,'' observed his host, ''and I am sure it could be revived. We might call a meeting for some evening next week and have you address them and then reorganize the Club. Could you be there? You intend to stay here some time?''

''I may decide to locate permanently out here,'' was the quick reply. ''I will certainly be on hand for any such meeting. My main purpose in life—until the cause is won—is to push the work for equal freedom in any and every way I can.''

Will Dennison looked pleased, and went on briskly: ''Then I'll see that notices are sent out. Franklin has the list we used last winter, and I can get it today. I can also have notices of the meeting in the dailies here and in Los Angeles. The meeting had better be over there, you think, Glen?" he had caught a gleam of amusement in his sister-in-law's eyes, tho her voice was serious enough as she said:—

"I think it would be well to have a meeting over there, and one here, too, and get up two active clubs as soon as possible. But, Will, I don't believe the postal notices will do a bit of good. Have you forgotten our experience last winter? You see," she turned to their guest with the explanation, "when the lecture I spoke of was under consideration among a few single taxers, we sent out postal notices for a meeting of the Club. Tho we sent to all, on a list of several hundred, whose addresses we thought at all likely to be still correct, only eight persons, including Will and myself, were there—and two of the eight came because they saw the notice in the papers. I think it would be a waste of time and postage to try that plan again."

"Well, what can we do?" Will Dennison looked rather helpless.

"Suppose you give me the list," suggested Ernest Wynn. "Tell me where you want them to meet, and whatever you can about the people themselves. Then I will put in some time in hunting them up and try to get them enough interested to turn out. From what Miss Harding has told me, I judge there are enough single taxers in this county alone to form—if once waked up—an invincible nucleus for a strong national organization."

His host looked relieved. "That's a mighty good plan,'' he assented, heartily. ''If you can go down to my office with me this morning, I'll phone Franklin to be there with the list, and I think I can get hold of one or two others who may help look up the rest,'' he added as they all rose from the table.

''All right, I am entirely at your service in this cause,'' said Ernest Wynn.

''But, Papa, can't we show Mr. Wynn our playhouse and sand bed before he goes?'' asked Merwyn anxiously, while little Fay caught the guest's hand to detain him.

''Yes, to be sure you can,'' smiled papa, ''if he wants to see them. I'll call up Franklin from here and let you know, Mr. Wynn, when I am ready to go down town.

''Show Mr. Wynn the south fence and the orange trees, children,'' said their aunt, ''he likes flowers.''

''We will, Auntie Glen. Come quick, Mr. Wynn,'' and they led the way into the garden, little Carol clinging to his hand while Merwyn and Fay ran on and back again. The row of four orange trees might have seemed but giant bouquets of waxen blossoms had not their sweetness proclaimed life and growth. The south fence proved to be about six feet high and was entirely concealed by a mass of bloom formed by a dense growth of Australian pea vine in full flower, the dainty pinkish, lavender and purple blossoms suggesting a miniature spray of wistaria. Here and there the dense cluster of flowers of a pink ivy geranium showed among the pea blossoms, while along the ground ran the riotous reds and yellows of nasturtiums. Then several yards of fence was covered with honeysuckles and white roses, and again the pea vine asserted itself to run riot over the front of the playhouse, at which the children stopped and began to show their treasures.

"See sand bed," said baby Carol, pointing to the boxed-in square of clean sand, now heaped up all about by little hands.

Ernest Wynn gave himself up thoroly for the time to the children, too far away to hear the comments of those who watched the scene from the side porch.

"I never saw anyone like him before, Birdie," remarked Will Dennison, who had just come out to look for their guest.

"I like him," said Mrs. Dennison, a pleased light in her eyes. "He is not pretending. He really wanted to go with the children, and you can see he is having a good time with them."

"He seems to me to be in more downright earnest for true freedom than anyone I ever met before," Glen Harding observed, thoughtfully.

Her sister gave her a keen glance of scrutiny, but made no remark.

CHAPTER 5.

THE STORY OF THE PAST.

On the following Thursday evening, a little ahead of the time set for the meeting, Ernest Wynn entered the Hall of the Metaphysical Club. Several persons were already there, and Grant Norwood came quickly forward to meet him.

"I'm so glad you came early, Ernest, for I want to introduce you to Tremont before the meeting begins. Here he is. Let me make you acquainted. Mr. Tremont, this is my friend, Mr. Wynn."

The two men shook hands and, half unconsciously, took a mental inventory of each other, as they exchanged the conventional greetings.

"A little man, but he has a sincere air about him and may amount to something. I wonder if he has met Miss Harding yet," and Arthur Tremont almost smiled as the fancy crossed his mind that he might find a possible rival in this new-comer among them.

"A fine looking man," thought Ernest Wynn, as he took note of the well knit figure of better height than his own, the smooth face and pleasant brown eyes, now alight with cordial friendliness; and he felt again the clasp of a soft, yet firm white hand. Involuntarily he looked down at his own hands and realized that they lacked the smoothness and whiteness of those unaccustomed to manual toil.

He was not left long to his own thoughts. People were coming in and Grant Norwood introduced him to this one and that, until quite a crowd had gathered. Then there was a slight stir and flutter of expectation as those about him turned to look toward the main entrance. "Miss Harding has come and the Japanese is with her, I wonder how that happened," Grant Norwood whispered to him in a quick aside as he passed him to greet the newcomers.

Ernest Wynn glanced toward the doorway and astonishment shone for a moment in his eyes. Could that lovely vision of a woman be the plainly dressed gardener to whom he had talked so freely? Her gown, set off by silver ornaments, was of some filmy material that seemed to float about her, and in texture and color suggested a bit of the rose-hued clouds of the dawn sky. Her mass of brown hair, piled high, was held in place by silver pins; and he thought her eyes shone with the clear brightness of the morning stars.

What fancies! Ernest Wynn gave himself a mental shake and turned his attention to the Japanese. As tall as Tremont and of a heavier build, he had a noticeably fine form; while there was an indescribable grace, and yet an air of firmness and purpose in his every movement. Thick, jet black hair, and a small black mustache served to lighten by contrast the light, yet brown tinted face, from which a pair of dark eyes looked out in serious thoughtfulness. Altogether, a man it would be well to know. A man who might do things of importance to his race.

Turning to look about for a seat, Ernest Wynn paused instantly as a musical voice met his ear: "Wait, Mr. Wynn, we have a moment yet and I want you to meet Mr. Motora. He is deeply interested in sociology. Mr. Motora, Mr. Wynn," and the vision in rose and silver passed on toward the stage, leaving the two men to greet each other and find seats together; which they did, all unconscious of the slight frown that shaded Arthur Tremont's face for an instant as he noted the episode.

"My friends, I want you to go back with me this evening to the far distant past, when our world and its people were still immature," Glen Harding began, and her clear, pure tones carried her words distinctly to every part of the well filled hall.

"I have been asked to tell you something of the time when the gods—the Devas, the bright ones—were still visible and taught all sorts of things to an adoring humanity: of the time when the White Brotherhood were leaders and guides in the development of the impressible minds of all earth's children. When Those Above set the daily lessons in the great school of life.

"It is a long journey backward on which I wish to take you, and a strange story that I have to tell. But if you will come with me I will show you many wonders of which you have not dreamed.

"In that long forgotten past we will find the roots of all the growths of later times. In the story of that early age we learn how we came to be what we are today, and I want you—every one of you''—the speaker's voice, mellow and clear, held a thread of mingled persuasion and command—''to go with me now, back into that past; so that you, too, may see and know its grandeur and its simplicity, its wonder and enchantment. I want all the beauty and pleasure of that marvelous early time to become a part of your lives today—as it is of mine.'' She paused a moment, and her large gray eyes, sweeping slowly over her audience, rested for an instant on the intent face of Inazo Motora and then caught the questioning gaze of Ernest Wynn. A slight smile parted her lips and she went on:—

''Our journey tonight is back to the old home—the roof that once sheltered all earth's people, and made of them one great family of children, varying in complexion, but of like needs and capacities.

'' 'All discoveries and prehistoric studies,' says the Marquis De Nadaillac, 'testify to the unity of the human species in all regions. . . . It is not alone by his bony structure that this identity of man in all time and in all regions is to be affirmed. In my long anthropological studies I have been more than once surprised to encounter everywhere the same manifestation of man's intelligence—the same creations due to his initiative. When we visit the prehistoric collections in our museums we are astonished to see everywhere the same forms and processes of work and labor, and these among peoples separated by broad oceans or by arid deserts.'

''To those who Know, the explanation of this unity of the human species is easy. We were all children together, learning our lessons from the same great picture book, in the world's first Kindergarten and Manual Training school. It is about some of the marvels of those original school days I am to tell you tonight.'' Glen Harding smiled brightly, but there was a far away look in her eyes.

''In that elder time, when humanity was young, our earth was still wrapped in its last swaddling robe of aqueous vapors—as the planet Jupiter is today. Looked at from outside, thru our telescopes—as many of you have doubtless seen it—that vapory shell on Jupiter is a continually changing picture, varying in color from day to day, and showing ever new and yet ever repeated stripes and bands and spots. Some years ago watching astronomers saw large masses of Jupiter's covering fall in at one of its poles, which necessarily left an opening in the circumpolar regions.

''During the childhood and youthtime of humanity—as a race—our globe had a similar world-roof, with polar doors or windows, thru which the dawning intelligence of persons caught glimpses of the outer universe.

''This watery covering, or celestial ocean of vapors, formed a most wonderful picture book—an illuminated scroll as large as the great round sky—to the childish eyes that watched it as it revolved rapidly around the earth and at the same time floated slowly, but steadily, on its spiral path from the regions above the equator to its circumpolar ending places. These were about the regions we now know as the arctic and antarctic circles; but I will talk to you tonight only of scenes and features in that world kindergarten picture-book as they appeared when view from our own home in the northern hemisphere.

"Come with me, my friends, back to that earlier time, when our sun of today had not yet found its place in the heavens. Instead of seeing the clear blue sky of this favored land, look up with mental vision into an ocean of watery vapors. See them spreading out in the zenith like enormous fans and narrowing gradually into rows of bristling points far down on the east and west horizons. Watch how they go, whirling, writhing, coiling, twisting, and piling upon each other, as they move rapidly from horizon to zenith and from zenith to horizon; and at the same time almost imperceptibly, yet unceasingly, toward that giant vortex in the north polar sky, formed by the gathering and fall of revolving vapors.

"There in the north polar heaven was the place of concentrated glory, for a vapor heaven is made up of bands and belts and lines, and every band and belt and line had to end its career as an arch or crescent in that vast arc world—a world called the moon land or crescent land long before our moon of today was seen.

"There, too, formed by the opening in the celestial waters, was the one still place, the isle of stars, the Jade stone, the adamantine rock, a portion of the true sky, as seen thru the great hole in our world covering. It was the one enduring Rock in the midst of an ever moving, whirling, changing scene.

"The sun poured its beams into that vast vapor shell, hence there could be no real night during canopy times. The time we now call night was then only a more shaded day. Life was easy and long, for our water heaven acted as a hothouse roof and kept out the maturing, and therefore death-dealing, rays of the sun. But that sun poured its light steadily into our watery heaven and at certain times flooded with an indescribably dazzling brilliancy the north polar opening and its environs. All who looked up saw everywhere light and color and movement, ever variant, yet ever repeated.

"In our childhood all that moved had life and all that lived was consciously alive. Hence, to the adoring eyes of earth's children those watery vapors were a celestial ocean on which rode the ships of the gods. The quiet spot in the midst of the waters was the manifested isle, the 'isle of innocence' on which many gods were born, for in that spot those divine beings were first seen as very little things—the infant Zeus was the infant heaven, the little heaven.

"The spiral line formed a pathway for marching hosts. In that march of canopy forms we have the original flocks and herds, the celestial cattle of the gods. We can now understand why the word pecus—which at a later day was applied to terrestrial domestic animals—held the meaning of unceasing movement. The original pecus never stopped, never rested by the way. This has given us also

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the word pecuniary, an apt name for currency that passes from hand to hand in a never ceasing round of exchange. Those celestial forms and features never paused, never slept; they changed, but thru all their changes they kept up their never halting march to the great gathering place in the polar sky. Well was it called the 'Mount of Assembly in the Sides of the North.'

"In that enchanted celestial land, where at some time shone every hue in the chromatic scale, was raised the great city of the gods—of the gods of all peoples—whose walls were built of sunlight and vapor, put up 'without sound of hammer.' That north polar opening was Heaven's door, the entrance into the unseen glories beyond the enveloping waters. There was the Seat of the Judge, for the giant vortex kept the Wheel of the Law in constant motion.

"Now-a-days we are told that 'the higher enjoyment of nature is connected with the scientific establishment of cosmic laws,' and that 'the conjunction of the two serves to raise human nature to a higher stage of perfection.'

"In the childhood of humanity the celestial world—as well as the terrestrial—was under the control of visible cosmic law. Themis, goddess of Law, taught us many things, and we human beings recognized that even the gods were subject to the orderly trend. The power of cosmic law was visible in the heavens, and particularly in the northern sky, where the great Law Wheel was at times an all-commanding feature.

"This Wheel of the Law was a visible scene in the north polar sky, where the vast vortex of watery vapors, lighted by the beams of the hidden sun, made a magnificent turning scene. Wheels and rings and arches made a spectacular display of color and form and movement of which I can give you only a fleeting glimpse—until your minds are trained to fit the larger vision and you see it without my help!

"In that giant vortex originated the fire drill and the adoration or prayer wheel. That vast turning scene was the helix of the world, the center of the universe. The heaven of canopy times was the universe to earth's children: the word universe meaning simply 'the One who turns' or 'the turning of the One.'

"High up in the zenith heaven dwelt the White Brotherhood, those higher figures of purest white, long known as among the earliest of the teachers of human beings.

"But you wish to know what the divine beings taught us in that Manual Training school, while we of the human family were children and growing youth, and I will try to tell you a few things as they come back to me." Glen Harding's voice took on a softly reminiscent tone, and her darkening eyes had a far-off look in their depths, suggestive of glimpses down the vista of the ages.

"Bear in mind," she went on, "that all life manifests itself in action, and that imitative action is the strongest trait of childhood; is, indeed, essential to its existence and growth; and you will readily understand how the gods taught us, as children—by giving us patterns to imitate.

"The divine beings in that wonderful world on high, and especially in and about the marvelous polar opening, or celestial earth, were always active, always working, always making something. Human eyes saw those things and tried to imitate their form and color in terrestrial materials. Beads, for instance, are scattered all over the world and are made of every possible sort of material. The art of boring is so ancient that the most careful research has failed to find a time, since persons lived on earth, when it was not known and practiced. Of course not, for the great celestial bore in the northern sky—which gave its name to that land of the Hyperboreans—formed the most striking scene to meet the eyes and dawning consciousness of our earth's children.

"The origin of the fire drill, also, has had to be put farther and farther back. Why? Because the god of fire had a place in that wondrous northern scene; and the vertical shaft of light, the divine fire stick, turned in its notch in that gigantic vortex; and when the hands of persons on our planet fashioned stick and hole, and imitated the movements of the god of fire, terrestrial fire was produced.

"There, too, was located the original potter's wheel; and the gods turned out all manner of handicrafts from that celestial workshop. Bowls and baskets, vases of all sorts of shapes were produced by the continually changing shape of the opening and its environs, as vapors rolled up and fell away; and also by every change in the location of the observer on our earth.

"It has long been noticed that all peoples in the earliest times show an appreciation of beauty and grace, using curves and circles and spirals of perfect proportion, to shape and ornament even the rudest materials and commonest utensils. What wonder that this should be so, when we had the divine pattern as our only rule and guide. In those celestial patterns the lines and proportions were perfect, and the patience of our teacher seemed infinite, as the lessons were repeated over and over and over again thru the passing years and centuries.

"The white heaven, with its bands and belts and lines, interweaving and separating, joining and raveling out, gave lessons in the art of weaving. While the divine spinner was ever busy at the great celestial spindle in the polar sky; and the whorls or spindles found today in such abundance in all parts of the world attest the widely scattered locations of pupils of that great teacher who, in weaving the robes for goddesses and gods, taught human beings how to fashion mats and blankets and garments for themselves.

"The creator, the divine worker, was the original builder, the first carpenter. Human eyes saw the building of celestial temples and palaces, of cities and villages, in the vapor world above. All the arches and collonades, pillars and shafts, temples and pyramids, tombs and city walls, the domes and spires on our globe, are but crude imitations of divine originals once seen by human eyes and imitated by human hands: and thus architecture was taught us by the gods.

"The leader of our friends, the monists, tells us that there is a 'universal substance' or 'divine nature of the world' which 'shows us two different aspects of being, or two fundamental attributes—matter infinitely extended (substance) and spirit (the all-embracing energy of thought),' and that all the things we see about us, and we ourselves, are but transitory forms. Looking up into the watery heaven of primitive times we saw 'substance' under the control of, and inseparable from, moving force or energy, which constantly created new forms and combinations of forms, and unceasingly repeated certain figures and combinations at regular intervals. This was divine thought manifested, and it spoke a message from deity, to the growing minds of human beings. Every new manifestation was a 'thus saith the Lord' to the watching eyes of the seers of that elder time—and they interpreted it for the rest of us for all time.

"This monist leader speaks of 'the all-embracing energy of thought' in total unconsciousness of the fact that in an earlier age a visible 'substance' moving around our globe—Varuna, the all-embracing world-cover—helped to indelibly impress on the minds of earth's children a consciousness of the moving energy of thought. Hence we say that 'Thought works out in action.'

"In the childhood and youthtime of humanity the thought of deity was manifested in the work of deity. Every new exhibition on high, every change in scene and feature in the celestial world of waters was a thought of Deity told out, spoken to all whose growing intelligence could comprehend it. This was the original 'tinted thought,' for all the colors we know had their part at some time in that vast sky picture-book, with its vividly illuminated frontispiece in the north polar heaven. Each color and tint and shade meant a change in conditions in the divine world, and held a meaning for the wise ones on our planet who watched with a growing understanding the actions of Those Above.

"In that polar world was the well of wisdom and source or fountain of knowledge, from which, as a central root, all our wealth of language and literature has sprung. The oracular north was the Mouth of Deity, and each feature and scene and condition, as it was translated into the daily life of human beings, became a sign, a word, and thus language was born.

"Mathematics, too, was taught by the gods to the developing minds of the children of our earth, thru the exact balance, perfect proportion and constant repetition of certain lines and figures, scenes and conditions, in the celestial world of that earlier time. Persons learned to measure time and space and to calculate what would be from what was and what had been.

"In that divine world of prismatic glory dwelt the Muses—for original music was perfect harmony of movement, and the 'music of the spheres' was the visible movement of the circles and wheels and orbs in that vast center of attraction—the home of Love and abode of Desire—the brilliantly radiant north polar opening and its environs. All beauty and glory centered there. Forms and features from all parts of the wide heavens journeyed to that one great meeting place. Dancing and racing, hunting and trading, war and peace, work and play, had their places in that scene of constant animation. What wonder that we human children learned thoroly, in such an environment, the lessons given us by the divine teachers!

"At last there came a time when the Great Teacher disappeared—when the White Brotherhood departed—and humanity was left to its own devices, to work out in a beautiful world the lessons taught by Those Above. Some of these lessons have been long forgotten, but they are coming back to us now in the clear light of truth.

"Oh, my friends!"—Glen Harding's eyes shone darkly luminous as she looked into the intent faces before her—"I have given you but the tiniest glimpse into the wonders of our marvelous past. The story is as endless as time and as varied as all possible human knowledge. I want you to see it for yourselves! I long to have you realize its grandeur and its glory, its beauty and its hope! The clear knowledge of our past, that is now open to us, throws a flood of light on our present problems and future possibilities—but I may not say more tonight." She turned away amid a low murmur of applause.

Grant Norwood rose and made some remarks, but what he said was wholly lost to his old friend, whose eyes and mind followed Glen Harding as she resumed her seat among the palms and pink and white roses, thus unconsciously making of herself a picture that Ernest Wynn felt he could never forget. He wanted to talk to her, to ask her questions, but he had to wait, for Grant Norwood was announcing the next speaker, and he found that Arthur Tremont was to give a talk on reincarnation.

Wishing to understand the subject and to learn something, also, of the mental attitude of the man, Ernest Wynn tried to concentrate his attention on the speaker. But the address seemed, to his logical mind, sadly lacking in clearness, and appeared at times even contradictory; and he soon found himself more interested in watching the effect of Arthur Tremont's talk on the brightly earnest face under the palms.

That expressive face showed such a live interest and evident comprehension of the subject that Ernest Wynn marveled. Yet when, two or three times, her eyes met his, he felt that her quick glance and smile held a meaning, a significance, that he wholly failed to catch. Vaguely, he realized that she expected an understanding on his part that he could not give. The feeling passed like a flash, yet each time it left him puzzled, perplexed, wondering. Then he tried again, and this time successfully, to fix his mind on Arthur Tremont's smoothly flowing speech.

At the close of the meeting Ernest Wynn at once made his way toward Glen Harding, but there was a little crowd around her and he had barely reached her side when he heard Will Dennison's voice behind him, saying, "Are you ready, Glen? Birdie is waiting in the auto." Then, as he turned, the voice took on a touch of surprise, tho the owner's hand clasp was cordial: "You here, too, Wynn! I didn't know you were interested in this sort of thing. We have a spare seat in the auto—I run it myself—let us take you home. The ride is fine on such a clear night and I'd like to know how you are getting along in stirring up the single taxers. We must have that meeting soon and get a strong Club started."

Ernest Wynn gladly accepted the invitation—and then found it hard work to keep his resolution not to tell all his thought until Will Dennison's mind should be more fully prepared to grasp it. There was a lively discussion, into which Glen Harding entered ardently, as to the best way to rouse an enthusiasm that appeared to be sleeping all too soundly in the minds of once active followers of Henry George. No word was spoken about the meeting he had just left, and Ernest Wynn remembered that his friend had said that Mrs. Dennison was not interested in her sister's metaphysical studies, and that Will Dennison was a strict Presbyterian and would have nothing to do with Theosophy.

CHAPTER 6.

THE CHILDREN'S PICNIC.

It was about two weeks later, on a Friday evening, to be exact, that Ernest Wynn received a note which pleased him a good deal. He had spent most of the time during that two weeks in and around Los Angeles, looking up and interviewing persons whose names were on the old Single Tax Club list. He had made several brief calls at Arroyo Vista, and one afternoon, going early, had found only Mrs. Dent, the nursery governess, and the children at home. The latter were playing on the lawn and begged him to stay, and Mrs. Dent cordially seconded their invitation. Feeling that he had earned a rest, he had remained, throwing himself heartily into the children's games, and, when they tired of play, gathered them about him on the grass and told them stories; and then shared their picnic supper in the arbor. It was a simple meal at which Mrs. Dent presided.

Going back to his room in the early evening, he felt refreshed and invigorated and ready to renew his search for live single taxers. He was keeping on steadily at his self-appointed task, tho not finding it to be an exactly inspiring work. The amount of apathy and downright indifference he met with would have discouraged a less sanguine temperament. It seemed like trying to melt walls of ice, but the fire of his enthusiasm had the unquenchable quality possessed only by those who are sure of the justice of their cause and of the possibility of its speedy success if once understood.

He was delighted to find—as he had found before—that the very necessity for argument and discussion with the icicles he encountered was making every point of view and phase of the subject clearer in his own mind. Questions and objections had suggested new ideas or called for a new way of explaining some phase of the problem. All these he had gone over and thoroly revised, and added much to the manuscript he was preparing for submission to Glen Harding.

That these people with whom he had talked—and others like them—could be induced to see and apply the truth he was certain. It was only a question of time and energy, and money with which to carry on the propaganda—and success was sure!

He had seen little of Glen Harding during that two weeks, but had called at Will Dennison's office nearly every day to report, with the gratifying result of feeling that he was gradually getting the lawyer to see more and more plainly the true way out.

Returning to his room late on that Friday evening, Ernest Wynn found that a note had been pushed under his door. The address was in a woman's hand and unknown to him, so he opened it with some curiosity, and found it ran thus:

> My dear Mr. Wynn:
>
> I know something of how busy you are just now, but the children have been coaxing me all the morning to write and invite you to go with them on their own little picnic tomorrow. Can you possibly spare the time? Would you like to go? Merwyn says you used to walk all over the mountains in Montana and would like to do so here. Fay tells me you gathered wild flowers in Dakota to send home to your folks, and the child is very desirous of showing you the wild flowers now so plentiful on our foothills. Baby Carol says you could "wide" one of the burros. What do you say? Do not come if you would not enjoy it. The trip is only a short one, across the Arroyo and up the trail back of Linda Vista. Mrs. Dent will go with the children and be responsible for them. If you would like to go, please come in time to start at nine o'clock.
>
> Cordially yours,
>
> BIRDELLA H. DENNISON.

Ernest Wynn glanced at the date and found the note had been written that afternoon, and he decided to accept the invitation. He loved children and these little ones had proved especially engaging. Then, too, a little walk over the hills, with only the prattle of the children in his ears—for Mrs. Dent seemed a quiet woman, not much given to talk—would tend to erase from his mind a lot of the rubbish to which he had been compelled to listen during the past two weeks, and so aid in bringing out more distinctly the thoughts he wished to make as accurate and clear cut as possible, before showing his manuscript to Glen Harding. Yes, he would go.

"Mama, Mama," called Merwyn, on Saturday morning, running into the garden where Mrs. Dennison and her sister were busily engaged cutting roses for bouquets, "is Mr. Wynn coming to our picnic?"

"I don't know yet, dear. He was not there when Jake left the note. But it is almost time to start, and if he is going he will soon be here. There is Fay coming out. You two might run down to the entrance and look for him."

The children darted off and Mrs. Dennison turned to her sister. "Now I'll see if Mr. Wynn enjoys the children as much as he seems to. If he accepts an invitation to go off there with the tots and Mrs. Dent, I will be sure the children really attract him."

"Then you did not tell him——"

"That you always go with the children on their picnics when I cannot go myself?" finished Mrs. Dennison, smiling. "No, I did not mention you. That is the sugar plum," she added, mischieviously, "to reward him if he cares enough for my splendid children to want to please them."

"He does," laughed her sister, as a merry shout of "Here he is," came to their ears and they turned to see the children gayly leading Ernest Wynn up the garden path.

"I say, Wynn, your example is contagious," remarked Will Dennison, who now joined the group in the garden. "When I told Franklin how you were going after the people on our lists he said he would see some himself; and Jack Romaine, a fine young fellow who has brains as well as money, happened to be in the office and heard us. He surprised me by offering to look up a dozen or two people. He was in earnest and said he would try his best to get them out. I never knew him to do anything active for the cause before, tho he has taken a desultory sort of interest in the single tax all thru his youth—calling himself a single taxer—on account of hearing Henry George speak during that fatal campaign in New York. Jack was only a boy then."

Ernest Wynn's eyes sparkled. "That is good news!" he exclaimed. "That young man interests me considerably. His name was on one of the lists you gave me, and I had quite a long talk with him. He asked intelligent questions and seemed to understand my explanations, but did not offer to do anything. He told me some incidents of his visit to New York and how a single tax friend took him, with his mother, to hear Henry George, who must have made a strong impression on him. He said Miss Harding had helped him to understand some things he remembered hearing Henry George say."

"And what are you doing, Will?" asked his wife.

"Oh, I've kept the phone and auto pretty busy. Another week of such work will finish up our list in good shape. Then I think we can count on enough people turning out to start a pretty good Club."

"Come, Mr. Wynn! Come, Auntie Glen!" the eager children were calling; "Mrs. Dent and the baskets are in the auto. Do please come."

Mrs. Dennison did not fail to note the gleam of pleased surprise that passed over Ernest Wynn's expressive face when he thus learned that Glen Harding was to be one of the party, and she remarked, casually, "My sister or I always go with the children on their little picnics, and I could not get off today."

"The burros wait for us at the foot of the trail," said Merwyn.

"There will be lots of flowers," added Fay. "We pick them on top and on our way home."

"The air is so delightfully clear this morning that we ought to have a glorious view from the point before the smoke gets around to hide it," remarked Glen Harding, as the car started off.

Their route took them down the hill, across the bridge, and past a large grove of eucalypts, where the square stems and blue-gray coloring of the new growth mingled in strange contrast with the slender, rounded branches and dark green leaves of older parts of the same tree. Then for a long distance their way was shaded by rows of the always beautiful pepper trees, with their dainty, fern-like leaves and luxuriant display of sprays of tiny blossoms delicately tinted in yellow and cream, which, on the female trees, turn later to long, drooping clusters of bright green berries, that change to a vivid red, making the trees more lovely than ever, and tempting the robins and cedar waxwings to stay a while among them—and even luring the mocking birds away from the ripening figs.

Along the roadsides, everywhere, in the vacant lots, running up the hillsides, clothing the Arroyo's steep banks, and even trespassing on the garden spots, waved the wild oats; and Ernest Wynn agreed with the children that no cultivated grass could be prettier.

A few moments more and they turned aside and passed thru orchards of apricots and peaches to the foot of the trail, where Jake Harris and the burros waited. Mrs. Dent and Carol were soon mounted on one, and the baskets, with Merwyn and Fay, were easily carried by the other faithful little creature. Glen Harding and Ernest Wynn brought up the rear of the cavalcade, which wound its way up and up, along the mountain side on a narrow, almost overgrown path.

"I have been up here many times and never before found the bushes so rampant over the trail," said Glen Harding. "It may sound silly to you, Mr. Wynn," she added, smiling, "but to me it seems good just to be alive on a morning like this!"

Ernest Wynn laughed. "I feel that way myself just now," and he looked about over the flower covered hillsides. "What flower makes those great patches of yellow—or orange, rather—bloom over there, and there—why, that side of the mountain is nearly hidden by it!"

"That's the sticky monkey flower, Mr. Wynn. Here are some bushes of it close by," Merwyn called back.

"See the Indian paint brush," cried Fay, "and up there are lovely Indian pinks—those pretty red flowers, Mr. Wynn."

"Notice how the varieties change as we wind up the hill," said Glen Harding. "Here the sage is everywhere, and I don't see a single sticky monkey flower."

"We are almost to the top, see the old windmill," Merwyn presently turned to call back.

"There was once a well there, and I have heard that it had water in it several feet deep, even in the dryest seasons," explained Glen Harding, "but a storm overthrew the windmill and the place was abandoned."

"Somebody's there, Auntie Glen, somebody's on our picnic ground!" exclaimed Merwyn, suddenly.

"What shall we do, Auntie Glen?" added Fay, anxiously.

"Wait a moment and we will see. Mrs. Dent," she called softly, "is there another party ahead of us? We never before happened to find anyone up here," she added, to Ernest Wynn.

The front burro had halted when the other did, and Mrs. Dent now turned to say: "It's only a man, and he is coming to meet us. Why, it is Mr. Tremont!"

"He can stay with us, we like him," said Fay.

"But not so well as Mr. Wynn," said Merwyn.

"I like them both the same much," insisted Fay.

"Very well," smiled their Aunt, "it is your picnic and you can go on ahead and invite him to it if you want to."

The children's burro was instantly urged in front of its companion on the now broad and nearly level path along the top of the hill, and a moment later a man with a decidedly pleased expression—which even the presence of Ernest Wynn could not dampen—met the rest of the party as they arrived at the broken remnants of the old windmill.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Miss Harding," he exclaimed. "I am visiting my friends, the Duttons, at the foot of the hill for a few days, and the air was so clear this morning that I came up here to look at the view."

"Isn't it glorious!" She looked about with delighted eyes.

Ernest Wynn had helped the children dismount, and fastened the burros as Merwyn directed. Now he stood looking around in sheer enjoyment as the children eagerly called his attention to all the points of the compass in turn; thus showing him the wide views over three fair valleys: The great San Gabriel, with Pasadena as its crown; the beautiful Eagle Rock, and lovely La Cañada.

Mrs. Dent had established herself on a comfortable piece of the old framework, and was keeping a watchful eye on baby Carol, who toddled about picking up little stones for miniature house-building.

Ernest Wynn devoted himself to the children, entering with lively interest into their hunt for "as many different sorts of flowers as we can find," as Merwyn said. In this work Auntie Glen had to be frequently called upon to identify and name the finds, and this at last caused Arthur Tremont to join in the search.

"There are not so many flowers up here," said Fay. "We will find lots more going down."

"Isn't it fun, Mr. Wynn," said Merwyn, later on, as they all seated themselves on the ground around the beautiful lunch Mrs. Dent had spread out on a cloth on a smooth, open spot, "to have our lunch up here with only a cloth for a table, and all outdoors for a house?"

"I like to get away from the crowd of houses," remarked Glen Harding. "I remember years ago visiting a cousin in the country—the real country, back in Pennsylvania—and how I enjoyed it! I thought then as I do now, that the ideal home would have the ample outdoor spaces of my cousin's place, and yet contain—what her home lacked—a good library and new books and magazines coming in. With autos and telephones, all and more than I then thought of could now be realized by all of us if we had equitable conditions."

"You evidently agree with the writer of your new Garden Book, Glen, that tho we live in cities we were meant for the country," observed Mrs. Dent, smiling. "She says land is comparatively cheap in California, and home builders ought to secure more land around their houses, because 'a genuine home can hardly be made on a small city lot—it is more apt to be an abiding place only.' "

"Comparatively cheap, indeed!" exclaimed Glen Harding, indignantly. "Just look at the prices asked for even little bits of land on the flats! As for homes, I can show you lots of tiny, one and two-room houses—they looked like doll houses to me when I first came out here—mere shanties, some of them, on our way home. Yet Pasadena is called a millionaire city, and one of the beautiful towns of a region full of lovely places—and tiny houses."

"It would be far more beautiful if the trolley cars and telephone poles were eliminated," observed Ernest Wynn.

Arthur Tremont looked at him, as tho in doubt whether he had heard aright: "Surely you would not have us go back to the days before telephones and electric cars made life pleasanter, or at least easier?"

Ernest Wynn smiled. "I did not say that, Mr. Tremont."

Glen Harding laughed, tho her tone was serious enough as she said: "There is no excuse now for the existence of a single yard of rail or trolley wire on city streets. An automobile service would be a hundred times better and more convenient. Just think of the actual danger avoided and the enormous nervous strain eliminated by the one item alone of taking a car at the curb instead of in the middle of the street."

"I never thought of that," ejaculated Arthur Tremont.

"I read an account the other day," said Mrs. Dent, "of the successful use of automobiles in place of street cars in an eastern city. I think it was during a strike on the car lines, and the people liked the automobiles so much better, they wished them kept up."

"The only reason they are not already in universal use"—Glen Harding spoke gravely—"is because the exclusive possession of public highways, which the rails and wires necessitates, gives to the corporations owning them the power to levy tribute on the people to the utmost limit they can endure. The fiction of doing it as a 'public service' blinds the average busy person to the real situation. People go on paying tribute because they must use the highways, grumbling at the poor service and constant danger to life and limb—yet too blindly thoughtless to see that the whole system can be easily and quickly abolished and an efficient automobile service substituted—until we win equal opportunities. Then every family could have an automobile—or more—to suit its own needs and save all the time now wasted by having to stand around from five minutes to half an hour every day waiting for a car."

"But why do not the companies substitute the automobiles for trolley cars now, if they would be so much better?" remarked Arthur Tremont.

"Oh, Mr. Tremont," exclaimed Glen Harding, with a distinct note of impatience in her tone. "Don't you see that with automobiles it would be impossible to secure and maintain that tribute compelling power which is involved in the laying of rails and putting up of poles and wires on city streets and other public roads?"

"The poles are not pretty, Mr. Tremont. I like trees better," said little Fay, suddenly.

"But you like to talk to people over the phone, don't you?"

"Yes, Mr. Tremont," the child admitted, "we do. Merwyn can, too, but Carol is most too little."

"But, Mr. Tremont, all the wires ought to be underground at this moment, and thus do away with the constant danger to linemen—and other people, too, from exposure to live wires," said Glen Harding, earnestly.

"The telephone is too great a convenience for me to care to quarrel with the methods of the companies," said Arthur Tremont, lightly. "I notice even the small workingmen's cottages have phones now."

"We don't like those little houses—sometimes we see ragged children around them—I wish they all had homes like ours," spoke up Merwyn, and Ernest Wynn remembered the serious attention the child often seemed to give to the talk of older persons.

"They will have them, Merwyn, as soon as we can get them to see the way," Auntie Glen spoke reassuringly.

"Luther Burbank says children ought to be brought up in the country and not go to school until ten years old," observed Mrs. Dent, thoughtfully. "How does that agree with life over there?" She indicated the fair city spread out far below them.

''A good many people seem to fail in making even abiding places of their houses, if the 'for sale' and 'for rent' signs have any meaning. I've seen them on all sorts and sizes of places and houses,'' remarked Ernest Wynn.

''I met the secretary of one of Pasadena's finest Clubs some days ago,'' said Arthur Tremont, ''and she chanced to remark that the people of Pasadena were so nomadic that it was hard to keep an accurate record of addresses—even in Clubdom alone. How must it be in the whole city!''

Glen Harding almost sighed, then smiled. ''I suppose it is partly because of Pasadena being such a resort for tourists; and besides that there has been a vigorous real estate boom going on for several years. I confess, tho' that I greatly dislike the everlasting numerousness of those 'for rent' and 'for sale' signs; and the 'furnished rooms' and 'rooms and board' aggravate the evil. I have an almost uncanny, homeless feeling, sometimes, when going about the city.''

Ernest Wynn looked sympathetic. ''I understand that feeling, Miss Harding,'' he said, ''and the only possible way out that I can see for any of us is to make people see that the land question must be settled first of all—and why.''

''The author of that garden book,'' Mrs. Dent spoke again, ''wants this 'Land of Heart's Desire' to be the scene of the most genuine and heart satisfying home building the world has ever known. She grows quite confident, and insists that 'it can be and I have faith that it will be, but of course no such delightful millennium can be reached without years of persistent effort along right lines, together with a gradual development of higher ideals for home building and home surroundings.' "

"She spoils her whole suggestion, Mrs. Dent, by that implication that it will necessarily take many years to accomplish it," said Glen Harding. "It can never be done by merely teaching people to want gardens, without showing them how to get a permanent hold on even a foot of ground! On the other hand, if we settle the land question, it will not take five years thereafter to see a complete change in this whole country, making it a gloriously lovely land, full of real homes and big gardens, with happy parents and merry children in them."

"Then the sooner you get the subject clear enough for the people to understand it, the better! I am quite sure that there can be very little, if any, genuine home life for the children in our crowded cities," asserted Mrs. Dent, who seemed unusually animated, Ernest Wynn thought.

"I greatly dislike the grind and rush of business life in a large city, tho I am compelled, for the time being, to go thru the motions," observed Arthur Tremont.

"I cannot imagine such cities as continuing under equitable conditions," said Ernest Wynn.

"They could not," emphasized Glen Harding.

"That reminds me, Miss Harding, of an announcement I saw some time ago in a Chicago paper, of a series of articles by the editor, in which you will be interested,'' said Arthur Tremont. ''The general title of the series is 'The Science of Social Service'.''

Glen Harding smiled. That science can be summed up in three words, Mr. Tremont, and they are 'service for service.' To give anything less than an equivalent for services rendered is obviously unjust, unfair. To pretend to give more than that—before such a balance is established—is either a fraud or a delusion. Such errors in the past have gone far to make and maintain the horrible conditions about us everywhere today.''

''You are far above those conditions, Miss Harding,'' Arthur Tremont smilingly protested, ''and they should not be allowed to annoy you.''

Glen Harding turned toward him a deeply serious face as she said: ''How can I be perfectly happy when I know that there are thousands of women like myself who are at this moment held in a bondage worse than death? How can I be wholly care free when I realize that thousands of children, who ought to be as healthy and happy as Birdie's little ones here, are being crushed and crippled for life, in factories, and other thousands starved to death in the slums of our cities? How—''

''Oh, Auntie Glen,'' broke in Merwyn, ''I'm so sorry for the poor little children, I'll give you all the money in my bank to help them.''

''So will I,'' added Fay. ''My cat is most full.''

''Me will,'' chimed in baby Carol's voice, uncomprehending, but always ready to follow its leaders.

Glen Harding smiled brightly on the eager, earnest little faces. ''Of course you shall, dears. We will ask Mama to help decide where your money will do the most good, as soon as we get home."

"Really, Miss Harding," said Arthur Tremont. "we ought to banish all thought of such things from our minds, in order to get as much enjoyment as possible out of life."

Ernest Wynn saw a sudden, strange light gleam an instant in Glen Harding's eyes, but she only asked quietly, "Can you do that, Mr. Tremont?"

"Not wholly, as yet, but I expect to in time—when I can get a little farther from the grind of the city, and business ways."

Again Ernest Wynn saw a momentary gleam in the gray eyes, and Glen Harding seemed about to speak, when Fay, not interested in such talk, broke in with, "Auntie Glen, can we play blindman's buff up here? Now lunch is done. We've noticed and noticed."

"Very well, you can try it a while, but remember we want time to pick flowers on the way down."

"Will you play with us, Mr. Wynn?" begged Fay.

"Mr. Tremont can try, too," said Merwyn.

"Isn't this a rather small and rough place for such a game?" Arthur Tremont glanced doubtfully about the spot of stone-strewn, bush-covered hill top, which fell off sharply on one side.

"Oh, we will lead you very carefully up here," Merwyn assured him. "Do you think you will know the bushes?"

"The bushes?" repeated Arthur Tremont.

"It is a sort of botanical blindman's buff," explained Glen Harding. "One person at a time is blindfolded and led about among the bushes, and must tell what they are by touching the stems and foliage. Merwyn and Fay know all the trees in their home garden by the feel of the bark, and even baby Carol knows some of them. Sometimes the children make a flower game of it, and they are learning to know the flowers by touch. The player who recognizes the largest number wins the game.''

''No show of my winning against these children up here, but I'll try the game,'' said Ernest Wynn.

''So will I,'' smiled Arthur Tremont, ''tho I'm afraid I don't know any bushes but the live oaks.''

Mrs. Dent produced a handkerchief for a blinder, and a half hour was pleasantly spent over the game before the children were ready to go down the hill.

''What are those masses of pink flowers over there?'' asked Ernest Wynn, pointing toward a rose colored patch on the hillside, when he found himself beside Glen Harding for a moment on the way down.

''They are the prickly phlox. Here are some right in the path.''

Ernest Wynn looked down on the flowers at his feet, their pink satin petals glistening and shimmering in the sunlight. ''They remind me of the dress you wore at that Metaphysical Club meeting; it seemed like a bit of the rose-hued clouds of dawn.''

''What a pretty fancy! I must tell Birdie that. You see, Mr. Wynn, my sister plans all my gowns. I insist—and I can tell you I had to argue hard for it—on a certain waist measure; but Birdie selects materials and styles, and I appreciate the results just as she enjoys the garden I planned, and the changes I make in it from time to time."

"I see; and does she always have something pink about you?" He had just noticed the rose-hued ribbons at neck and waist that gave a touch of brightness to the linen colored gown she wore.

"Yes," she smiled, "Birdie chooses it for me because it is a becoming color, and I like to wear it because it signifies hope, and of all things today the world surely needs hope! I mean an intelligent hope that will lead people on to prompt and active work for its speedy realization."

Her companion looked with a new interest at the pink ribbons. "I know nothing of the meaning of colors," he said, "but if I thought that wearing rose color would help inspire people to work for freedom I'd certainly invest at once in a dozen pink shirts and try their effect."

Glen Harding laughed, but her face grew serious as she said, "Do give the idea a trial, Mr. Wynn, and I will lend you a lecture of Colville's on the power of color."

"All right, I'll try it," Ernest Wynn smiled back at her as he yielded to the pull of an eager little hand and hurried on to gather Indian pinks, too high up on the bank for Merwyn to reach. Some way, he felt elated, tho he had not failed to notice, in that one backward glance, that Arthur Tremont had already taken his place at Glen Harding's side.

The feeling of having made some progress came to him again when, as he was bidding the children good bye at Arroyo Vista, Glen Harding, who had hurried into the house to get the Colville lecture, gave him the book and said: "Mr. Wynn, I have read all the articles you left for me with Mrs. Dent the other afternoon. I find they clear up so many puzzles that I feel almost sure you have still more to say."

"I have," was the prompt response, "I am rewriting my ideas on the most important point—the source of ground rent—and I'll bring you the paper when it is done."

"I hope that will be soon." She spoke seriously. "I cannot see any way out of the present horrible industrial and social conditions, except thru the settlement of the land question, and anything which tends to that end is worth knowing."

CHAPTER 7.

ERNEST WYNN IS PUZZLED.

To say that Ernest Wynn was puzzled when he left the children and their aunt that afternoon is to put it mildly. He tried to think the matter out clearly as he walked along quiet side streets, back to his room. But he could not. Yet the feeling of hope, of elation, remained with him, and he felt encouraged in spite of the remembrance that Arthur Tremont had managed to devote himself to the children's aunt during most of the time spent on the hill.

Yet he recalled, also, that the man had shown himself profoundly ignorant or wilfully blind on a subject that to Glen Harding was of vital importance. That such a clear-headed woman, as Glen Harding always showed herself to be when discussing sociology, should be a theosophist seemed impossible to Ernest Wynn. Yet there was her strange talk at that meeting, and he had noticed how, on this Saturday afternoon, she had seemed to listen understandingly, and even with interest, to Arthur Tremont's talk as they two walked down the hill together; tho the snatches of their talk that he had caught seemed to him arrant nonsense.

Then he remembered sundry accounts of two opposite characters in one person—could it be that Glen Harding was one of those strange people? No! a thousand times, no! The thought was preposterous! He did not believe that a thoroly sane, normal person could possess such an abnormal duality of thought and action. Yet Grant Norwood was so positive about it, and Arthur Tremont had appeared to have plenty to say that held Glen Harding's attention while he kept so closely at her side. Ernest Wynn had not failed to notice that, and he frankly admitted to himself that the man had a winning, charming sort of personality.

Could it be possible that Glen Harding actually cared for Arthur Tremont and shared his beliefs? That question came back to his mind with a haunting persistence. Then he recalled her flashing eyes when Arthur Tremont showed his thoughtlessness on sociology during the talk at lunch that day. Surely such a man could not attract such a woman as a life companion, even tho she might to some extent share his metaphysical vagaries.

Then there came into Ernest Wynn's mind the recollection of Glen Harding's glowing face and serious, yet ardent tones as they talked over propaganda plans with Will Dennison, and—again he grew bewildered over the evident contradiction. He felt that he must clear it up as soon as possible.

By the time he reached his room Ernest Wynn had decided to make, the next day, his promised, and several times postponed visit to Grant Norwood's home, and try to get some points from him, as well as a release from the promise made on the train not to bring his friend's name into the discussion—when he talked to Glen Harding about her beliefs.

So? Now he thought of him, was not Grant himself an example of a believer in flatly contradictory ideas? Still, there was a difference not merely in degree but in kind. Grant Norwood refused to discuss any thing. Accept it or leave it, was all he would say when it came to the point of real discussion. Glen Harding seemed ever ready for argument or discussion on matters of real importance. No, she was not a bit like Grant Norwood. Still, a talk with is old friend, in the frame of his own home, might throw some light on the mystery that perplexed him.

In the meantime, there were still a few Pasadena names on his list; he could put in the evening looking up some of them. Then in the morning his mind would be clearer and he could write out the new ideas that were coming to him and finish up the paper he had promised to take to Glen Harding. What would she say? He wondered.

Finishing his paper to his satisfaction took more time than Ernest Wynn had expected, and it was therefore rather late that Sunday afternoon when he found himself at last in front of Grant Norwood's cosy little cottage. His friend's home was pleasantly located on an oasis of garden spot in the midst of the graded vacancy on the side of one of the numerous hills on the outer edge of eastern Los Angeles. He was glad to find his friend alone, they could talk more freely together as they sat on the vine-covered porch, and looked out over what had once been, according to the season, flower covered or sun browned hills.

Ernest Wynn marked a certain cosy homelikeness in the tiny garden of his friend that seemed lacking on other unoccupied lots in sight, tho they, too, were planted with grass and flowers and vines. He could not see what made the quite evident difference, and spoke of it to his friend.

"It's Miss Harding's work," Grant Norwood explained. "She came over and helped Daisy fuss with it every day for awhile last winter, just after we got settled here. She said the lot was too small. But they certainly made the most of it," and he looked about with some pride. "I don't know how she does it," he added, "but Glen Harding has a knack of making a homelike spot out of any garden ground she touches."

"She seems fond of out-of-doors."

"Yes, and one way I don't like it. Motora calls it a Japanese trait, Daisy says. She is over there now, spending the day with Mrs. Dennison. Some shining light in the way of a Presbyterian preacher held forth at their church this morning, and Daisy was invited to dine with him at the Dennisons. Grace has gone to visit friends at Hemet, and I'm glad of it, for she was getting too much interested in Tremont. I don't want her to get to care for him if he is to marry Miss Harding."

"But is he?"

"Of course!" The tone was positive and emphatic. "Haven't you seen them together? Don't you notice that he just adores her?"

"Well, it looked something like that yesterday—"

and he gave his friend a brief account of the children's picnic.

"Then you must have seen how well matched they are."

"No, I did not. Nor did I see any evidence that Miss Harding is especially taken with Tremont, tho she did listen to his nonsense with more patience than I possess."

"Now, Ernest, you don't mean to say you think she prefers that Japanese?"

"I did not say so. In fact, I have not seen them together at all, except that moment at your Club. I have been too busy hunting out the old single taxers around here to look him up yet; but I was very favorably impressed by what little he said to me that evening."

"Oh, come now, Ernest, don't put your weight on the wrong side," pleaded his friend. "Daisy says you are getting a strong influence over Dennison, and that Mrs. Dennison likes you in spite of your single tax talk."

Ernest Wynn looked pleased. "I'm very glad to hear that, for Dennison has the means and the personality to be a power in the work for true freedom."

"That's all right! But don't you see that if you use your influence in favor of Motora it is bound to count against Tremont? You know the Dennisons are not at all interested in the Divine Wisdom."

"Don't worry about that! I will not favor Motora, or Tremont, either! That is a matter Miss Harding ought to be left to settle for herself. But, Grant, I want you to release me from the promise I made on the train. Then I can talk quite freely to Miss Harding—when I get a chance—and find out just how much, or how little, of a theosophist she is. I confess I am thoroly puzzled about it, and I like to have things clear in my mind."

His friend smiled tolerantly. "Of course I'll let you off the promise. Now that you have heard her it does not matter, anyway. As for her belief in theosophy, I tell you her talk at the Hall that night was ample proof that she is a living attestation to the truth of reincarnation in this world. I don't see what more you want."

"I want to know where she got those ideas, and—"

"Merely from memory, I tell you," interrupted Grant Norwood, with a faint trace of impatience in his tone. "Didn't you notice that she talked about that far away time just as you or I might talk of events that occurred in Kewanee when we were boys? I tell you, Ernest, she is just the sort of woman to make Tremont's work the biggest kind of success. With those two working together it would not be long before we would have the largest society in the United States!"

"But just what is Tremont doing? What does his work amount to? I have not seen anything particularly important about the man."

"That is because you have not yet recognized the height of the plane on which he lives." Grant Norwood spoke impressively. "He is teaching the great truths of Divine Wisdom. His classes are larger than any other teacher of metaphysics can get together here. He has also written a lot of books to explain the subject. His latest one deals with the magical control one mind has over another. As it has reference especially to business it is thoroly practical. I'll lend you a copy if you would like to read it. Tremont says it's his best work."

"Then it's the book for me, and I'll read it carefully. I want to get at the man's point of view. I have had no chance yet for any real talk with him; but from the sort of incidental remarks he's made in my hearing I should say he does not know the A B C of sociology. How about that?"

"Tremont has never given the subject any study. You see, Ernest, his whole mind is on a higher plane than yours, and he leads us away from the sordid things of life."

Ernest Wynn turned on his old friend a look of mingled pity and curiosity, but his tone was all seriousness as he said: "I once thought, Grant, that you understood the teachings of Henry George."

"I do. I'm a single taxer all right, but I have learned a lot of other things, too. Don't you see that if Tremont marries Miss Harding she can supply all the sociological knowledge needed in his works?"

"But how about her?" There was a ring of scorn in Ernest Wynn's voice. "Would you have a woman like Miss Harding marry a man who knows nothing and who seems to care nothing for the work for which she cares so much?"

"Oh, as to that, Daisy and I get on very well, tho she does not care a straw about either single tax or theosophy. I'm afraid, tho, Ernest, that your coming just now may make it harder for Tremont, and give Motora a better chance. I do wish you'd be a little more careful.''

''What are you talking about now?'' demanded his friend.

''Oh, I know you did not mean to help Motora. But you see your propaganda talk, and stirring up Dennison so, has made Miss Harding more eager than ever to do something to help settle the land question. Now, as I told you, Tremont has never thought it worth while to study up on that subject, while Motora is going into it like fits—with Miss Harding for teacher—on the plea that he wants to utilize the knowledge for the good of the Japanese when he gets back to Japan.''

Ernest Wynn's face lighted up with pleasure. ''I'm mighty glad to hear that, Grant, and I'll make a chance to talk with Motora myself as quick as I can.''

''Then you'll help him along,'' protested the other.

''I want to help anyone along who has sense enough to take a live interest in the settlement of the land question,'' was the prompt and energetic retort. ''If Motora has any sort of influence in his own country he can do a lot of good there by thoroly understanding the land question before he goes back. I'll find out tomorrow when I can have a talk with him.''

''Now, there you go, Ernest, without a bit of thought. Do you want Motora to hold two cards to Tremont's one?''

"How's that?" and there was a flicker of a smile in Ernest Wynn's eyes.

"Of course Motora was brought up a Buddhist, and he is a fine oriental scholar besides, so he knows as much as Tremont can about Eastern religions and metaphysics. Now he is all on fire about the land question—Daisy told me of it—and Tremont has never thought it worth while to study up on that—"

"Well, he ought to," broke in Ernest Wynn, bluntly, "and you ought to try to interest him in it."

Again the tolerant smile appeared. "I won't argue that point, Ernest. We all have our own places to fill, and—oh," he checked himself abruptly, "there comes Daisy up the hill."

"Mrs. Fujita came last night, and I never saw Glen look so happy before," Mrs. Norwood announced, when she had greeted the guest. "Mr. Motora was at the Dennisons' all the afternoon, and those three talked and talked in the happiest fashion, out in the arbor, after Mr. Prior left. I would not be a bit surprised if Glen married Mr. Motora. Having her great friend—Birdie says Glen and Mrs. Fujita have been the most intimate friends for years and years—in Japan, would naturally make it easier for Glen to go there, too. From some bits of the talk that I heard, I judge that Mr. Motora is trying to make Glen think she could do a great work in the world by going to Japan and helping them settle their land question."

"There now, you see, Ernest, how you have helped Motora," exclaimed Grant Norwood.

Mrs. Norwood laughed. "You are funny sometimes, Grant. Now I will tell you both a bit of fact. If Glen Harding ever marries she will decide on the man for herself, regardless of anyone else's opinions or wishes."

"I think, myself, that Grant is a little too anxious to help on Miss Harding's choice," said Ernest Wynn, smiling. "It is really none of our business."

"I agree with you, Mr. Wynn," assented Mrs. Norwood, heartily. "Glen Harding is old enough and sensible enough to settle such a matter for herself."

CHAPTER 8.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

Monday morning came, cloudless and glorious, and the hour after dawn found Ernest Wynn walking briskly along Grand Avenue in front of Arroyo Vista. Eagerly his eyes searched the garden as he paused at the entrance, but all was quiet in front, and the house looked deserted, as tho its inmates still slept. However, he knew the gardener's ways too well to be deceived by the uninhabited stillness of the front garden. Quickening his steps he soon turned the corner and gained a point from which the rear and north sides of the grounds could be seen.

Yes, there she was, busy with hose and hoe among the bright beds and banks of bloom. He watched her for a moment—how graceful and strong she looked, bending now and again to her task with quick, yet unhurried movements—then he continued rapidly down the hill and up the garden path.

Glen Harding saw him coming and met him at the top with extended hand. "What is it?" she asked. "You look as tho you had come to tell me good news."

Ernest Wynn smiled. "I hope you will find it good news. I have brought the papers I promised." He took a long envelope from his pocket and handed her a number of closely written sheets. "I went over it all very thoroly yesterday, and I want you to tell me what you think of it. Could you read it right away? I'll attend to the irrigating."

"Very well," she assented promptly, noticing the only half-suppressed eagerness in his voice. "There are these three long borders to attend to, and I can sit right here." She took the manuscript to a near-by garden seat, across which the earliest sunlight now threw its warming beam, and became absorbed in reading.

Ernest Wynn watched her as she read, glancing aside from his work of guiding the life-giving water among the masses of verbenas, phlox and candytuft, and then on to the gay nasturtiums the humming birds love. He saw her expression change from a look of eager interest to one of intense thought, and again to a glow of triumph, as she read the last sheet. Then she looked up and smiled, and in the brightness of that smile Ernest Wynn felt that he had gained a prize of great worth—the full appreciation of one who thoroly understood.

"Oh, Mr. Wynn," she said, "when did you do it? Have you had this in mind all along? How could you keep it from me?"

"I have had to hold onto myself rather firmly, more than once, Miss Harding, when you came so near expressing the same thought. The idea of exactly what constitutes a balanced land tenure came to me nearly a year ago; but when I tried to discuss it with single taxers, expecting them to see it at once and to be interested in spreading the light, I met with such an utter lack of comprehension among them that it almost stunned me. Then I felt that I had better work the idea out more fully and test it in all the ways I could before trying again. The more I have studied over it, the more certain I have become that I have really discovered a great truth.''

''Assuredly you have, Mr. Wynn!'' and her face and voice expressed a great joy. ''This is precisely the balance I had so long felt there must be to put the tenure of land on a thoroly scientific basis. I was sure there must be such a law, and that it could be found. You have found it!''

''Then you find the explanation of the source of ground rent a reasonable one?''

''Most decidedly! And you have made it so clear in this''—her grasp tightened on the manuscript in her hand—''that anyone can understand it. I am so glad! so glad! I feel as tho all the mystery and complexity had suddenly fallen away from the whole problem, and that here we have at last the solid rock of a simple truth on which to take our stand.''

''I hoped—I thought you would see it so! We have all been floundering along in a sea of error, and yet the truth is so simple and plain that it is a marvel we did not see it long ago. But now we have found it,'' he concluded, energetically, ''we can make the work for true freedom go ahead with a vim!''

''It must! It shall! I want Will to see this paper. He is probably downstairs by this time, for he said last night that he meant to see the sun rise once this spring,'' she laughed. ''And Helen, too. I want to show it to her. I mean my friend, Mrs. Fujita. She came Saturday evening. I want you to meet her, for she is very much interested in sociology, and will, I hope, have the opportunity to do great good in Japan.''

''Mrs. Norwood mentioned that your friend had come, and that was one reason why I came so early this morning. I thought you could read my paper and then I would go away without disturbing the others or taking your time from your friend.''

''Indeed, you will not go, Mr. Wynn,'' was the quick response; and as the gardener looked over the flower beds she smiled. ''You have worked well, and these flowers are all right for today. Please put the hoe in the shed while I turn off the water.'' They met again at the head of the path, and Glen Harding led the way to the house.

''I've gone carefully over all the articles you left with me,'' she said, ''and Helen and I were quizzing Will yesterday. I think you have prepared him to understand and take hold of this at once. I believe, Mr. Wynn—'' she stopped in the path and faced her companion—''I feel sure that you have made one of the most important discoveries that ever has been or ever can be made.''

Ernest Wynn's eyes shone. ''I hope that I have found the truth,'' he said. ''I want you to help me by putting it to every test you can think of. If it is true, it is a genuine law—the law controlling harmonious human association. The very thing we have looked for so long.''

"It is too simple and clear to be false," was the quick reply. "I may have time to read this to Will and Helen before breakfast—my sister will want you to stay—and we can see how it strikes them. There is Will now, and I caught a glimpse of Helen on the side porch a moment ago. Will," she called, "come out on the porch, I have something interesting to show you."

"All right, in a moment." Then, as he appeared at the door, "What is it? Oh, you there, Wynn? Glad to see you," and he held out a cordial hand.

"Mr. Wynn has found something, Will, that we have all been hunting for this long time," said Glen Harding. "I want to read this paper," indicating the manuscript she held, "to you and Helen, and see what you think of it. Oh," she laughed, "I forgot to present you, Mr. Wynn, and it is hardly necessary to go thru the formality: Mr. Wynn, Mrs. Fujita," she added, and they shook hands heartily, as Mrs. Fujita remarked:

"Your name, at least, is entirely familiar to me, Mr. Wynn, thru your single tax work that has been reported in our papers."

The four settled themselves in the comfortable porch chairs and Glen Harding read the article thru without making any comment, while Ernest Wynn noted its effect. Mrs. Fujita's face wore a thoughtful, rather puzzled expression, then gradually cleared into a keen interest, as she listened intently to the reading. Will Dennison looked earnest, absorbed, surprised, and then a smile of pleasure lighted up his handsome face. As his sister-in-law ceased reading, he sprang up, and grasping their guest's hand, shook it ardently.

"Wynn," he exclaimed, "you have done it, and no mistake! I'll pay you the highest compliment I can. I think your discovery is Henry George plus!"

Glen Harding looked delighted. "I thought you would understand its importance, Will. It is like putting the keystone into the arch built by Patrick Edward Dove and Henry George."

"I want to be sure that I understand it clearly, too," observed Mrs. Fujita, as Will Dennison sat down again. "I never could get the single tax clear in my mind—that is, just how it could be equitably worked out in regard to highways."

"It could not," said Glen Harding, decisively.

"This new idea sounds as tho it might settle the whole problem," continued Mrs. Fujita, thoughtfully, "but I am not certain that I quite grasp it—tho it seems so simple."

"A good way to be sure you understand another person's thought is to restate it in your own words. Suppose you try that, Mrs. Fujita," suggested Ernest Wynn.

"Very well, just let me think a minute," agreed Mrs. Fujita. "No one," she began, "has or can have any natural right to keep or put other people off the earth. But in order to use the land for homes or business we must have exclusive possession of locations. This is impossible without common ways, and some persons must maintain those parts of the land in proper condition for common use at all times. This work adds advantages to the locations held in exclusive possession. Hence, if each person holding an advantaged location pays the exact amount of that advantage to the support of the common ways, the accounts will balance, and equal freedom in the use of the earth be secured.''

''Exactly,'' exclaimed Glen Harding. ''It is what Patrick Edward Dove was trying to get at when he talked of the 'equilibrium of equity.' ''

''It certainly looks plain enough,'' said Will Dennison, ''tho I can think of a lot of questions likely to come up when we get to telling it to others.''

''Of course,'' assented the discoverer, ''and it will easily stand the test of all of them if it is true.''

''I know it will,'' asserted Glen Harding, earnestly. ''It is simple and clear, and those are sure signs of the truth.''

''It certainly looks that way,'' added Mrs. Fujita ''I shall study it out thoroly.''

''Our propaganda can go ahead with a lot more vigor now that we can show exactly what must be done to secure equal freedom in the use of the earth, and why nothing else will do it. '' Glen Harding's voice had a determined ring.

''That's so,'' joined in her brother-in-law. ''We must get our plans in shape, and then——''

''What are you people talking over so seriously, this bright morning?'' broke in a gay voice, and Mrs. Dennison appeared in the doorway. ''Good morning, Mr. Wynn,'' as she saw the guest, ''now I shall not have to send for you. The children fixed up a 'surprise' yesterday, especially for you, and made me promise to ask you to come today and see it. They were so much taken with a story you told them the other day that they spent most of yesterday forenoon working it out in their sand bed. I really think it is quite wonderful!" A touch of loving pride came into the mother's eyes. "There they come now" she added, as the patter of little feet sounded round the corner of the house. "Children," she called, "Mr. Wynn is here." A shout, a rush, and the children swarmed about their friend, baby Carol accepting a helping hand and scrambling on his knees.

"We will not tell Mr. Wynn anything about it now, children," their mother smiled mysteriously. "After breakfast you shall show him. We must all go in now and have something to eat."

"Mr. Wynn has made a great discovery, Birdie," said her husband, as they took their places at the table, "and I'll get you interested in sociology yet, for now we can make it all plain to you."

"Oh, if you can do that, I will listen," was the laughing reply. "But really, Mr. Wynn," and she turned a serious face to the guest beside her, "it has always seemed to me that the single tax plan would level us all down rather than up; and I don't like the way single taxers talk of my children. However, I must confess that the whole subject is merely a haze to me, tho I have listened by the hour to Glen and Will discussing it."

"You are right about the leveling down, Mrs. Dennison, but I do not understand the reference to your children. What can single taxers say about them?" Ernest Wynn looked perplexed.

"What in the world do you mean, Birdie?" exclaimed her husband.

"I don't mean they are mentioned by name! But don't you remember, Will—and you were there, too, Mr. Wynn—the other day, just as I happened in at the office, Mr. Franklin was remarking that every child born in Pasadena added four hundred dollars to the value of lots in the business section of town? Just as tho my babies were somebody's property and had a price! People must have spoken in just such a way of a negro child born on a southern plantation before the war—I don't like it a bit!"

"Why, Birdie, I never thought of such a thing," ejaculated her husband, "and I'm quite sure no such notion crossed Franklin's mind."

"Nor did I think of it—at that time—yet I ought to have noticed it, too," said Ernest Wynn, "for Henry George pointed out long ago that our industrial system—under land ownership—is only a refined form of slavery. You have given me a new idea, Mrs. Dennison. The very fact that the worth of a child—in connection with the single tax—could be seriously stated in terms of dollars and cents ought to have shown us that there was something wrong with the system we advocated."

"One of the speakers at the Single Tax Conference last fall said he thought 'land value' a misnomer," observed Mrs. Fujita. "He said the value attached to the people—to population—'if the people of a community move away the so-called "land value" vanished with them; if they come back, it comes back. It is inherent in the people. . . . It is people value.' "

"There is a flaw in that reasoning," Ernest Wynn responded, promptly. "The presence of those people—exactly the same in number—gives no 'value' whatever to land used in common, so long as it is actually common and open to the use of all. The land used as streets in the heart of the most densely populated city has no 'value' unless a special privilege in the shape of some franchise or license—that is, the power of appropriation, of robbery—has been granted to some person or persons. Then the 'value' at once becomes 'all the traffic will bear! It is neither 'land value' nor 'people value,' but wholly the robber power of taxation, the tribute compelling power of property in privileges."

"Yet it is a fact, for all our real estate speculation is based on it," said Will Dennison, "that every increase of our population, whether by birth or immigration, shows up in increased land values."

"Of course it does, Will, under the inequitable conditions in which we are living," Glen Harding spoke quickly, "for it gives the land owners that many more subjects from whom to wring tribute money under the name of rent or purchase price of land. I have no doubt that every increase of travel thru Robin Hood's woods added materially to his income—it certainly has that effect with our modern highwaymen, on railroads and street car lines! They charge all they can hope to get, and of course the more people there are who must travel over their lines the greater the 'value'—the more the owners of the privilege can take in tribute."

"There is one phrase that single taxers have constantly used," began Mrs. Fujita, "that appears to sound well and yet has never seemed plain to me, the how of it, I mean; just how the community does it. I suppose we have all said it lots of times, but I never heard it satisfactorily explained: 'The community creates land values and therefore land values should be taken by the community, and the single tax will do it.' It seems to me that all taxes are paid in products, or money obtained thru the sale of products, that are the result of individual effort. Whether that effort is exerted alone or in company with other workers does not seem to me to make my share of it any different—I use my own hands and brain in any case, to accomplish given results."

"I long ago decided that phrase was obviously incorrect, and quit using it," said Ernest Wynn.

"Yet the community does create land values," Glen Harding spoke up decidedly. "The community—local or national—enacts and maintains the statutes which make legal property of the exclusive possession of land—whether it takes the form of ownership of certain plots of land or of a right of way over streets or other strips of land—and thus gives to a few persons the special privilege of squeezing all the tribute they can from all the people who have to live on or go over that land."

"I see, I see," admitted Ernest Wynn. "Really, Miss Harding, you have hit the nail square on the head! In that sense the community does 'create land values.' "

"But for the government to take such tribute by the single tax, or in any other way, would be simply robbing the robbers," objected Mrs. Fujita.

"It does look so," added Will Dennison, "and I'm quite sure Henry George did not work for any such object."

"Surely not, Will," exclaimed his sister-in-law. "Henry George worked for freedom. Don't you remember his reply to William Lloyd Garrison: 'You say you do not see in the single tax a panacea for poverty. Nor yet do I. The panacea for poverty is freedom.' "

"But the idea was that we could secure freedom thru the application of the single tax," persisted Will Dennison.

"What Henry George taught"—Ernest Wynn took up the explanation—"was that ground rent could be taken under the form of a tax, and this led to the adoption of the name 'single tax' and the confusion of 'rent' and 'land values.' But it is clear that Henry George fully realized that true freedom could only be secured thru the settling of the land question by establishing a just land tenure. He plainly stated that 'the tenure of land is the fundamental fact which must ultimately determine the conditions of industrial, social and political life.' Hence, in working for a balanced land tenure we will be going directly on in the cause for which Henry George lived and died."

"Then I'll be with you to the finish, Wynn, and help all I can," vowed Will Dennison fervently.

The discoverer's eyes sparkled with bright hopefulness. "That means much for the cause, Mr. Dennison. Now that we know the exact source of real rent we necessarily also know exactly how it must be spent in order to maintain equity, and we can take a firm stand for equal freedom thru this simple balancing of the land tenure."

"It begins to look to me, Mr. Wynn, as tho your discovery would take away the vagueness from a good many phrases we single taxers have been using without really knowing just what we meant by them," remarked Mrs. Fujita.

"I have found it so," assented Ernest Wynn. "It clears up most of the minor difficulties by eliminating them—by showing that they belong wholly to the inequitable conditions brought about by an unbalancing of the land tenure. Such things can have no place in the simple mechanism of the natural law governing—regulating—the association of persons under really free, that is, normal conditions."

"How long have you been working on this line, Wynn?" His host's tone expressed some curiosity.

"I don't know exactly, but for a number of years. You see, I felt the need of an exact balance between revenue and expenditure, and I was impressed by Herbert Spencer's statement that nature's rules have no exceptions. You remember it, Miss Harding. You once quoted it in a letter: 'There is no alternative. Either society has laws or it has not. If it has not, there can be no order, no certainty, no system in the phenomena. If it has, then they are like the other laws of the universe, ever active, and having no exceptions.' I felt there must be such a law and I set out to find it."

"And, like the man who prayed his way thru, you thought your way thru," said Will Dennison. "I congratulate you on the result."

"I'm so glad, Mr. Wynn, that you got out of the woods, so to speak, while I am still here to profit by it," said Mrs. Fujita. "I shall want to go over a lot of points with you that are crowding into my mind this minute, for I want to take as definite and plain a message to Japan as I possibly can."

"I shall be delighted to have you bring up all the questions you can think of," was the ready response.

"We must tell Mr. Motora of this discovery of yours as soon as we can, Mr. Wynn, for now we can answer all his objections and explain several problems that he has found perplexing," said Glen Harding.

Her sister looked up quickly: "How would it do, Glen, for you and Helen to take the touring car for your ride to Hollywood, and have Mr. Wynn and Mr. Motora go with you? Then you could talk sociology all you want to and see the country at the same time. I'll put in a big hamper and you could have lunch wherever you wished. Could you go, Mr. Wynn? Would you like it, Helen?"

"I'd like it very much," exclaimed Mrs. Fujita. "When would we go?"

"Thursday is set apart for Hollywood. Can you go then, Mr. Wynn?"

"Certainly, I can go, and most gladly, Mrs. Dennison. I'll scurry about a little faster in the meantime and try to look up the persons I had booked for that day."

"But you won't go till you've seen our surprise, Mr. Wynn?" Merwyn spoke anxiously as the group rose from the table.

"No, indeed! I will not begin to hurry until you have shown me all you want to," responded Ernest Wynn, smiling down into the eager little face.

"Run along then, children," said their mother, "and show Mr. Wynn what you have done."

"Thank you, Birdie! You are just splendid at planning good times for me," her sister stopped to say, when the others had left the room.

"I wish I could make good times for everyone!" Mrs. Dennison smiled, but there was a touch of wistfulness in her voice.

"You can do that, Birdie, by helping on this work for equal opportunities. Just think what it would be to have no wretched poor, no starving children in the world! It is terrible to think of all the needless suffering—it is even here in this glorious land."

Her sister shivered. "Don't think of it, Glen—not too much. If there really is a way thru which such misery can be stopped I will help you all I can. But go on now and ask Mr. Wynn to wait till I phone Mr. Motora, so you can arrange when to start.''

Glen Harding found Ernest Wynn and the children in the garden beside the playhouse, and gave her sister's message, adding: ''I wish you would see Mr. Motora today, or tomorrow, and let him read this manuscript''—she gave back the papers she had kept—''then he will be ready to discuss the subject Thursday. He always wants to think over a new subject or a new idea before saying much about it.''

''I'll try to get it to him this morning. I'd better go in and speak to him about it while Mrs. Dennison has him on the phone.''

CHAPTER 9.

ALONG THE ROAD.

A merry quartette left Arroyo Vista that Thursday morning. Glen Harding was driving and went slowly round the corner and down the hill, that her guests might enjoy the views of the Arroyo Seco and the gardens and orchards that rose from it, sloping upward in bloom and color. They crossed the bridge and climbed slowly up the winding road to San Rafael Heights. The morning was cloudless, with not a trace of fog, and the air was deliciously pure at that early hour.

"We had to coax my sister," Glen Harding was saying, "to let us come away without breakfast; but it is so delightful to sit on Eagle Rock in the early sunlight, and having breakfast there will save time. I was sure you would all enjoy it."

"I always like to be out of doors in such weather," remarked Ernest Wynn.

"Breakfast anywhere with this company would be charming," added Inazo Motora.

They passed the golf links of the Annandale Country Club and then Glen Harding turned out of the road, saying: "We can leave the car here. This basket of fruit and the small hamper are all we need for breakfast. We can take cushions for seats. Thanks," as the two men each picked up a burden and all started along the footpath toward Eagle Rock.

"What a queer mass of stone it is," observed Mrs. Fujita, when they had gained the highest point of the large lump of conglomerate that, on its eastern side, jutted out suddenly from the dense growth of chaparral that clothed the hillside; rising in a steep, upward slope, naked and bare, to end abruptly toward the west in a sheer precipice of cliff-like proportions.

"Why is it called Eagle Rock?" asked Ernest Wynn, as he walked about the uneven surface.

"I believe it is supposed to bear some resemblance to our national bird, when seen from a particular spot out there along the road," replied Glen Harding. "Or perhaps the name was suggested by the bald head sticking out from the dark shoulders of the foothills."

"The view is glorious, Glen! Do let us have our breakfast right up here," begged Mrs. Fujita, looking about her with the liveliest pleasure, taking in the green line of the beautiful little canyon immediately below them, and then gazing beyond along the lovely Eagle Rock valley, where homes and gardens and fields filled all the wide spaces and spread over or encroached upon the rolling masses of the foothills that rose, range upon range, on the north and south and west.

As they seated themselves on the cushions the two men had arranged, Mrs. Fujita glanced back toward the east, where, two miles away, the fair city they had left lay far spread in the still early morning sunshine, and suddenly exclaimed: "Do look there! It seems as tho there was nothing but a few bushes and a bit of rolling plain between us and Pasadena!"

"Is it not an odd illusion, Mrs. Fujita? As tho the Arroyo had no existence," said Inazo Motora.

"It does have that appearance," commented Ernest Wynn, turning to get a better view. "Any one unacquainted with the country and coming up from this side would not suspect the existence of such a big gash in the earth—from any evidence at this point."

Glen Harding looked pleased. "I see I was right to bring our breakfast," she said. "I felt sure you would all enjoy a stop here."

"You seem to be as fond of outings, Miss Harding, as any picnic lover of Japan," observed Inazo Motora, as the dainty breakfast was disappearing.

"Yes, I am sure I love out of doors as much as anyone can. It seems to me that we make a mistake in shutting ourselves up in houses as most of us do in this country."

"I agree with you, Glen," said Mrs. Fujita, "and the airy openness of the Japanese houses rather appeals to me—if it can be combined with due warmth when that is needed. My husband suggested that he had better have our house built, as so many are now among the well-to-do of Japan, in two parts; a purely native half and another American, and furnished accordingly."

"I expect to build in that style on my return home, or rather, add a well built American house to the large Japanese house already on the estate," said Inazo Motora.

"That will make it easy for you to entertain American or European friends," remarked Ernest Wynn. "You can give them a new experience, or just what they are accustomed to."

"I would prefer the new experience," said Glen Harding. "But, Helen, how did you decide to have your home?"

Her friend laughed. "Oh, I told my husband to wait until I was there and could plan things myself. I think I can work out a satisfactory combination; with all the disadvantages of both plans eliminated and all the comforts of both retained."

"Such an example would be a boon to Japan, Mrs. Fujita," exclaimed Inazo Motora, fervently.

"You can do it, Helen, if anyone can," assured Glen Harding. "I always knew a good architect was spoiled when you became a teacher."

"Not spoiled, I hope, but merely hindered in development," smiled Mrs. Fujita. "I have been studying along that line for some time and I mean to make it my lifework, for the benefit of the new Japan."

"That is good news to me, Mrs. Fujita," Inazo Motora spoke earnestly. "So much of the new building in western style is positively ugly; yet I am willing to admit that the old styles might be improved."

"Is there as great a contrast in the homes of your cities, Mr. Motora, as there is in the houses we have here?" and Ernest Wynn nodded toward the collection of palaces and cottages, the long streets of well-to-do houses and, yes, even there, among them all, some shanties in which poverty was visible—and made more pitiful than picturesque by the attempt at floral decoration—all now beginning to show up plainly in the brightening sunlight.

"Perhaps there is not quite as wide a gulf between the best and the worst," was the reply, "yet the contrast is there, and very sharply defined."

"There ought not to be such a difference, surely, Mr. Motora," Mrs. Fujita began, questioningly; especially in a land where so many of the great ones—great in power and in character—seem to really desire the highest welfare of all the people."

Glen Harding glanced at her watch and rose quickly to her feet. "We must start on soon," she said, "and I want you to look about here a little more."

"Where are we going?" asked Inazo Motora, taking the seat beside the driver as they started down the hill.

"Around by Glendale and Tropico to Edgemont and Hollywood. I want our friends to see the flowers there."

"They are a fine sight," he returned, "but I wish I could show you—all of you," (he half turned to include the others) "the flowers of Japan."

"Maybe you will, some day," suggested Mrs. Fujita. "I shall plan my houses with a view to having a flower garden about each one," she went on.

"Then you will have to first plan a way for each family to have more ground," was the quick retort of the Japanese. "You have no idea how crowded together most of our people are living today."

"But why need they be? I want to ask you seriously, Mr. Motora," and Mrs. Fujita's tone became very earnest, "if the land question and its importance to all the people cannot be properly brought to the attention of the Emperor and those statesmen who are helping him make the new Japan?"

"I wish that it could be," was the prompt and hearty reply, "but how to go about it, or exactly what to propose is not yet clear to me."

"It soon will be, Mr. Motora," broke in Glen Harding, "now that Mr. Wynn has discovered the law of human association. He has found that balance I have so often insisted on." There was a note of triumph in her tone. "And we can now go right ahead and work with all our might for a balanced land tenure."

"And just think, Mr. Motora, what an everlasting glory it would be to Japan to lead the whole world in the establishment of equal freedom," cried Mrs. Fujita, eagerly.

"An Emperor who bestows such an untiring attention to the affairs of his country and to the best interests of its people would surely give to this matter of a balanced land tenure that consideration which its importance merits,'' Glen Harding affirmed.

''I feel sure of that,'' and Inazo Motora turned his large dark eyes, now luminous with hope—was it personal or national?—upon the radiant woman beside him. ''We are sure of his attention if we can present the subject in a workable shape, as a definite proposition.''

''That is exactly what we can now do,'' was the quick reply. ''We can show clearly how and why the varying advantages of pieces of land held in exclusive possession are exactly balanced by the cost of maintaining those parts of the land—chiefly highways—necessarily used in common.''

''That is,'' Ernest Wynn continued the explanation, ''the cost of building and maintaining common ways shows in the form of excess products on the locations advantaged. It is really the exact amount of the excess produced on one over another, where equal amounts of labor—of effort—are put into production on different pieces of land. The labor expended on the common ways is stored in the form of advantages attaching to the land held in exclusive possession, and when the excess thus produced is paid by exclusive holders to those who work on the common ways the advantages are equalized.''

''You see,'' added Glen Harding, ''when we know exactly where real rent comes from we cannot help knowing exactly where it ought to go to, and——''

"Wait a moment, please," interrupted Inazo Motora, smiling. "You are going too fast for me. I must think a moment to get the idea clear in my mind. Do you mean that ground rent—the equitable rent of locations—and the cost of building and maintaining common ways,—of course I understand that includes all lands used in common,—are exactly the same in amount, because the production of the one causes the existence of the other?"

"Precisely that," was the quick reply. "You can see now why rent, being the stored labor of those who maintain the common ways, cannot be used for any other purpose than paying for that labor, without robbing either those whose labor maintains the common ways or those whose products are taken to pay for them. There is no other purpose for which rent can be used without robbing someone. On the other hand, there are no other purposes, necessary to the maintenance of equal freedom, for which a common fund is needed. Rent is a product. Products belong to their producers. The producers of rent are the producers of the highways. So you can see at once, Mr. Motora, that in the recognition and application of this fact lies the power to establish property in products and eliminate forever property in privileges."

"I think I understand you, Miss Harding," said the Japanese, slowly. "The plan seems plain and just; yet special privileges are entrenched in power everywhere, even in this great country that is called free. In fact, it has been a continual surprise to me to observe how little of real liberty you have here, where I expected to find everyone independent, at least in thought. I find most of the people with whom I come in contact—and many of them are wealthy—are controlled or hindered in one way or another by the influence of their environment—due to that property in privileges of which you speak.''

''It is true,'' answered Glen Harding, thoughtfully, ''and the reason why the worst tyranny is possible under the forms of liberty is not hard to find. The forms deceive by their suggestion that all are free; while under a monarchical form there is no such false suggestion. The utmost lawlessness is possible under so-called 'majority rule,' the real fact being that the 'majority' are manipulated by a few untitled tyrants. But, after all, Mr. Motora, it is only a matter of degree, and the form of government makes little difference so long as the people are everywhere held in bondage thru inequitable land laws—an unbalanced land tenure.''

''You see, Mr. Motora,'' and Ernest Wynn leaned eagerly forward, ''no human statutes can ever be beneficial—all of them sooner or later become actively evil to all concerned—except such as merely recognize and formulate natural law. All nature's laws relating to human association have existed since human life began on our planet, but, like all other physical laws, they must be discovered and our actions adjusted to harmonize with them. The only beneficial thing legislation can ever do is to recognize and apply natural law."

"And it is not needed for that!" interjected Glen Harding.

"That is, instead of making innumerable laws for the guidance of the people, we should give our minds wholly to the study of nature's intentions, so-called. Is that it?" asked Mrs. Fujita.

"You mean that in place of lawmakers you would have scientists? Would not that tend to cause science itself to fall into a rut and lose its prestige?" added Inazo Motora.

"No, indeed, Mr. Motora," Glen Harding spoke quickly. "True science can never fall into ruts because true science and the orderly trend of nature are one, and the things to be learned are almost innumerable in quantity and variability. On the other hand, the foundation of all science, like the fact that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, is invariable in its action, immutable. Hence, 'nature never lies' is the one solid basis on which we must all stand if we would really know, if we would be true scientists."

"Oh, Glen, see that lovely garden over there," broke in Mrs. Fujita. "Can we go around that way?"

"Yes, indeed! That is one of the prettiest ranch homes around here, and I want you to see it, as showing something of what all our homes ought to be."

"The Japanese seem to me to be easily influenced by those whom they respect, and they evidently want the best of everything in the way of knowledge,'' said Mrs. Fujita, taking up the subject later on, as they were eating their lunch in the shade of a group of eucalyptus trees, on a hill slope commanding a lovely view of mountain and valley. ''They would be likely to study the land question with more open minds than some others might show.''

''If your Emperor, Mr. Motora, could once realize that the establishment of a balanced land tenure would result in immediate and permanent benefit to every Japanese—without any exceptions—as well as secure an undying name for Japan as the leader among the nations of the earth in the greatest movement the world has ever known, he would surely consider the matter seriously,'' urged Glen Harding.

''Yes,'' Inazo Motora assented, warmly. ''We all, rich and poor, old and young, love our Emperor. The purity of his life and the supreme magnanimity he has ever shown to those who have been placed in opposition to his cabinet have won our profound respect. Watching his life we cannot but think that he studies personally the welfare, happiness and real comfort of his people.''

''Then he will certainly wish to understand the law of human association—the law that benefits every person, and is incapable of injuring any one—and apply it in Japan,'' persisted Glen Harding. ''Just think of the miserable, worthless sort of thing life is—compared with what it might so easily be—when it has to be spent almost wholly in a bitter struggle to merely exist. Then think of the possibilities of life with a balanced land tenure to insure equal freedom, where none could be troubled about the means of existence, and all of each person's physical and mental powers will be developed to their highest capacities. Every one will then be worth looking up to—be worthy the admiration and respect of friends and neighbors. Think what it means that your Emperor has it within his power to bring about such conditions in Japan."

"If the spirit of mere money getting has not gained too strong a hold in your country, Mr. Motora, your Emperor can do it," interjected Ernest Wynn. "I have found a number of my own countrymen who are now given over to money making who were active workers for reform ten years ago."

"I am sorry to say the same tendency is observable in Japan. Commercialism is getting control there, too. I suppose it is due to human avariciousness."

"Don't put it that way, Mr. Motora," was the quick retort. "Human nature is not avaricious. Live and let live is the normal spirit. Even the most cruel sportsman will often interfere to help the under dog when it seems helpless. The love of fair play is natural. Avariciousness is an excrescence, resulting from an unbalanced land tenure."

"Human avarice a result of an unbalanced land tenure,'' repeated Inazo Motora, introspectively. ''No! That is not exactly stated, altho the latter is an influential factor in aggravating the former's manifestations. However, I believe I know where the root is. It is deeply seated in the make-up of the average present-day humanity, notwithstanding the fact that there are, also quite a number of wholesome and well balanced traits, such as the love of freedom and fairness, appreciable despite that selfwardly biased abnormal move of desire—''

''I notice that you say 'present-day' and 'abnormal,' '' interrupted Ernest Wynn, and Inazo Motora continued:

''The two are, in nature, like that well known old Greek problem of which first, the hen or egg. And as a lover of life-giving truth, I should say, the same lack of co-ordination in the make-up of, and the consequent departure from, the 'straight middle way' by the present-day humanity caused them both,''—he paused; then, parenthetically, ''inwardly tending, it is felt in the one, and outwardly carried out, it is manifested in the other—like the face and hands, they are connected by the same nervous system.''

''It seems to me that your analogy is not perfect,'' replied Ernest Wynn. ''The hen and the egg, and the face and hands, are both normal, while you have yourself just said that avarice is an abnormal move of desire. The abnormal and the normal ought not to co-ordinate. Inequity not only aggravates abnormal actions, but it causes them.''

"How then, to eliminate the cause?" said Inazo Motora, quickly. "Mederi pro morbum—meden agan! that is, 'to heal according to disease—everybody, not too much.' That wanted spirit of co-ordination—proper and properly directed love—must needs be poured, thru and thru, into this everyday community."

"Love cannot mix oil and water," retorted Ernest Wynn. "Elimination of the cause, is what is wanted."

"As for the modi operandi," said Inazo Motora, continuing his soliloquy, "one shall be the character education, and eradication, and the other a radical change of environment, namely, a sweeping social reorganization, for good, of which this discovery of a balanced land tenure of Mr. Wynn could be a practical starting point."

"A practical starting point—that's it exactly," cheerfully assented Ernest Wynn. "For there is no point so good to start from as the bed rock foundation. Building upon it will undoubtedly involve character education; and a joyful one it will be, because the eradication will be accomplished by establishing a balanced land tenure."

"I believe Mr. Wynn is right," said Mrs. Fujita, earnestly, "and there must be some persons among those in power in Japan who regret such a fall as the triumph of commercialism would mean. We can appeal to them to help start the turn of the tide toward the real welfare of the people—the whole people, remember—from this point of a balanced land tenure."

"Mr. Motora, Japan must be saved from the fatal error of a fall into the commercial whirlpool that has engulfed the British Empire and the United States," began Glen Harding, with grave earnestness. "The white race is today everywhere dominated by the spirit of commercialism—the insane desire to get something for nothing. In its mad struggle for dollars; for pounds, shillings and pence, all genuine morality gives way. It is this craze for unearned wealth that has made the white race a scourge to all other peoples, a peril and a curse wherever the white man's foot has trod. It is this that has ruined and destroyed millions of people in India and China thru the English opium traffic. It is this that has, in a single century, devastated the western continent and exterminated millions of its inhabitants, people and animals alike. And for what? To pile up wealth in the hands of a few persons—to their own everlasting degradation."

"That is true," said Ernest Wynn, quickly. "There is no escape from the natural law of self-support and self-government except the way that leads to self-destriction."

"Yet the white race seemed so powerful, so prosperous," said the Japanese, thoughtfully. "They forced themselves upon other races as teachers, and insisted upon tradal relations."

"White people are too prone to talk and act as tho they could teach all other races everything worth knowing," answered Glen Harding. The actual fact is that every other race could teach the white people quite as much of desirable knowledge as it can learn from them.''

That is,'' added Mrs. Fujita, ''if we put all races on the basis of friendliness which equal freedom will bring about, each can help all the others to an astonishingly rapid advance in knowledge and the highest culture.''

''Cannot this subject be brought at once to the attention of some of your leading statesmen?'' questioned Ernest Wynn, turning to the Japanese. ''Would they investigate it seriously and help us get it before the people of Japan?''

''I am sure there are some who will give serious attention to such an effort,'' responded Inazo Motora, convincingly.

''There is one thing that makes me very hopeful for your country in this crisis, Mr. Motora,'' Ernest Wynn continued. ''Japan has shown herself capable not only of adopting and adapting all useful modern inventions and discoveries, but of the far higher ability to use the discriminative power of reason, and go back a thousand years to regain such customs and methods of an earlier time as make for her greatest expression of enlightenment today.''

''Oh, Mr. Motora,'' urged Glen Harding, with earnest emphasis, ''it is in the power of the Japanese to lead the nations of the world in the establishment of a balanced land tenure. Let your Emperor do this and the name of Mutsuhito of Japan will go down thru all the ages of the future as that of one of the greatest benefactors humanity has ever known or ever can know."

"But, Glen, Japan is only a small country, and I don't see how it could face the whole world in such a tremendous change," suggested Mrs. Fujita, doubtfully.

"You forget, Helen," was the quick retort, "that China is at her very door, and the Chinese are already waking up. For her own self-preservation China will stand shoulder to shoulder with Japan in any rational movement."

"But it will take a long time for the Chinese to change their ways," objected Mrs. Fujita. "It has taken Japan fifty years to change, and China is so much larger and her people are so much less homogenous; surely it will take a much longer time to bring about any improvements there."

"I think not," returned Glen Harding. "With the aid of Japan, the enlightened statesmen of China have it in their power to so guide the millions in their country as to bring about changes in five or ten years that will astonish the world. It is not necessary that the people should understand the whole program to start with. It is only needful that a few public spirited leaders should comprehend exactly what they are aiming at and how to get there. We learn by doing, and the Chinese are adepts at imitation. Let their leaders start them doing the acts of a free people and the very actions will cultivate their intelligence and make them fit for the highest freedom. We do not teach a child to walk by tying it in a high chair and giving it a book on the art of walking. We stand it on its feet and hold out our arms for it to come to us. Let Japan adopt a balanced land tenure and the statesmen of China could bring the four hundred millions of Chinese into line for equal freedom with a speed and smoothness that would make that section of China's history one of the most glorious marvels of all the ages."

"Indeed it would," assented her friend. "But, Glen, people will be apt to say that such a suggestion is a mere Utopian dream, impossible of realization."

"That will be their mistake," was the prompt and decisive retort. "The Japanese have proved conclusively that such a change is a thoroly practical possibility, easily within the power of the generation now living. As for the Chinese, a nation whose aristocracy is one of intellect and open to all its people, has—no matter what the outer appearance may be—the seeds of a great awakening so near the surface that it needs but the sunlight of a simple truth, the knowledge of the one way out, to bring them forth in such a blossoming as shall amaze the world. Japan and China can do it if they but learn the way before they, too, become intoxicated with the fatal draught of commercialism gone mad that has crazed the western world today. All the truly enlightened minds of the white race will work with them—and in the end all the nations of the world will bless the enlightened rulers and statesmen of Japan and China forever."

"Your government listens for the voice of public opinion, Mr. Motora,'' put in Ernest Wynn. ''Would it not be a good plan to spread the news of a balanced land tenure thruout Japan, and so, quickly create a strong public opinion in its favor?''

''I believe your Emperor could start that public opinion quicker and stronger than anyone else,'' urged Glen Harding, turning glowing eyes upon the man beside her. ''If he will do that all the nations of the world will hold him in blessing and honor to the end of earthly time! Surely it is fitting that the representative of the oldest dynasty of earth's monarchs should prove himself great enough to do this thing.''

''It is a wonderful thing you people are suggesting for my country,'' said the Japanese. ''At least the attention of the Emperor should be speedily called to this great truth of a balanced land tenure as the foundation for completely harmonious human association.''

''We will all try our best to gain that attention for it,'' added Mrs. Fujita, earnestly. ''In itself, it seems such a plain and easy thing to do—to make the change—if only people once bring their minds to bear on it.''

''When I think how simple the law is,'' observed Ernest Wynn, ''I wonder that it has so long been hidden. What originally caused such a maladjustment of human association is another question I'd like to have answered.''

''The selfwardly biased abnormal activities of desire caused—was the origin of—an unbalanced land tenure,'' replied the Japanese, promptly.

"What caused the abnormal activities?"

"The misunderstanding of nature's lessons, Mr. Wynn."

"Then your first answer fell short of the mark," commented Ernest Wynn, "and the underlying cause was lack of correct knowledge, and you know that knowledge is, as Dove said, the antidote of error."

"We need also the help or guidance of the golden rule," said Inazo Motora, smiling, yet persistent.

"Many a man has offered me a chew of tobacco in that spirit," replied Ernest Wynn, "yet tobacco is a poison."

"But that was not a correct interpretation of the rule. The rule must be interpreted in harmony with its setting."

"Then it is not sufficiently axomatic for a guide, Mr. Motora," was the quick response. "The axiom that two straight lines cannot enclose a space needs no setting to support it; it is self-explanatory and self-sufficient."

"And the law of human association seems to me to be just such an adequate guide," Glen Harding put in.

"I see," admitted Inazo Motora. "But, Miss Harding, what did you mean, a little while ago, when you spoke of a condition where every one might be 'looked up to'? Only a few can hold exalted places at any one time."

Glen Harding smiled: "That all depends on what we are looking up to! When—as it is today under the reign of property in privileges—money is the measure of power and esteem, making others look up to its possessor, then only a few can possibly be in the coveted positions, for it takes the daily grind and hustle of all the rest of the people to produce the enormous wealth necessary to make a multi-millionaire. True benefit can come only where conditions are equitable, where all exchange is of effort for effort, and genuine service to humanity will be the measure of esteem. Then all people can be looked up to without injury to each other, for talents and needs are as diverse as the variability of tastes. Each person can excel in something and yet be broadly cultured, hence, capable of the just appreciation of the excellencies of others. The highest reward—highest honor—possible to any human beings is the full appreciation of their equals.

"That is a goal well worth striving for," said Inazo Motora, "and I long with you to have it. But there are points I want to know. How, for one, after the land tenure is balanced, will people know how much of one thing contains as much labor as some other thing?"

"The medium of exchange must represent effort, not products," Ernest Wynn answered; "and the unit of the medium must represent the unit of effort."

"But, Mr. Wynn, will not that be hard to fix?"

"Not more so than any other units," was the prompt reply. "We measure time and space, weight and quantity, and mechanical power. It is only necessary to specify a certain kind of labor, at a certain time, under certain conditions—just as the unit of work in mechanics is fixed."

Inazo Motora looked thoughtfully off over the green hills and brown fields for a little time before he spoke again: "I am inclined to look at everything from the mechanical—the mathematical—point of view. I think I understand what you mean. Yes, I see it now. You have made that point clear to me."

"I am so glad, Mr. Motora,"—Glen Harding's animated voice and face expressed her pleasure—"for now you can make a balanced land tenure clear to your Emperor, and he has the power to do such great good to the world," she ended, fervently.

"It strikes me," put in Mrs. Fujita, "that in the devotion of the Japanese people to their Emperor, and their willingness to carry out his expressed wishes, we have the key to the unity that seems to be the watchword in Japan."

"It explains, too," added Glen Harding, "why Japan has already shown such mighty results from small beginnings. But vastly greater work can yet be done in your country"—she turned her earnest, hopeful face toward the Japanese—"if only we can get those in power to see the way."

"We can try, Miss Harding," was the prompt reply, and perhaps Inazo Motora's emphasis on the "we" was unconscious.

"We will all help you in any way that we can, Mr. Motora," assured Mrs. Fujita.

"Thank you. I shall count on you as a valued aid on my return home," said the Japanese. "In the meantime I hope to learn more about plans of work along this line. I find most people rather indifferent when I attempt to discuss the subject in a serious way—sociology, I mean. Perhaps I can make a deeper impression with a balanced land tenure."

"I think so," said Ernest Wynn, quickly, "tho I know well the sort of indifference you have met. I feel certain that fundamental truths, persistently, enthusiastically, and systematically disseminated, in clear, precise and logical form, will overcome that indifference and rouse the sense of fairness, love of freedom, and the rational faculties of the sane adults of this nation—indeed, of all English speaking North America."

"You will have to include Japan in that view, for it is now English speaking; but I should prefer to say 'of all the enlightened community of human beings'," corrected Inazo Motora. "Have you anything more written out about this discovery of yours, Mr. Wynn? Anything in a shape that I could study and make sure that I thoroly grasp the meaning of a balanced land tenure?"

"Yes," and Ernest Wynn put a hand into his breast pocket and brought it out full. "Here are several articles, which I think cover the essential points. I will be glad to have you subject them to the test of the closest scrutiny and the severest criticism. They must be strong all thru or they are no good."

"We must go on soon if we are to have plenty of time at the other places I wish to show you," Glen Harding remarked, as she picked up a paper plate filled with crumbs and scraps from the lunch and fastened it in a crotch among the branches of a tree. "The birds will find it and have a little feast," she explained.

"It is a beautiful thought, and I could wish to see your bird guests," said the Japanese. "Out of doors is your real home, Miss Harding."

"Yes," she answered, simply. "I love the air and sky and mountains—the whole world of real nature."

"I'm quite sure that one of the first results of equal freedom in the use of the earth," observed Ernest Wynn, now on a front seat of the auto, "will be a rapid emptying of the cities into the country. Even now we see the desire for real homes breaking out everywhere in the midst of the rush and roar and crowding of modern city life."

"The apartment house would be the first to go," added Glen Harding. "It is so utterly artificial that I am sure no normal person would—if really free to choose—elect to live in such a house, where people are packed, tier on tier, like sardines in a box!"

"I believe you are right, Glen," exclaimed Mrs. Fujita. "Even a gilded box is but a box, after all; and there are lots of things people now imagine they like to do that they could not even dream of if perfectly free and able to follow their true inclinations—or instincts."

CHAPTER 10.

TREMONT AND WYNN.

The day after the Hollywood trip, Ernest Wynn put in a long forenoon hunting up and trying—with more or less success—to argue into some semblance of live interest in the land question, a number of men whose names were on his now nearly finished list. He felt that he deserved a reward and decided to spend the rest of the afternoon in a call at Arroyo Vista. Perhaps he could answer some of Mrs. Fujita's questions.

He turned into Colorado Street just as a west bound Orange Grove car came in sight. He boarded it and, when the car stopped at Raymond Avenue, was a little surprised and considerably interested to see Arthur Tremont enter, for he surmised at once that they were both bound for the same place. The car chanced to be rather full, and in looking about for a seat Arthur Tremont saw Ernest Wynn sitting alone, and immediately went toward him, with his usual friendly smile and frank cordiality of bearing. Ernest Wynn greeted him heartily and mentioned his recent visit to Grant Norwood, and the loan of the book.

Arthur Tremont looked pleased. "Norwood was one of my first pupils out here, and a most ardent one. As for the book, I consider it the best work I have done, so far. Have you looked into it?"

"Yes, but not at all thoroly as yet. I've been too much on the go. Today I've been on the keen jump in the interests of our meeting. Dennison phoned me this morning that Miss Harding wants to have our meeting of single taxers—and a few others—while her friend, Mrs. Fujita, is here, so I want to get thru the list of people I'm looking up for it. But I will read your book carefully the first chance I have. I want to understand that subject in its bearing on the land question."

"I did not say anything about that in my book. I see things from a different viewpoint from yours, and some of the matter in my book may 'jar' upon you, but then you will understand that it is merely a matter of viewpoint and perspective."

Ernest Wynn laughed. "You rouse my curiosity. What can you have written that you think would 'jar' on one whose only object is to learn the truth and apply it?"

"I only thought," said Arthur Tremont, as they left the car and turned toward Grand Avenue, "that my lack of careful treatment of matters economic would probably 'jar' one like yourself to whom these things mean so much, by reason of the time, careful study and hard work you have put into them."

"Really, Mr. Tremont, are you not putting the cart before the horse? I put time and hard work into the study of the land question because it is obviously the subject that should be of most vital concern to every one of us—until it is settled. Our only hope of ever securing true freedom lies in securing, to all persons, equal freedom in the use of the earth, and my life is pledged to that work until freedom is won."

Arthur Tremont half turned and regarded his companion earnestly before he said: "Mr. Wynn, you are sincere. I can see that; but to be sincere in our present environment means to pay a price."

"I know that well enough," was the prompt reply, "and to be insincere also means to pay a price. But surely you will admit that the land question is of paramount importance? Of course you will be on hand at the meeting Dennison is getting up?"

"I hardly think I can take time for that. You see I am so very busy just now, and have a deal of writing to do."

"Better make time for it," persisted Ernest Wynn. "You must have discussed the subject with Miss Harding, and I would like to hear what view you take of it."

Arthur Tremont smiled. "You are mistaken, Mr. Wynn, in thinking I have talked up the land question with Miss Harding. I have not entered into that line of thought at all with her."

"But why not? The question is one of vital interest, and Miss Harding is by far the best posted woman and the clearest thinker on that line I have ever known."

"That is just it," returned Arthur Tremont, smiling, but firm. "I shall not go into that subject, Mr. Wynn, for discussing economic or sociological matters with either yourself or Miss Harding is like fooling with a loaded gun, or a buzz-saw, and in the words of the street, 'excuse me'."

Ernest Wynn turned and stared at his companion in astonishment, and then came a sudden lightening at his heart as the thought flashed thru his mind of the utter impossibility of Glen Harding marrying a man who actually refused to discuss sociology. How could such a man even dream of winning her? Tho Ernest Wynn felt that this attitude put Arthur Tremont out of the count as a rival, he knew such a thought could give him no encouragement in regard to Inazo Motora. He could not deny that the Japanese was as willing and eager a student of sociology as he was himself—that much the Hollywood trip had made plain.

Arthur Tremont noticed his companion's surprise, and hastened to add: "I freely admit that the land question may be important, but there are other subjects in which Miss Harding is interested and about which I find it a great pleasure to talk with her. She is a remarkable woman, Mr. Wynn."

"I entirely agree with you on that," came the prompt acquiescence, and the two men turned in at the entrance of Arroyo Vista.

They were greeted by a chorus of merry shouts: "See our ellies! See our ellies!" and the three Dennison children, grouped on the lawn, pointed with eager little hands at a pyramid formed of three rather ungainly gray cotton flannel elephants, which, like their owners, were of graded sizes. Their gay red blankets, edged with gold embroidery, made a pretty bit of color on their unwieldy gray bodies. while their bright black shoe-button eyes stared with unwinking serenity at the approaching visitors.

The two men stopped a moment, looking at the children, when baby Carol suddenly upset the pyramid by seizing the topmost elephant by its tail and pulling it off, to immediately stumble and fall over the unwieldy creature. In a moment all three children were dragging and tumbling and throwing the elephants about on the soft Bermuda grass.

''How happy they are, and they have such a fine playground,'' said Arthur Tremont, looking about the pleasant garden.

''Yes,'' returned Ernest Wynn, ''and all children ought, at this moment, to be as happy and well off as these are. Here, Fay,'' he called, as he dexterously caught a flying elephant, ''come and get your ellie and tell us where to find your Auntie Glen.''

''Auntie Glen is over there behind the rose bushes. Fay didn't see her come out,'' said Merwyn, coming up, and it is my ellie you have.''

''Thank you,'' Ernest Wynn resigned the elephant and turned across the lawn. Arthur Tremont was already disappearing around the bushes.

''You see I'm very busy this afternoon,'' Glen Harding was saying as the second visitor appeared. ''Good afternoon, Mr. Wynn, I am glad to see you. My friend will soon be out—oh, there she is now,'' and Arthur Tremont, following her glance toward the house, looked with considerable interest and some curiosity at his countrywoman who had married a Japanese, and whose example might have weight with her old school friend. She was leading a remarkably pretty child, about baby Carol's age, whose dark eyes and black hair must have come from its father, as the mother had light brown hair and blue eyes. She left the child with the little group on the lawn and approached the rose corner, to be greeted with:—

"Helen, here is another of our friends; Mr. Tremont, Mrs. Fujita."

"A decidedly pretty little woman," thought Arthur Tremont, while, "She is bright and sensible, and sure to be a power in the Japan propaganda," crossed Ernest Wynn's mind as Helen Osmond Fujita gave the two guests a pleasant greeting.

"Now, you people of leisure," observed Glen Harding, "please sit there"—she indicated substantial seats in the rose-walled, bloom covered corner—"and entertain each other a little while till I finish my work. It is tomorrow's work," she added, in explanation to the guests, "but Mrs. Fujita and I are going off early in the morning for the day, and the garden must be all in order for my sister's party on Monday, so I want to finish this bit of work today. I know you will excuse me."

"Certainly," said Arthur Tremont, concealing the disappointment he felt. It had occurred to him that he could talk to Glen Harding while Mrs. Fujita and Ernest Wynn discussed sociology for the benefit of the Japanese. However, he must wait, so he seated himself near Mrs. Fujita and she immediately started to talk with him about his new book, into which, she said, she had just been dipping.

Ernest Wynn was still standing, looking about, and now said: "What have you to do, Miss Harding? Oh, I see. You are clearing up and cultivating along the hedge and around these bushes. Let me take the hoe and you go on with the rake, then you will be thru in half the time and we can all sit down comfortably."

Glen Harding gave him a quick side glance, then she smiled. "Very well, here's the hoe; but take off your coat first. It is warm work for such an afternoon."

The brisk wielding of hoe and rake did not prevent their holders catching snatches of the talk going on near them.

"They appear to be discussing Tremont's new book," remarked Ernest Wynn, when he chanced to be near the gardener at the far end of the rose patch. "Norwood loaned me a copy and I want to read it as soon as I can make time. Do you think it good?"

"Well, in some ways it is," she replied, thoughtfully. "But it is self-contradictory. For instance, the direct teaching is that we should be afraid of nothing but fear; yet the whole book appears to be based on fear—the fear that someone will somehow take advantage of us. Each must always be on guard against the will of others, yet each must always try to influence, or take advantage of, those others. The book is a product of present conditions and fits them. It seems to me that the wiser teaching is the positive plan of being always on the lookout for something better, for some new and more forcible way of presenting things—but really, that throws one back on the fact that rules belonging to a state of equity cannot be made to work out properly in an inequitable environment.''

''That is true,'' assented Ernest Wynn, ''yet the positive attitude you describe is the only one that can be taken by the sincere seeker for truth, and such an one cannot help being fearless.''

''I think I understand you,'' she spoke, over her shoulder, as their work separated them again. ''Just listen, Mr. Wynn,'' she said, smilingly, a few moments later, as they neared the others. ''Mrs. Fujita is going for Mr. Tremont about a point that stirred her up a good deal.''

''I don't at all like the tone you take, Mr. Tremont, when speaking of women who are not compelled to work for a living,'' Mrs. Fujita was saying gravely. ''You think most of us are parasites and say we are to blame for the prevailing worship of the Almighty Dollar. Surely you know that laws made by men are responsible for putting women into the abnormal social and economic position the majority of them still occupy today, in spite of their efforts toward more just relations in the industrial world? Do you think it fair for men to make laws that compel married women to depend, financially, wholly upon their husbands, and then call those women parasites?''

''Why, no, certainly not,'' was the smiling reply. ''But you are probably aware that many of those

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very wealthy women, who refuse to even make their own beds or sweep a room, look down on their husbands as 'mere money-making machines.' It is such women whom I regard as parasites."

"Then you think that all women ought to earn their own living the same as men?"

"No, indeed!" was the prompt reply, "I do not think that all women should earn their living the same as men."

"Do you realize what you are saying, Mr. Tremont?" Glen Harding paused in her work to ask the question, and Ernest Wynn caught the indignant flash in her eyes. But the look was lost on Arthur Tremont, from whom a blooming spray of Gold of Ophir roses hid the gardener's face as she added: "Any sane adult who is financially dependent on another is to that extent, at least, a slave or a pauper. You would keep women in that position!"

Arthur Tremont felt that he had somehow made a bad break, but his smiling calm was undisturbed as he pushed the branch aside to see the speaker. How fine and earnest she looked in her indignation. "Of course I do not want women to be slaves, Miss Harding. I do think that all, men and women, should take a part in the world's work, and not be parasites any more than they can help. I suppose, tho, that all of us are more or less parasites, for that matter."

"If we are"—Mrs. Fujita took up the discussion again—"it is certainly evidence that there is something radically wrong which concerns all of us, and which must be righted before any of us can get into a wholly normal condition.''

''I think,'' returned Arthur Tremont, ''that most of us are too intent on money getting. I know I must often seem to be, and yet I do not care a snap for dollars except as a means of expression—or rather, as a means of overcoming obstacles to free expression and life. I enjoy books, music, and other things and I require money to secure them.''

Ernest Wynn glanced at Glen Harding to see if she had heard. She was raking industriously, with her head bent over her work, but her face showed considerable amusement, which broke into a smile as she caught his look.

Their faces were turned from Arthur Tremont, but Mrs. Fujita had seen the exchange of glances and went on wickedly, tho her tone was quite serious: ''I see, Mr. Tremont, but, really, can you tell me of any sane person who cares a straw for money in itself?''

''Why, lots of—well, I had not thought of the matter in that light. What are we all scrambling and pushing and crushing each other for in the effort to get money, if none of us care anything for it?''

''You will have to discuss the land question, Tremont, if you want a serious answer to that,'' put in Ernest Wynn, smilingly.

''That seems hardly necessary,'' was the quick retort. ''Don't you want money as much as I do, Mr. Wynn?''

''Very likely,'' was the prompt answer, ''and probably more than you do—at least, more of it! You say you want money to secure books and music and other pleasant things of life. I want money—lots of it—to print papers and books which will proclaim the way to secure equal freedom in the use of the earth—equal opportunities here and now. When we can do that it will be only a few years more till ALL of us can have all the books and music, and as much free out door life, as we want—and all the things which make for rational living in a fair world.''

''Any one who chooses to do the necessary work can get all those things without waiting for everybody to join in, Mr. Wynn. Just consider the fact that now, for the first time in history, mental magic is being used to advance commercial interests. Here in the United States we teach it in a way that can be utilized in the making of dollars,'' Arthur Tremont finished, in a slightly triumphant tone.

Glen Harding paused a moment in her work to throw in a word: ''Did it never occur to you, Mr. Tremont, that, in practice, that means trying to use the power of suggestion to wring tribute from our fellow beings—to get something for nothing?''

''Why, Miss Harding, you are surely not in earnest!'' and there was a quiet assurance in Arthur Tremont's pleasant voice as he went on: ''You understand that we can secure anything we wish if the desire for it is strong enough to become a moving force—thus attracting the desired object to us. In the commercial world this works out in terms of dollars and cents, and we are able, thru the use of this power, to make money faster or in larger amounts than we otherwise could.''

Glen Harding's reply came from behind a rose bush and there was a noticeable increase of vigor in the movement of her rake before she spoke: ''Certainly, but that does not alter the fact that the money so obtained is largely tribute.''

''I think we all vaguely feel, even if we do not positively say,'' added Mrs. Fujita, ''that mere money-making is a low aim to set before a young person as an object in life. But why is it?''

''It seems so, at first glance, I admit,'' said Arthur Tremont, ''but we ought to encourage all young persons to try to achieve success. Look around and you will see that most of the men who have 'arrived' today can control other men—and the few exceptions, such as prominent scientists or literary men, artists and inventors, only prove the rule. In their case some practical man gets the lion's share of the financial returns. This being true, I feel justified in teaching that real success is the securing of financial rewards, the more dollars a person can get the more successful he is.''

''If that is the fact today, Mr. Tremont,'' said Mrs. Fujita, ''don't you see that it must necessarily be one of the results of the injustice of property in privileges?''

''The fundamental error in your statement, Mr. Tremont,'' Ernest Wynn looked around a nearby bush to say, ''lies in the assumption that present human association and actions are normal—natural

—and then you assume that what some get others must lose. 'The lion's share' is not only the largest portion, but always obtained by the sheer force of appropriation—not by production."

"Oh, I grant that inventors, authors and scientists might get a certain benefit out of studying how to control their fellow beings. But, after all, it is the 'man among men' who gets the real thing—for he not only achieves success, but that manifestation of success in material form—money."

"But, Mr. Tremont, you really cannot believe—" Mrs. Fujita started to speak, but stopped as the rapid movement of the hoe coming towards them attracted her attention.

"Mr. Tremont, it's too brambly here to look out at you." The hoe had stopped a moment and rested below a particularly thorny bush. "But you don't seem to perceive that the failure of those people—scientists, inventors, authors, and artists, to reap the financial rewards of their work is not because of any inherent fault of theirs, but because of the inequitable basis upon which human association now rests; by means of which some persons have the power to appropriate the results of others' labor. If human association was on the normal basis of equal freedom, those industrious persons would reap their full reward in equivalence of exchange with other persons, without the necessity of studying methods of offensive and defensive warfare; for such warfare is possible only where human legislation has interfered with the equality of human freedom."

"We have to take things as they are, Mr. Wynn," returned Arthur Tremont, raising his voice slightly as the hoe moved briskly away, appearing and disappearing around the bushes that hid its moving power from the occupants of the seats.

"I hear you all right. Just go ahead, Mr. Tremont," came a voice, and the man, leaning back comfortably on the broad bench, resumed:—

"If we only concenter on some object and hold the thought firmly enough and pull hard enough—really hustle for it, you know—we are certain to do our best work in that line, and then we are sure to find a market for our services, and get the money reward—the one thing worth striving for."

"Yet I know a lot of cases in which it has not worked out that way," said Mrs. Fujita.

"So do I," came the voice of Glen Harding, as she appeared at the end of the row, raking rapidly toward them.

"Me, too," laughed Ernest Wynn, as he came around the last bush and caught a glimpse of Arthur Tremont's face. Then his tone and expression changed to a grave earnestness as he continued: "It is not the best work that is rewarded by employers in these days, but only such as will bring the employers the largest financial returns. Often it is the worst work. If what you just stated about concentering was true, then the concentering scientists, artists, and so on, would reap the financial returns of their labor—that now goes to others. The difference between them and the ones who get their financial rewards is that they concentrate on doing something useful, while the others concentrate on plans for getting away from them the pecuniary results of their doings. It is not hard pulling, nor hustling, nor 'concentering', that brings financial success under present conditions, but the power of appropriation—the tribute compelling power—which resides in property in privileges.''

Arthur Tremont smiled pleasantly as he glanced up at the animated face near the top of the hoe handle. ''You are thinking of the individual, Mr. Wynn, and perhaps you don't realize how the oneness of all is bound up with all my teachings. No one can get away from his oneness with all—it is at the basis, the heart, of all esoteric teachings. This thought helps us to understand the coming brotherhood of man and how we can at last use the occult powers, latent in all persons, in a way to command financial success—true success. If any worker refuses to accept the means of 'financial salvation' now open to him thru such teachings, it is his own fault if he starves. Anyone who is too lazy to study the way to be saved ought to be—something else. It serves him exactly right!''

''Mr. Tremont!'' There was a flush on Mrs. Fujita's face as she turned suddenly toward him. ''Do you realize that among the workers you condemn in that wholesale way as 'lazy' are little children? Either your remark is meaningless or it must include ALL the workers; all the three-year-old children in sweat shops; all the little ones from five to ten years old in cotton factories; all the young life in the coal breakers. Do you realize this? Or what do you mean?"

The quiet smile showed again. "Of course I don't believe that children should work—they ought to be properly educated."

"Come up here, Mr. Wynn," Glen Harding said leaning her rake against the end of a seat. "Let us rest a bit and then we can soon finish, there is only that space across the end of the plot and along the outer hedge."

Ernest Wynn appeared and obediently sat down near her, facing Arthur Tremont, to whom he at once addressed himself: "I heard what you said, Mr. Tremont, and it strikes me that it is very irrational for teachers of the 'oneness of all' and 'the brotherhood of man' to assume that the present predatory relation of persons to each other is natural, and waste time and energy in framing instructions for the few to follow—for I noticed all thru your book that while saying the way was open to all, you also said we could rely on very few having seen it and learned to take advantage of us—in order to enrich themselves at the expense of the many. Such sentiments as are involved in your statement, that all who starve or suffer deserve to do so, are utterly at variance with every true conception of human unity and harmony. The more persons train themselves for taking advantage, and guarding against being taken advantage of, the less fitted will they be for taking part in such harmonious association with their fellows as is implied in the word 'oneness.' Before there can be harmony there must be an elimination of advantages.''

''Evidently we do not look at these things from the same viewpoint, Mr. Wynn,'' Arthur Tremont blandly observed.

Glen Harding rose suddenly and turned away to resume her work, with an amount of energy that seemed hardly called for by the condition of the ground. Ernest Wynn followed her example, going ahead with rapid, skilled movements.

Far down the row they stood together a moment and Ernest Wynn said, half questioningly, ''I don't understand that man!''

''He is trying to practice his own teachings, Mr. Wynn, and as they are obviously contradictory he seems rather confusing at times.''

''It seems to me, Miss Harding, that true teachers of morality would not misuse their energies in instructing a few how to take advantage of the present state of affairs. Such teachers would point to the normal relation of persons to each other, and instruct them how to readjust themselves to nature's laws, so that each might reap the full results of va's own labors.''

''Mr. Trement has no conception of such a condition, Mr. Wynn, nor have I been able to get him to listen—yet he has the ability to do good work.''

''Do you really think, Mr. Tremont, that young people ought to be taught to work out their 'financial salvation,' regardless of the means offered?'' Mrs. Fujita spoke seriously. ''Is not making money a low aim? You know that today such success too often involves the abandonment of truth and virtue—the prostitution of one's abilities to the service of inequity. I admit that we see these things all around us, yet surely it is not wise to teach our youths to strive for financial success on such terms. Don't you think we should tell them to admire those lovers of truth who prefer their own self-respect to anything that can be gained by bartering it away?''

''Such teachings would hardly lead to any great success now-a-days, I'm quite sure, Mrs. Fujita, and I want my pupils to amount to something,'' Arthur Tremont smiled genially. ''They must be in earnest, and of course we must teach young people that the desirable things of life—enjoyment and culture—can be obtained only thru the possession of dollars, and it is for such objects they are working when they strive to make money.''

The rake stopped abruptly and its holder leaned forward in a frame of rose sprays to say earnestly: ''You cannot 'make money' in a fair exchange, Mr. Tremont, you can only make satisfaction.''

''Miss Harding is right,'' came Ernest Wynn's voice from behind a nearby mass of rose bloom; ''and we need only look about us anywhere today to realize that we get a vast amount of dissatisfaction all round when we 'make money'.''

''What are you people talking about now?'' and Arthur Tremont allowed a shade of perplexity to show in face and tone for a fleeting instant.

Glen Harding, still looking thru the fragrant sprays, noticed the expression and smiled, as she said: "Under equitable conditions, where all work would be a means of self-expression—for it is only thru personal effort that we can manifest normal characters—all trade would necessarily be a fair exchange of equivalents of effort. Service for service would be the rule, and there could be no such thought or teaching as that involved in the phrase 'the making of dollars'."

"That's it, precisely," Ernest Wynn exclaimed, suddenly appearing, hoe in hand; "and in that idea we have the answer to Mrs. Fujita's question as to why 'making money' is a low aim. In a fair exchange there can be no sense of 'making money'—only satisfaction. Hence, when the money profit is the object, or is possible, there is necessarily a condition of injustice. Under equitable conditions the value of an object would express the resistance of nature which labor had to overcome in order to produce the object—wealth would be the measure of the power we had acquired over nature. The concentrated wealth of today is the measure, not only of the power over nature, but of the tribute compelling power of property in privileges. Persons generally do not yet realize this, but all human beings are so constituted that freedom—a just condition—is their normal atmosphere, and they feel restless and uneasy under injustice and oppression, even when they are unable to explain the cause of such feelings."

Arthur Tremont looked thoughtful: "That may be so, now that we have advanced nearer the light," he said, "but in the earlier times when persons were struggling thru the savage stage of life they could have no such feelings. Even now, the great majority are still so far back in evolution that it will probably take several more generations before we can expect to have just economic conditions.''

''That is wholly a mistake,'' Glen Harding exclaimed, skillfully raking her way around toward the speaker. ''In that elder time persons were every whit as human as they are now. There is no evidence whatever from the past to indicate that equity—the harmonious association of persons—will ever come of itself, or as the result of the mere passing of more time.''

''I think that is true,'' Mrs. Fujita put in. ''Too many people seem to forget, or fail to see, that changes are continually, and often very quickly, brought about thru the acts of persons.''

''Still it takes time for evolution to work out,'' Arthur Tremont quietly persisted. ''The most we can do now is to secure all the personal enjoyment we can, and set those powers going which may work out toward freedom in the future.''

''I cannot agree with you, Mr. Tremont,'' Glen Harding wielded her rake as vigorously as tho scratching for justice then and there. ''We can work for and gain equal freedom far easier today than can those children''—she glanced toward the happy, frolicking group on the lawn—''at a later day, if we accept your view and leave them in a world more widely steeped in corruption and crime than this planet ever knew before. The way to secure justice is simple and easy to learn, and we—

we four people here, and others like us—have the capacity to learn that way today, and the power to follow it right here and now!'' There was a glow, not of the sunshine, on her face, and her eyes blazed as she turned them full upon Arthur Tremont. ''Dare we shirk our responsibility? Are we such cowards?''

Arthur Tremont's training stood him in good stead, and tho he trembled inwardly over the possible havoc the talk had wrought to his dearest hopes, he was able to say quietly and with all due earnestness: ''You are certainly not a coward, Miss Harding, but please bear in mind that my viewpoint is not quite the same as yours, tho I trust it may someday be so,'' and in his soul he felt a passionate desire to conquer the love of the woman before him. How handsome she looked, he thought, during such moments of intense earnestness—excitement. What a pity it was that she should waste time over sociology when she could be using her talents to make a name as well as a large measure of success.

''There is another point on which I differ from your conclusions, Mr. Tremont,'' said Mrs. Fujita, recalling his wandering mind to the duty of the moment. ''You teach that we should practice doing disagreeable things in order to strengthen our wills.''

''Certainly,'' was the response. ''I have personally found the practice very helpful.''

''Yet as a public school teacher I always found my pupils advanced, became strongest mentally, along the lines in which they took the most interest and therefore liked to do. Surely we can exercise our muscles, at least as effectively, in doing work we like as in doing what we dislike and shrink from.''

''Oh, no,'' was the quick reply, ''you mistake me. I mean that ordinary people, even the weakest sort of persons, can do things they like to do; things that offer no resistance, while it takes a really energetic man or woman to go ahead against resistance—whether inner or outer. On that account I advise the frequent practice of doing disagreeable things in order to strengthen the muscles, both mental and physical.''

''I do not see it in that light,'' Mrs. Fujita persisted. ''Surely there is ample resistance to compel healthful physical and mental growth in the natural difficulties met with in pleasurable work—any work worth doing. The hard wood is no less tough because I like to carve it. The problems I have to master require just as careful study, if I desire to become a teacher of mathematics.''

''But don't you see that those things are easy for you, if you like to do them?'' Arthur Tremont was insistent in his turn.

Mrs. Fujita laughed. ''I assure you, Mr. Tremont, that I did not find it so in the case of mathematics. I am quite certain the mental training was more helpful to me just because I loved to wrestle with and conquer the problems than it could have been if I had been driven to the study as to a disagreeable task.''

The others were again near enough to hear the talk, and Ernest Wynn put in a word: "I think the idea that it is necessary to do disagreeable things in order to attain power arises from industrial conditions which have made labor almost synonymous with slavery."

"I feel sure that is true. Under equitable conditions such an idea could have no place, for all work would be done with the pleasure that attends conscious self-expression. Besides, to a person aiming at the fullest and truest development, nothing can be disagreeable that it is right or wise or kind to do." As she spoke Glen Harding noticed the momentary blankness on the face of the one man and the quick appreciation in the eyes of the other.

"There is certainly a lot of difference between ancient work and that turned out by our modern commercial 'systems'," said Mrs. Fujita, thoughtfully. "The thoro, careful faithfulness of the one shows a love of the work itself; while the work of the modern factory slave is shoddy, and too often but half done, so that it hardly holds together—it is made to sell and not to last."

"In the older time," observed Glen Harding, "all work was part of the religious life of the people. Goddesses and gods worked, and all terrestrial work, being an imitation of celestial patterns, was honorable and was loved and done always with a just pride in its successful accomplishment. This applied to both physical and mental effort; to the composing of a poem or the carving of a signet ring, or the building of a temple."

"I remember an illustration of that trait, given in one of the Stoddard lectures,'' said Mrs. Fujita. ''One of the fragments of the ruined Parthenon was a portion of a frieze that once surrounded the entire edifice. 'The figures in this frieze were fully fifty feet from the ground, where small defects would never have been noticed, yet every part of each was finished with the utmost care.' Their fall brought the sculptor's grand fidelity to light after two thousand years.''

''How does our modern work compare with that?'' exclaimed Glen Harding.

''But, surely, Miss Harding, you admit that our advanced civilization had to pass thru a stage of slavery in order that people should learn to work?'' said Arthur Tremont.

''I freely admit,'' was the quick retort, ''that our advanced civilization is an embodiment of the worst slavery the world has ever known. The power to rise high measures the degradation of the fall. I deny utterly, however, that any real advance ever has or ever can come on account of slave conditions. It is only thru the abolition of all forms of slavery that we can ever become truly advanced, in the sense of enlightened and fit for higher things.''

''I agree with Miss Harding.'' Ernest Wynn came hoeing rapidly up along the hedge of Ragged Robin and Cherokee roses, the more easily to join in the talk. ''The modern doctrine of evolution by natural selection—the struggle for existence—is responsible for many of the greatest errors among educated people today. Yet consider its inherent weakness! It is based on the theory of development from the simple to the complex—the tendency to individualization, differentiation."

"Yet its most earnest supporters, such as Herbert Spencer, held that its application to human development necessitated the evolution of civilization from chattel slavery," interjected Mrs. Fujita.

"Exactly," continued Ernest Wynn, "and the tendency of slavery, of every form, is to destroy individuality, to annihilate distinctions and reduce all to a dead level of uniform activities and conditions. That is, the tendency of slavery is exactly opposite to the tendency of what evolution is supposed to be—progress. The two tendencies are mutually antagonistic. The dominance of either involves the destruction of the other."

"Then our socialist friends are trying to do the impossible," suggested Mrs. Fujita, "when they aim at securing freedom thru compulsory combination."

"Assuredly," agreed Ernest Wynn. "It is not possible to secure freedom thru compulsion."

"Now this work is all done," remarked Glen Harding, glancing critically along the length of hedge, and about the rose arbor and scattered bushes. "Let us go up to the pergola, it is cooler there and we will have some lemonade."

The others rose at once, and Ernest Wynn picked up his coat and took possession of rake and hoe. "I'll put the tools away and join you in a moment," he said, starting quickly toward the vine-covered tool shed in the rear garden.

CHAPTER 11.

A WOMAN'S VIEWS.

"What a delicious morning, Glen!" exclaimed Mrs. Fujita, as the two friends, with baby Irene between them, started off in the little auto soon after dawn, on a cloudless May morning. "Let us go slow and enjoy the air, it is so pure and fine even here in the city, at this hour, and then we can see more of the country, too."

"All right, Helen, that just suits me. I cannot see any sense in using a car merely to see how fast we can get over the ground. We will go out Lincoln Avenue, the road I showed you the other day—and then east and south along the foothills. That way you can see a good deal before the smoke gathers and spoils the views. Do you know, Helen," she went on, reflectively, "to me it seems good just to be alive on such a morning, and yet most people in the city are still in bed and miss it all; and too many in the country seem not to notice or are too busy to heed the beauty about them, even where their work calls them up and out in the early hours."

"You have a good deal of that mere joy of living, which my husband says is a characteristic of the Japanese!"

"It is because of their outdoor life. They will lose it, Helen, if they are shut up in shops and factories—even in schools. It is simply our normal love of out of doors. It is lost where our civilization turns night into day, recreation into dissipation, and work into drudgery.''

Her friend looked serious. ''I had not thought of it in that way, Glen, but I see what you mean. I must tell my husband. What an awful amount of suffering there is in a world where all nature seems made for abundant enjoyment. We ought all to be as happy as the birds, just hear them sing! Look, Irene!'' She called the child's attention to a large flock of linnets resting on the telephone wires. As she spoke the birds flew down among the grain and weeds in a field they were passing, and the child laughed aloud in delight, there were so many.

''There is a mocking bird, Irene,'' said Glen Harding, ''and I hear a meadow lark, we must watch for it. I tell you, Helen, we simply must find a way to make people see how easily and quickly they—we—all of us together—can live as joyously as the birds. We must show them that there is not the shadow of a shade of necessity for the poverty and suffering that exists today.''

''But how can we do it? My husband writes me that even in pleasant Japan the people are getting worse off, and that is a great disappointment to many.''

''I don't see how such a condition can be avoided, anywhere in the whole wide world, so long as the land question remains unsettled. Oh, Helen! The very realization of how easily and quickly all this suffering and crime can be done away with makes it harder to endure! It seems as tho I must be out and doing active work somewhere, and now that Mr. Wynn's discovery has put the whole subject on a strictly scientific basis—as definite and readily understood as the fact that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, I cannot keep still much longer."

Mrs. Fujita looked at the animated face of her friend and marveled at the intense longing it expressed. "You have some plan of work in mind, I do believe, Glen," she said.

"Yes, but it will take more than one person to carry out my plan, so I must wait. But, Helen, you have a great opportunity before you! With Mr. Fujita's position and influence to help, you can get the true solution of the whole industrial problem before the Emperor and his Cabinet. I feel sure, too, that Mr. Motora will do all in his power to help on the cause. Helen, that man has in him the making of the finest sort of statesman, and he is devoted, heart and soul, to his country and its people," she ended, enthusiastically.

"I shall certainly learn all I can while here, and then do all in my power to help the Japanese—Japan will be my home and my country then, you know. But, Glen"—Mrs. Fujita looked long and earnestly at her friend—"I am sure you could have a greater power for good in Japan than I can even hope to exert. I have watched Mr. Motora every time he has been with us, and there is no mistaking his feeling or his desire. As his wife you would be placed at once in a position of power that would open the way to make your influence felt in the highest circles of the empire. Mr. Motora's rank is higher and his wealth vastly greater than my husband's."

Glen Harding looked surprised. "I knew he was well-to-do," she said, "but I had no idea that Mr. Motora was especially rich."

"Well, he is, for a Japanese, immensely rich. Of course that is not as wealth is counted in the United States. There are, as yet, no multi-millionaires in Japan. Inazo Motora and my husband have been great friends since they were mere babies, so I learned all about him. Oh, Glen, it would be so splendid to have you in Japan! We might live quite near together."

"Yes, that would be very pleasant for me," Glen Harding admitted, noticing the yearning in her friend's voice and eyes. "But, Helen, Mr. Motora has not said anything to me of wishes in that line."

"He is sure to do so soon. I know the signs; and you are not blind, either," Mrs. Fujita smilingly retorted. "Personally, he appears to be exactly the sort of ideal you used to want for a husband; with his dark eyes and hair, his fine form and graceful manners! Don't you remember?"

Her friend laughed. "What a memory you have, Helen, for our old time talks! I am quite willing to admit that Mr. Motora is a decidedly attractive man, and," she concluded, gravely, "I have thought a great deal lately about the possibility of going to Japan to live."

They were going slowly, for an automobile, along a pleasant road, enjoying to the full the clear air and cloudless sky, and the morning changes in color on the mountains to the north. Glen Harding pointed out places of interest, almost halting the car when passing an especially attractive orchard, orange grove or garden. At last she turned suddenly to her friend with the question: "Helen, what do you think of Mr. Tremont?"

Mrs. Fujita smiled. "He is a handsome man, tho not so like your early ideal as Mr. Motora. In other things I think Mr. Tremont does not compare too favorably with my husband's friend."

"What things, for instance?"

"Well, of course Mr. Motora has known all his life and as part of his life, many things Mr. Tremont has only studied for a few years. That would naturally make some difference in the way they look at the ancient eastern religions and so-called occult studies; and yet, Glen—I may be mistaken, of course —it seems to me that Mr. Motora studies those things today with an earnest desire to learn the truth, to understand their real meaning; while Mr. Tremont studies for the mere purpose of making something—'making dollars,' as he said. Winning 'success' to him is a matter of more or less money. Of course he would only make it in a 'legitimate' way—but what does that mean to any of us today?"

"So you noticed that, too. I sometimes doubt if he is really aware of what he is doing—if he understands enough to comprehend the full measure of responsibility he has assumed in the position he takes as a teacher. There are times when it seems to me that Mr. Tremont is like a child playing with matches—or edged tools.''

''That may be, Glen,'' her friend answered, thoughtfully. ''And yet it seems hard to imagine, seeing that Mr. Tremont appears to have had ample opportunity to learn. Another thing. I could not help noticing the other day that Mr. Tremont does not even try to understand the land question. He is either hopelessly ignorant or wilfully blind.''

''It is wilful blindness, Helen. He deliberately shuts his mind up from all thought on that line. He has ample capacity, but refuses to exercise it on any study of the land question.''

Mrs. Fujita regarded her friend hopefully as she said: ''It is plain, Glen, that Mr. Motora is thoroly serious in his effort to get to the bottom of the whole subject.''

''Indeed he is!'' was the hearty assent. ''I intend to have him go home the best posted man in Japan, on the land question.''

''If you would only go with him, Glen! How glad I would be!'' Then, persuasively: ''My husband says it is a delightful country, in spite of the earthquakes.''

Glen Harding regarded her friend long and seriously before she said: ''So many people think there is great risk in marrying into another race than one's own. May I ask you a question, Helen?''

''As many as you like, and I'll answer them if I can.''

''Are you sorry to have to take Irene to Japan, while still so little?''

"Not at all," was the prompt reply. "I would rather have Irene grow up in Japan. The Japanese seem to take a more serious view of life than we do here. I would have gone with my husband, you know, if it had not been for mother's illness. She is entirely recovered now and promises to make us a long visit next year, if all goes well."

"Then you are quite happy in your marriage?"

"Entirely so, Glen," and the deep contentment in the blue eyes spoke louder than her words to the friend who loved her. "I don't think it is merely because my husband is a Japanese, however; but because we are thoroly suited to each other. In the same way, I believe Mr. Motora is just the sort of man with whom you would be happiest. It's the character and spirit of the man I think of, and not his being a Japanese rather than an American."

"Then an American with a similar sort of character and spirit, the same earnest desire to help his fellow beings and the same ardent love of truth for its own sake; and with whom I could work for freedom, would do just as well?"

Mrs. Fujita gave her friend a quick look of comprehension. "Yes, to be quite honest, Glen, I think he would," she said.

"There's nothing in particular to see along here, just the wide outlook over the valley, so we can go a little faster for awhile," remarked Glen Harding a moment later. "I want to get to a delightful spot I know, in which to eat our breakfast, and where I can show Irene some pretty things." She looked down at the child, who glanced up happily and then turned its attention again to a brand new beast in the shape of a gray cotton flannel elephant, now dangling in a perilous position outside the car, as baby Irene held it by its wisp of tail. The Dennison children, feeling that their guest could not be quite happy without an ellie, had coaxed Miss Lane, the seamstress, to make it the day before, and Mrs. Dent had embroidered its gorgeous scarlet blanket.

"The little Dennisons are among the nicest children I've ever seen, Glen," observed Irene's mother, as she rescued the elephant and placed it safely by Irene's side.

"They are happy and good because they are healthy," said their aunt, in pleased tones. "Birdie is really very sensible in their training, and the more she sees of good results the more readily she gives way to our ideas—the plans you and I talked over so often."

"I've tried them on Irene with great satisfaction. Mother was a little inclined to spoil her only grandchild, but I insisted on having my way—plain food, plenty of sleep and out doors, and no unnecessary holding or coddling. Irene's father entered heartily into all my ideas for the baby, besides having his own as to physical culture—for we both want Irene to be as graceful as any Japanese—and we have done well, as you see."

Glen Harding looked down at the beautiful child, so bright and happy, and then there came to her mind the thought of other children—of children with wan, pinched faces; of children whose little bodies were bent and crippled from toil, from abuse, from neglect—and she spoke her thought abruptly—

"Helen, can you be entirely happy with Irene and forget the children in our schools and factories and mines?"

"What do you mean, Glen?" the other asked, half startled. "I am certainly very happy with Irene," and she glanced fondly at the child. "Of course I never really forget that there are thousands of unfortunate children, and I would gladly help them if I could; but what can I do? I confess to a great lack of faith in the child-labor legislation now being demanded. We have entirely too much legislation already. You and I know that it does not strike at the root of the evil."

"Now, that's sensible, Helen," her friend eagerly exclaimed. "There are not a few who claim to see to the root of the evils about us, and yet keep on using up their time and money and spare energy on the very palliatives they know can never stop the evil. But here we are at the Welden Ranch." She turned the car into a broad driveway, with tall palms on either side. "The place is vacant now, but the owner is a friend of Will's, and I want to show you over the place. We will breakfast in a lovely spot at one end of the pergola, from which we can have a fine view of mountains and valley."

The hamper was soon unpacked and the simple breakfast spread on a small table. "Is it not delightful?" Glen Harding asked, as she busied about, getting Irene seated and well provided for.

"It is glorious, Glen!" Mrs. Fujita was looking out from the shelter of the vines, over the beautiful garden and beyond to the heights on one hand, and then off on the other over the far reaches of pleasant valley land.

"It is a beautiful country, Glen, and I don't wonder you love it!"

"I often think how different life would be if, instead of our crowded cities, with their squalor and misery and crime, we had a country full of beautiful homes, where the air and sunshine could get at them all around; with gardens, larger or smaller than this five acres, about every one. There is plenty of room, and sun and air, and plenty of people to enjoy such a life."

"If we could only make them see the way, Glen! It would take so little time to change it all."

"Oh, Helen," and Glen Harding's tones expressed the deep enthusiasm of a firm conviction, as she continued: "I am quite sure that a mere fraction of the time, effort and money now being spent in trying to secure restrictive laws, if put into straightforward, definite work for equal freedom, would so rouse and educate public sentiment that public opinion—the strongest of all human forces—would wipe out the whole miserable mass of special privilege legislation and establish in its stead such a land system as would give equal opportunities to all. Then all could have homes as pleasant as this, and there would be no thought of child labor legislation, for there could be no child laborers among a free—a thoroly sane and rational—people."

"That sounds easy, Glen, and I wish with all my heart that it could be. Yet I have no idea how to go to work to stir up such a sentiment. The change would be easy enough to make—it is getting people to realize it that is difficult. I've tried, honestly tried hard, to get women with whom I have come in contact, interested in the single tax. I confess I have not been encouraged by the result. I do think a good deal about the children, Glen. Since I have had our little Irene''—she glanced with a bright smile at the child, whose answering smile illuminated the dark eyes and spread in laughing ripples over the face—''Glen, I seem to love all other children as I never did before, tho you know I always liked them. I want Irene to live in a freer world. Yet it will not help the poor, unfortunate little ones for me to sit about and cry over a fate I cannot cure.''

''Surely not! But don't you see, Helen, how the deadening influence of that slave suggestion, 'what cannot be cured must be endured,' acts like an opiate on our minds? You and I know—and so do all intelligent people who stop to think about it seriously—that human legislation made, created, that property in privileges which makes child labor and child suffering an unavoidable result—and we ought to know that human beings can wipe out all that injustice the moment public sentiment intelligently demands it.''

''Of course they can. I see that plain enough, but I don't see how to get people interested; how to get the subject fairly and fully before the whole people. It seems hard to get any one to listen. Even some of the old time single taxers I talked with in New York appear to have lost the lively interest and enthusiasm they used to show. What shall we do, Glen? What can we do about it? Do you think Mr. Wynn's discovery will wake up the people?"

"That is exactly what I mean to find out," was the decided retort. "I believe it will appeal to the love of freedom and fairness that is somewhere in every human being—rich and poor alike. Every sort of person would be benefited and none injured. so we can appeal to all. It is to the personal interest of each to secure a balanced land tenure at the earliest possible date."

"I wish we could get more women to understand and work for the settlement of the land question, Glen."

"So do I! It is not now a question of voting, but only of learning the truth and then helping spread the good news; and in that women can help—just wherever they happen to be at this minute. There simply must be some way found, Helen, thru which women generally can be interested and enlisted in the cause of real freedom—to work for a balanced land tenure. Just think of all the money and energy women are wasting, thinking they are working their way out. Tho," she added thoughtfully, "there are among those workers some who see that all such effort is only palliative; that in working for temperance, suffrage, all manner of legislation and every conceivable sort of charity, they are not touching the heart of the problem. They see as plainly as we do that in spite of all their work the times get harder and oppression grows heavier, and the suffering becomes more unendurable. I tell you, Helen, there must be, there shall be, a way found thru which women can be made to see that all the problems with which they are struggling—whether personal or local or national—have their roots in a system of property in privileges which enables a few persons to live—to riot—on the earnings of the many. Think a moment, Helen, of the vast power for good they could be if such organized bodies of women as the suffragists or the Women's Clubs, or Woman's Christian Temperance Union, or even any one of them, could once grasp the fact that all the real things they desire are kept from them thru the power of property in privileges, and that their only hope of success lies in the total abolition of all such privileges."

Half smiling at her friend's vehemence, yet feeling strongly the force of her words, Mrs. Fujita answered, thoughtfully: "There can be no doubt about their power if they once saw the truth; but the great difficulty, Glen, is to gain their attention long enough to consider the subject at all. I had a bit of rather sharp experience in that line several months ago. I met one of the prominent workers for child labor legislation and tried my best to get her to see the bearing of the land question on the work she was doing. She answered me politely, but quite firmly, that she was a socialist, and she would not even try to understand what I wished to explain."

"I understand, Helen. I have met the same sort of bland refusal—shown in word or action—from more than one enthusiastic worker on palliative lines. I freely admit that they mean well, but none the less, Helen, in refusing to try to understand the land question they are actually prolonging, and thereby helping to make worse the very suffering they seek to alleviate. Yet they really want—they badly need—true freedom. Only thru that can they ever secure peace and comfort for all people."

"Of course they want freedom, Glen," acquiesced her friend. "They want all that is good, just as much as you and I do. The question is: How can we get them to see the only road that leads to the desired goal?"

"If they would only seriously study the subject for themselves I have no shadow of doubt as to the result—for truth would win, and do it soon."

"But women are so busy, so inert, so driven, so lazy or so indifferent—I met all those varieties, Glen, while trying to get acquainted with the mothers of my pupils—that they consciously or unconsciously refuse to listen. You know how it is yourself! However, I have by no means given up the effort, and as the women of Japan are now so wide awake on many lines, I have hopes of being able to work faster there than I could do here, in this country."

"You may find it so, Helen. I think it more than probable that you will. All the same, I intend to find a way to get the women of the United States to understand a balanced land tenure and all that it means to every one of us—they shall understand!"

"I do hope so, but oh!"—she broke off abruptly—

"do look at Irene among those flowers!" and Mrs. Fujita started hastily toward the baby, standing in the midst of the golden glory of a wide stretch of California poppies which filled the slope between the pergola and the driveway.

"Isn't it a lovely picture, Helen! You fix the camera while I hold Irene's attention. Pick all the pretty flowers you want, Irene," and the little human flower set gleefully to work, gathering great handfuls of the sort of golden treasure that children love.

"Why think of the women of the United States now, Glen? I believe there is a grand opportunity for us among the women of Japan," suggested Mrs. Fujita, persuasively, when they were again going leisurely along the sunny road. "You will find they are quite wide awake and eager to learn all that is good. They have not yet become so absorbed in different lines of thought and work as to exclude all consideration of other lines to which their attention is seriously and earnestly called."

"You may be right—as to the women of Japan," assented her friend. "Mr. Motora has told me a good deal about his countrywomen, and they evidently have a much greater influence than westerners generally have imagined. I am confident that it is well worth while making a special effort to win their attention to a balanced land tenure in its direct bearing on the lives of women and children. I confess to you, Helen, that the most discouraging thing I have met with in trying to interest women in the land question has been the indifference, the refusal to give the subject any serious thought, on the part of those who ought—judging by their words or work—to be the first to come forward and help."

"I understand, Glen, and I have figured out that the very fact of her activity along some other lines makes each woman feel that her especial line is the one thing needful, and she thinks you would see that if you would take up her line, and—"

"But I am always willing to do that, Helen," interrupted Glen Harding, earnestly. "I mean that I am willing to give the same serious attention to arguments for temperance, or child labor legislation, or any other line, as I ask for a balanced land tenure."

"Well, but, Glen, no woman likes to admit she has taken up a partial reform instead of having gone to the root of things—particularly if she has been very active for it. How would you like it yourself, if you, whom many know as a strenuous worker for the single tax, were suddenly confronted with the possibility of having to give it up as an error, or at least as not the essential thing you believed it to be? Would you take up the new idea and drop the single tax?"

Glen Harding opened wide eyes of astonishment. "Are you in earnest?"

Her friend smiled. "Quite so. Of course I might guess your answer, but I would rather have you give it."

Glen Harding laughed. "Now I know you have something in your mind you have not told me yet.

You know me well enough, Helen, to be sure that I don't care a fig for any of my beliefs if they can be proven erroneous. I want the truth. I was convinced by Henry George that the land question is at the bottom of the industrial problem—of all our problems—and that there is no sure way out except thru the settlement of the land tenure. But I soon saw that the single tax was not a full solution, for it did not show how to solve the transportation problem—the road question. Then I saw, too, that it was mixed up with the money question. It became a three-cornered problem that I felt must be settled all at once. That is, I saw the problem involved exclusive holdings of land, common ways, and a medium of exchange. I felt for a long time that there was a hitch somewhere that we single taxers had not straightened out."

"Why, how do you mean, Glen?"

"Well, you know single taxers have a good deal to say about the surplus revenue—they do not often use that phrase—that the adoption of the single tax will give the government. I felt there was a serious mistake in such an idea, and a long time ago I became convinced that there must be an exact balance between real rent and government expenses. Don't you remember my writing you about it before I came out here?"

"I recall something about it, now you remind me. I am afraid Mr. Fujita occupied my mind at that time more than did the land question," Mrs. Fujita smilingly confessed.

"I thought a good deal about it—the land question—along that line of rent and government expenses, and gradually the field for those expenses narrowed down in my mind to the maintaining of common lands—roads and other lands used in common."

Mrs. Fujita regarded her friend with some surprise. "Then you as well as Mr. Wynn made the discovery that the single tax does not solve the whole problem?"

"That is not the discovery! Don't you remember that Henry George himself said more than once that the single tax would not cure all human ills, but that freedom would? Then I read Dove's book, with its assertion that there is a natural law thru the application of which the equilibrium of equity would be restored. That is, there must be an exact balance—natural, not arbitrary—between public revenue and public expenses. I often said to myself that when we had found that natural law we would know exactly what to do to secure equal freedom in the use of the earth. Now that Mr. Wynn's discovery has brought the law to light, I shall work to win its speedy recognition—work with every fiber of zeal there is in me!"

"I know you will, Glen, and you make me feel that I must keep it ahead of everything until freedom is won. But, Glen, had you told Mr. Wynn about your thought of an exact balance, before he brought you those articles about a balanced land tenure?"

"Oh, yes, several times, and I had mentioned it in our correspondence about the propaganda when the thought first came to me. He, also, had been studying for some years especially to find the natural law that would place human association in the list of exact sciences. I consider his discovery—measured by its importance to humanity—as the greatest ever made. The application of the law of human association—resting on the simple plan of a balanced land tenure—gives us a solid and permanent foundation on which to develop and build up human intelligence along every line of rational thought, to the highest and best that a truly free humanity can become. It is what every person needs, it is what all people really want—and we can and will get them to see the way to it very soon.''

Her friend caught something of the glow of Glen Harding's hopefulness: ''Yes, we will! I'll do all I possibly can to spread the news. I'm so glad I heard about it before going to Japan, for I wanted something definite to propose—and now I have it. I never felt that I quite understood the single tax, and the attitude of the single taxers I met last fall discouraged me. I found so many were unwilling to discuss the subject freely. Mr. Wynn does not seem to fear discussion.''

''Not a bit! He courts argument and objection, and fully agrees with me that it is only thru full and frank discussion that we can get people to see the truth.''

''I wish my husband could hear you, Glen! I wrote him a long letter last night, and sent him copies of everything Mr. Wynn has had printed about a balanced land tenure, so he could be studying up, and get ready to help me make plans when we are settled at home.''

''Mr. Motora will be a splendid help by that time, too—and that reminds me that we must get home early this afternoon,'' Glen Harding looked at her watch, exclaiming, ''It is after twelve! I had no idea it was so late. I want to show you a place about a mile farther on, then we will turn back to that great live oak over there to the west. It's a delightful place for lunch.''

'' 'Ittle cups?'' baby Irene had caught the familiar word, oak.

''Yes, Irene, lots of cups and nice fat acorns and some long, slim ones, too. We will help you find plenty to play with and take home,'' said Glen Harding.

''This reminds me of a lunch I had with Sara on the way out here,'' said Mrs. Fujita, as they all sat on the ground under a wide-spreading live oak that had grown on a rounded knoll, giving them a good outlook over the level of the valley floor to the roll of the foothills and the ever-present mountain background.

Baby Irene's attention was divided between the lunch and a tempting heap of acorns and cups already gathered, and on which ellie was now supposed to be dining, the clumsy cotton flannel trunk plunged luxuriously into the brown heap.

''I don't mean the scene is the same,'' Mrs. Fujita smilingly continued, as she looked out over the brown and green fields, the great patches of vineyard, orchard and garden, "but we took lunch out doors one day, and sat on the ground and ate it. I had to insist, actually, Glen, tho it was a lot pleasanter. Sara had a notion the Indians might consider it a precedent for holding onto some of the uncivilized ways she is trying to educate out of them."

Glen Harding smiled. "That sounds just like her letters. I am a little disappointed in Sara. I thought she would learn so much from the Indians as well as teach them other things, but she appears to think the ability to teach is all on one side. Just think, Helen, how differently life has turned out from what we expected when we three decided at that missionary meeting—so long ago—that we would be missionaries when we were thru school."

"And yet we are all doing, or going to do, that sort of work, Glen."

"Yes; Sara a missionary among the Amerinds, you an architectural missionary to Japan, and I—what am I?"

Mrs. Fujita laughed. "You are a born propagandist, Glen, and will be a missionary all your days. First, whether here or in Japan, to help get a balanced land tenure. When that is accomplished you will go on thinking of no end of splendid things to learn and to do, and suggest to other people to learn and do—for the pure enjoyment of knowing and growing."

"Is Sara happy in her work?"

Mrs. Fujita considered a moment before she answered: "After a fashion, she seems to be; and yet, Glen, she is missing so much thru that one-sided view of it. I left her my copy of 'What the White Race may Learn from the Indian,'' and marked a passage I learned by heart, to keep it in my own mind when training Irene. There have been times, Glen, I confess, when mother's insistence and the weight of the influences around me almost made me give up our plans—but I held on! That's one reason I'm glad to take Irene to Japan. The environment will be too new to weigh on me, and my husband heartily shares our views.''

''Yes, Helen, that will make it easier, and give you that energy to put into accomplishing things—that you have to waste here in combating the old environment. But what passage of George Wharton James' book did you learn. I have two copies and I'll give you one when we get home. I intended it for Sara.''

''Only a bit on education. 'The Indian basket weaver far surpasses the white woman of college education in invention of art form, artistic design, variety of stitch or weave, color harmonies, and digital dexterity, or ability to compel the fingers to obey the dictates of the brain. Education is by no means a matter of book-learning. It is a discipline of the eye, the hand, the muscles, the nerves, the whole body, to obey the highest judgment, to the end that the best life, the happiest, the healthiest, and the most useful may be attained, and if this definition be at all a true one, I am fully satisfied that if we injected into our methods of civilized education a solution of three-fifths of Indian methods we should give to our race an immeasurably greater happiness, greater health, and greater usefulness.''

''It's a good definition,'' said Glen Harding, thoughtfully. ''But—well, I wish Mr. James would keep it in his own mind, at least the part about obeying the dictates of the highest judgment!''

''What in the world do you mean?''

''I mean that Mr. James has failed entirely, so far, in learning the main lesson his life among the Amerinds ought to have taught him. Actually, Helen, the man lets his own 'highest judgment' go off on such long vacations that his life is now one incessant drive, drive, drive—too busy to listen to reason! It really looks at times as tho he had assented to Herbert Spencer's question, and was trying to live up to it! Yet every line he writes shows that he knows better!''

''What question, Glen?''

'' 'Shall we consider the total absorption of time and energy in business—the servitude of the mind to the needs of the body—the spending of life in the accumulation of the means to live, as constituting ''greatest happiness,'' and act accordingly?' ''

''I would never have dreamed that, Glen. He writes as tho so thoroly in accord with the spirit of freedom.''

''He is! He has a strong personality, and wants to be free—yet claims to be too everlastingly busy to even listen to the one simple way to speedily obtain freedom. He tells us: 'If an evil can be remedied, remedy it. If a wrong can be righted, right it.' And yet he says he is too busy to even look into the one way to remedy the evils against which he declaims, the only way the wrongs done the Amerinds can be righted; the sole path to freedom for any of us."

"I spent a week with Sara, and we went to a number of villages. The Indians, it seemed to me, Glen, are giving way everywhere before civilization. They are adopting the ways of white folks, to their own loss and degradation. Instead of the whites learning from the Indians, they are training or forcing the Indians away from all that was good in their own system of education, and giving them nothing better in place of it."

"Yes, Mr. James admits that the Indians are being overcome by the ways of the whites instead of the whites adopting some good Indian ways. He tells us in this last book to learn from the Indians, and in another to learn from the desert; and yet himself fails to learn the one great lesson that the American Indian and the American Desert alike ought to have taught him!"

"You mean the lesson of the need for true freedom, first of all?"

"Exactly, Helen. Mr. James knows the Amerinds are being ruined because their lands and springs were taken from them. He could see in a moment—if he would let himself stop in his mad rush thru life long enough to let his 'highest judgment' come back and act a while, that it was the free Indians who practiced in fullest measure the system of education he extols; and that it is being lost in the exact degree in which Indians are being enslaved—enslaved by our civilization, our land system. The education of the Indian and the charm of the desert depend on plenty of room, on a free, outdoor life. These things can no more be transplanted into the life of our crowded cities than you could grow a wild rose successfully in a cemented cellar. He asks us to do the impossible, Helen, and then refuses—because 'too busy'—to listen to the one simple thing that can make the life he wants—a free, glorious, growing life—speedily possible for all of us, Indians and whites, alike.

"Oh, Glen, he ought to be made to see that. His knowledge and influence would count for much in hastening the day of genuine freedom."

"Of course it would—and there are others like him. He says we will have to keep at them until they take time to listen. We will, too! Could you believe it, Helen, after reading that book, that Mr. James could say that most people do not want freedom?"

"Is it possible that such a man could ever be so thoughtless!" exclaimed Mrs. Fujita, incredulously.

"It's a fact, Helen, and I tried to work it out—after I recovered from the shock. It seemed to me we might as well say that a plant did not want the light, or that a new born babe does not want air in its lungs. I asked myself, what did I mean when I claimed that, whether conscious of it or not, every person had the instinct for freedom? What is it but the absolute necessity for room in which to grow?"

"I think I understand, Glen," said her friend, looking at little Irene, now playing happily among the acorns. "My baby did not make a speech and demand air, and so most people do not go about demanding freedom. But they develop toward the full stature of normal human beings in just the degree that they have freedom. It is lack of that ample space genuine freedom would give that makes some people so horrible, and all of us somewhat twisted and warped and crooked. Glen, oh, Glen, we must secure a balanced land tenure, and give the children a chance to really live! I'll help all I can," and there was a world of love and resolution in the mother's voice.

"We will, Helen, all of us will work together. Come, Irene, here's a nice basket to take the acorns and pretty cups home in." She began helping the child gather up its treasures, as she added: "We will go right home from here. Birdie has invited Mr. Motora to the family dinner, and she told him to come early. She thought you would like to see all you could of him while here; then he will be another familiar face in Japan."

"Your sister is so kind and thoughtful. I appreciate it and will tell her so when we get back. My husband was greatly pleased when I wrote him I would probably have the opportunity to get acquainted with his friend while here. I do wish, Glen, that you wanted to go home with him. He is really a very fine man."

"Indeed he is," was the hearty assent. "I have rarely met any one so eager to learn and so open minded to new ideas. Then I have learned so much from him, especially about the most ancient religion and traditions of Japan. It is a fascinating study when one understands it, as I wrote you long ago."

"It looked so to me then, but I have been so busy with mother, and visiting friends before leaving for my new home, that I have not had a chance to take up the study."

"Mr. Motora grasped the idea at once, and became intensely interested, and we have done a lot of studying together along that line. He says that it is the only thing that explains the ancient literature of Japan. His wide knowledge of oriental languages and literature has been a great help to me in tracing out and clearing up many points in the old beliefs that at first looked thoroly mysterious and hopelessly occult. He said to me one day that he was so fascinated with the subject that he was tempted to devote the rest of his life to the study. I own I have felt that way myself—many times."

"And yet he takes a very wide awake interest in the land question, and must have been studying that, too, or he would not have so quickly and thoroly grasped Mr. Wynn's ideas."

"Oh, I never lost sight of the importance of the land question—even when most fascinated by the effort to clear up the mysteries of the past—and we studied it also. Mr. Motora's greatest desire is to serve his country and his Emperor, and I am sure he sees now that the settlement of the land question is the one matter of supreme importance in Japan—

and every other country. He is a thoroly practical man, in the sense of desiring to put a good thing in operation as speedily as possible, and we have had many talks about the chances of securing a completely just land tenure—and we know now that is a balanced land tenure—for Japan, as the basis for its highest national prosperity. I am sure you can rely on him, Helen, for all the aid he can give you and Mr. Fujita in carrying out any plan that promises to benefit the Japanese people."

"And you, Glen? Oh, I wish you were coming with him!"

CHAPTER 12.

IN DENNISON'S OFFICE.

"It was Wynn's idea, Mrs. Fujita, to have our first meeting here in my office," Will Dennison remarked, as they stood a moment looking around the large, well lighted room. 'He thought it best to get together those most inclined—or who ought to be most inclined—to work, and have an informal discussion of a balanced land tenure, and lay out some plan of work before we call any general meetings. If enough show up and get interested, we can go right ahead tonight and organize the Pasadena Club. Franklin will preside. He knows more of the men than I do, and will help make the meeting more sociable."

"It looks as tho you expected quite a little crowd, Will," his sister-in-law glanced at the rows of seats. "May I rearrange the chairs a bit?" She moved quickly about among them.

"Any way you like, Glen. I had about thirty placed, and there's a pile in the inner room if we need them. What are you doing? Oh, I see," he laughed.

"We cannot have an informal discussion, Will, if we are all in stiff rows. Now everybody can see all the rest, and any chair can be turned a little this way or that without disturbing others. Everyone will feel more free to speak out, and that is what we want tonight. We must set them to talking to each other as they come in, and make them feel that there is something doing; then when the chairs are pretty full the talk will be general. Jack Romaine promised to act as usher for any late comers. There he is now, and has brought his mother and Mrs. Moreland. That's fine! They will help us." She hurried to the doorway to greet the newcomers.

Inazo Motora found Ernest Wynn waiting for the elevator and greeted him with, "I have read your papers with the greatest interest, Mr. Wynn, and made a number of notes on various points about which I wish to talk with you when we have the opportunity."

Ernest Wynn's face lighted up with pleasure, "I'm glad of that, Mr. Motora. I would much like to be able to reach some of the influential men of Japan, and get them to understand a balanced land tenure. I have written to the statesman whose name you gave me, referring to the efforts being made to allow foreigners to own land in Japan, and pointing out the danger of it; but I don't know whether he will pay any attention to my letter or not."

"He is a thinker, and will not ignore such a letter; besides, you write like Leveleye, and he studied under Leveleye and was much impressed with his ideas."

"Then maybe he will give some attention to what I sent him."

"He will pay attention to it, Mr. Wynn, he is a student and a thinker."

"I have not yet written to the men on the list you gave me. I hope to have a paper going soon, and am waiting to follow up whatever I send them with copies of the paper, and thus keep up any interest my letters and leaflets may start."

"It is not necessary to wait, Mr. Wynn. We cannot tell how much good your literature will do; but no effort is lost. Those men are all earnest men, and everything you send them will have some effect."

"Then I'll write them as quick as I can and have them on the lookout for more. It looks as tho we would have quite a meeting tonight," he added, as they entered the elevator and it filled rapidly.

"Hello, Wynn, I've a piece of good news for you," was Jack Romaine's welcome as he met the group entering the office door. "I found Hugh Murray, of New York, at the Maryland this afternoon, and got him to promise to be here this evening. He knows all those eastern single taxers, and we want a good, live time tonight to show him how we do things out here."

"That's right," exclaimed Glen Harding, who had joined the group in time to catch the latter part of the remark. "We must make every one who comes here tonight see that we are in downright earnest and mean business clear thru."

"Wait a moment, please, Miss Harding," and Ernest Wynn laid a detaining hand on her arm as a momentary jam at the doorway separated them. "There is a woman coming out of the elevator I want you to meet. She is a Mrs. Bell, from Colorado, just arrived here yesterday," he hurriedly explained. "She is one of a family of single taxers I met on my way out. A fine lot of people. I explained my new ideas to them, and later on sent them some leaflets, but I don't know what she thinks of them. I had only a moment's talk with her this afternoon. Here, please, Mrs. Bell," as the newcomer reached the doorway, "I want you to meet Miss Harding."

Glen Harding's greeting was cordial: "I'm glad to see you here, Mrs. Bell. Let me make you acquainted with my friend, Mrs. Fujita. Please take those seats over there where I laid my jacket, Helen, and keep that chair for me. I want to speak to some of the folks coming in."

Most of the chairs were occupied, and Horace Franklin was about to call the meeting to order, when the New Yorker appeared and was promptly escorted by Jack Romaine to the place of honor beside the chairman.

When the stir caused by the arrival and general introduction of the eastern guest had subsided, the chairman observed:

"We want to keep this meeting as informal as possible in order to have such a general discussion of a balanced land tenure as will enable us to clearly understand it, and want to go to work to secure its establishment at the earliest possible moment."

"I thought this was to be a single tax meeting," an elderly man rose to say, with protest and question in his tone.

The chairman looked around. "That's all right, Mr. Olin. Most of us here are, or have been, single taxers; but some of us may remember that Henry George long ago pointed out that human freedom depends on the settlement of the land question. Mr. Wynn claims to be able to show us how to secure a perfect land tenure—which spells freedom for all of us, and, the Lord knows, we need that bad enough. Go ahead, Mr. Wynn."

Ernest Wynn was instantly on his feet: "As I have already talked to most of you, and all of you"—the New Yorker was included in his comprehensive glance about the room—"have had some of my literature on this subject, I will merely state now that I have discovered that the labor applied to the maintenance of roads—or, more precisely, of those portions of the earth that must be used in common—results in giving advantages to some locations over others. Ricardo defined rent as the excess which the same application of labor could secure from different locations. I find that 'excess' to be the equivalent of the advantages just mentioned. Consequently, if those who receive the advantages pay for the labor which makes the advantages, those who labor will be compensated by those who get the results of their labor; advantages will be thereby equalized, and freedom in the use of the earth will be equal. My friends, here is my criterion—the guide that has led me out of the wilderness of vague and uncertain theories: The law of equal freedom—That every person has freedom to do all that va wills provided va infringes not the equal freedom of any other; that the freedom of each person is limited only by the like freedom of every other person. That is the law of human association. It is the only measure of necessary public activities; the only rule by which to draw the line accurately between public and private functions. Whatever is necessary—absolutely necessary—to the maintenance of equal freedom is a public function. All else is necessarily private. There can be no ignoring of this rule without producing inequity.''

''It seems to me''—Jack Romaine's enthusiastic young voice took up the word—''that single taxers ought to tumble over each other to begin work for a balanced land tenure.''

''I agree with that,'' affirmed Glen Harding, ''for Henry George proposed to take ground rent for public purposes, and thereby secure freedom for all people. Mr. Wynn's discovery lies in his showing exactly where the ground rent comes from, and therefore exactly where it must go in order to secure to all persons equal freedom in the use of the earth.''

''Precisely, Miss Harding,'' assented Ernest Wynn. ''It merely clarifies the problem.''

''I don't see how that especially concerns single taxers,'' an energetic looking young man remarked, somewhat aggressively. ''Even if it can be proved true that real rent is exactly equal to the value of the labor expended on common ways, there is no reason why a man should be considered any less a single taxer who refuses to accept it.''

Glen Harding jumped up, exclaiming incredulously: ''Do you actually mean, Mr. Plater, that it does not matter whether single taxers accept or reject a truth, the recognition of which is essential to the settlement of the land question?''

''Well, I don't see any call to make a fuss about it, so long as we go ahead and work for the single tax,'' was the quick retort. ''You know that single taxers have never yet been able to agree as to who really pays the rent, and it is harder yet to agree on what part of rent reflects government expenses.''

''Why, Mr. Plater,'' Jack Romaine laughingly put in, ''that sounds as tho single taxers did not know what the single tax was, nor where it came from, nor where it ought to go to.''

''That's a mere matter of theory and definition,'' Carl Plater insisted, with some heat. ''It's folly to claim that there's only one way to work for equal freedom; or to demand that before people can work for 'that taking of rent known as the single tax' they shall agree completely among themselves on all other questions. Single taxers are agreed that land values ought to be taken for public expenses, thru the single tax, and we ought to work as hard as we can for that.''

''Yet, if there should be only one way to reach the goal of equal freedom, I'd be mighty glad to know I was working along in that path,'' exclaimed a voice.

"So would I," agreed another. "There's lots of truth in the old text: 'Enter ye in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. Because straight is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth into life and few there be that find it.' "

"There's all the more need, then," cried Jack Romaine, "that those who do see the right way should tell the others as fast as they can, and get them headed straight."

"Single taxers confuse themselves and others thru their failure to recognize that what they call ground rent includes two entirely different things," Ernest Wynn rose to explain. "One is the product of the labor of maintaining the common ways, the other the product of individuals in their personal affairs. Single taxers also fail to see that what they call land value is neither of these, but only the power to take—to appropriate—these. Robbing the robber cannot result in equity, whether we call the process the single tax or by any other name."

"Whatever the genesis of land value, I favor taking it for public purposes," Carl Plater was up again. "If we stop work for the single tax until we thrash out all theoretical differences nothing will be done."

Ernest Wynn started up, but sat down again as a stout, comfortable looking man of middle age rose and mildly remarked: "I don't think I quite understand some of the things Mr. Wynn has said and written. 'The Single Tax' may not be as felicitous a title as 'a balanced land tenure,' but to me it sounds just as well."

"It is not a question of sound, Mr. Lawrence, but of meaning," Glen Harding flashed out. "As the name plainly shows, a balanced land tenure means an exact balance—the 'equilibrium of equity' Patrick Edward Dove wrote about. The words 'single tax' have no definite meaning, and this has led to that lack of agreement among single taxers which Mr. Plater just mentioned."

"It does not appear so to me, Miss Harding," the mild voice insisted. "I can see in a balanced land tenure only an incomplete statement of the single tax."

Glen Harding smiled: "A balanced land tenure is only an incomplete statement of the single tax, in the sense that it leaves out the element of tribute which the single taxer includes in rent; and by that very elimination it fails to become a tax, but remains merely the expression of service for service—a fair exchange."

"I cannot see wherein 'a balanced land tenure' is an improvement on the single tax, as I understand it," John Lawrence persisted.

Glen Harding held her ground. "Now, Mr. Lawrence, would you think of saying 'the multiplication table, as I understand it'? Do you not see that the very fact that single taxers find it necessary to say, 'the single tax as I understand it,' is ample evidence that the words 'single tax' have no definite meaning? Too few of us seem to realize how our way of talking limits our power to think clearly, or we would surely be more careful in our choice of words when discussing a matter of such supreme importance as that involved in the settlement of the land question."

"Well, that is just what the single tax will do! The single tax, as I understand it," John Lawrence's mild voice rambled on again, "is a tax on the value of all valuable locations which will equalize the advantages of locations, the abolition of all other taxation; and the using of the entire amount of such tax for all necessary public uses; for the maintenance of Courts of Justice; and even for some public uses which may not be absolutely necessary, such as the maintenance of public parks, for public music furnished in public parks and other public places; for the building and maintenance of public halls, where public entertainments may be given free or at a nominal price; for the building and maintenance of public schools, public baths, libraries and museums, picture galleries, etc.; in short, for anything and everything which the people themselves, thru unbribed, unbribable, public spirited representatives would think desirable for the people for participation in common, as distinguished from what pertains to private life. The maintenance of highways is a necessary public use, but it falls far short of covering everything that must, under any conceivable condition, be paid from public moneys. Another comes to me now. For a long while, in fact, till all the world has come to our way of thinking, the maintenance of an army and navy will be a necessary public expenditure.''

Glen Harding rose quickly, her eyes flashing with indignant fire: ''How can you imagine an army and navy as existing anywhere under equitable conditions?'' she exclaimed. ''How can you conceive of an army and navy as necessary under true freedom? Do you not realize that so long as such physical force is considered supreme or even necessary, the world will be subject to despotism? Even today there is absolutely no rational excuse for the existence of war materials—whether soldiers or war machines—in a nation calling itself enlightened. We do not need them against weaker peoples unless our purpose is the enslavement or extermination of those peoples. We cannot use them against nations as powerful as our own without utterly overriding what has been called 'the first law of nature', the instinct of self-preservation. The normal condition for all peoples is that of harmony and mutual aid, and, by securing equal freedom in the use of the earth we will provide the soil, the environment, in which such friendliness will grow and flourish. We of the United States can adjust ourselves to the law of human association at any time we choose, in our relations with each other—utterly regardless of what other peoples do.''

''Miss Harding is right,'' Ernest Wynn affirmed, decisively. ''There are no people so idiotic as to even dream of attacking such a nation as the United States, if all its people were living the happy and comfortable lives of an equitable condition.

Even now they will not do it if we attend strictly to our own affairs. In all my experience of several years among men of the frontier—some of them of the worst sort—I never found it necessary to even carry a revolver. 'Mind your own business' was my motto, and it kept me out of trouble. Any nation that will do as I did will have as little use for an army and navy. As for the other things Mr. Lawrence mentions as proper for support thru taxation, I want all of you to recognize certain facts: Given a world in which the material and forces of nature yield only to labor, without discrimination of persons, and there is but one criterion by which to regulate human association—the criterion of equal freedom. The sole test must ever be: Does it tend to equal freedom or to create advantages? No matter what else may be said for or against the proposition, if it does not plainly tend directly toward equal freedom—if it does not fit in with the conception of equal freedom—it must necessarily tend toward unequal freedom, which is, and ever was, inequity; and must not be considered as possible. The distinct line between individual and political action is always and only the line of equal freedom—and this begins and ends with a balanced land tenure. Whatever is either more or less necessarily results in evil. That is, whatever is either more or less than necessary to the maintenance of equal freedom must necessarily produce unequal freedom—and that spells slavery."

As Ernest Wynn sat down Mrs. Fujita rose to speak, her cheeks slightly flushed, and her eyes shining, but her tone expressed a great regret as she began: "It seems to me such a pity that this matter of a balanced land tenure could not have been brought before the Single Tax Conference in New York last November. They put in a whole afternoon discussing the terms 'common ownership,' 'whether of land or land value,' and the words 'land value' or 'rent,' and that would have been such a fine opportunity to have brought in a balanced land tenure and cleared up the whole problem once for all. If I had only known about it then, I would have tried my best to get the subject before the assembled single taxers, and so furnished all of us with a new incentive to enthusiastic work for human freedom. But I suppose you did not make the discovery in time to take it there?" She turned to Ernest Wynn, who answered promptly:—

"Yes, I did, but I was not able to go to the conference as I had intended to do. I sent my papers to our friend here, Mr. Murray"—he looked toward the New Yorker—"because he knew something of my previous work for the single tax, and I knew he would be sure to be at all the meetings of the conference."

Hugh Murray smiled genially as he rose to his feet. "Yes, indeed, Mr. Wynn, your name has been long known to me, and I think I have appreciated the services you have rendered to the single tax cause. But really, I was unable to bring up your suggestion of a balanced land tenure because my conception of the conference was a meeting together of persons who believed in the single tax, not a meeting for the discussion of other remedies, however valuable they might be in themselves.''

Mrs. Fujita and Glen Harding exchanged glances of amazement, and Will Dennison ejaculated: ''The idea of saying that a single tax conference is not the proper place at which to discuss the land question! What has become of the single taxers' boast that they were the true land reformers, and their cry of 'the land for the people'? As well might an astronomer say that a conference of astronomers was not the proper place at which to discuss the question of the discovery of another celestial body!''

Jack Romaine bounced up impulsively, adding: ''Especially if they all acknowledged the discoverer to be one of their most devoted astronomers and accurate observers, and in his discovery lay the explanation of problems which had been a puzzle and hindrance in their work for years. Why, anyone would think such men had gone daft—to refuse to even consider his evidence, when all that he asked of them was to point their own telescopes in the direction he suggested and see for themselves what was there!''

''Now, gentlemen and ladies, please consider a moment the difficulties under which I was working.'' The New Yorker was on his feet again, protesting. ''If you could realize how hard it was to get those present at the conference to come to any sort of agreement on the single tax itself, you would understand how fatal to the much desired spirit of harmony it would have been to introduce another subject, such as that of a balanced land tenure. I have never assumed the single tax to be a finality in the sense that once it was achieved, all need for economic reform would be eliminated; but, on the other hand, I regard it as an essential step toward any just social order, and until it has been achieved I am not personally concerning myself with what lies on the other side of the hill. In a word, you will understand me as not either accepting or disputing the views Mr. Wynn now holds, but simply as giving it as my humble opinion that the conference held in November was not the proper place for their discussion.''

A white-haired man rose slowly to his feet, his tall, spare form and bent shoulders shaking a little, while his voice quivered with excitement as he said: ''Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Murray, that I, who have worked steadily for the single tax since 1879, as the solution of the land question, have lived to learn that single taxers have ceased to work for the settlement of the land question and become mere tax reformers and government machinery tinkerers? Is the single tax more to them than human freedom?''

''Oh, no,'' was the quick reply. ''I only mean that we must get the single tax first; then we can attend to other things.''

''You remind me, Mr. Murray,'' Will Dennison remarked, with a twinkle in his eyes, ''of the story I heard a Farmers' Alliance man tell when I was in Omaha several years ago. He said a man was riding across the plains, and, seeing in the distance an unfamiliar object, went toward it. As he approached it there seemed to be a dark object on a mass of white, like a buzzard on a carcass. Curiosity led him on. Imagine his surprise to find a man sitting astride a pile of bleaching bones, and flopping his arms and calling to the bones to 'git up'.

" 'What in the world are you doing?' he said.

" 'Doing,' replied the man, 'doing? Why, I'm riding Dobbin. My grand father rode Dobbin; my father rode Dobbin; and I'm going to ride Dobbin as long as a bone will hold together. Git up, Dobbin!' "

In the midst of the laughter that followed, Ernest Wynn sprang up and faced the guest of the evening. his small, slight form, tense with the enthusiasm of a great purpose, contrasting sharply with the large, loose portliness of the other man. "You said a little while ago, Mr. Murray," he began, "that you appreciated my efforts for the single tax, and yet you refuse to personally—or otherwise—consider a suggestion of mine which is thoroly in line with Henry George's assertion that the tenure of land is the fundamental fact which must ultimately determine the conditions of the industrial, social and political life of persons. This matter is of too vital importance to human freedom to be lightly put aside, and I want to ask you, as a representative single taxer, a few questions, the answers to which concern all of us. You say that the single tax conference was not the proper place to discuss a balanced land tenure. But suppose that the value of a balanced land tenure consists in its being a finality which will eliminate all need of further economic reform? And suppose, further, that it can be attained with less expenditure of time and energy than it would take to get the single tax into full operation? Is 'the single tax, right or wrong,' your motto? Surely single taxers generally have not become so dogmatic, so conservative, as to deliberately close their minds to new ideas? It does not seem possible that the rank and file of single taxers have become so irrational as to be willing to refuse to ever again reconsider the grounds of their faith in the single tax. Do you suppose, Mr. Murray, that the firmness of your hold upon your belief will suffice, in lieu of logic, when some of your single tax assertions are challenged? Will you persist in trying to climb to the top of a certain hill regardless of what is to be gained by the climb? What if you should be mistaken, and the single tax can be proven not to be an essential step toward any just social order? Of what earthly use was a conference of professed political reformers at which it was not proper to discuss the only question—that of the land tenure—the solution of which can possibly place all political action on a normal basis?"

"Oh, I say, what's the use of fussing over that conference?" exclaimed Carl Plater. "Henry George neither sought nor coined the name 'single tax?' His book was not written to secure a perfect tax system. What he preached was that we must abolish that control over the earth which gives to some men the power to make slaves of others."

"Of course he did," promptly assented Ernest

Wynn. "And that is precisely what a balanced land tenure will do—and nothing else will. As a matter of fact, I can prove that a perfect land tenure—the object Henry George had in view—can be attained thru such a disposition of rent as will totally abolish all taxation—single as well as multiple. In other words, I can prove that the fullest measure of Henry George's desires can be completely realized—on all lines; as to the disposition of rent; the settlement of the land tenure; the abolition of poverty; the establishment of human freedom and equity—by a balanced land tenure, without taxation of any kind."

"If this new idea really is in line with the teachings of the Prophet of San Francisco," came a voice from near the door, "how comes it that more single taxers didn't think of it instead of drifting along or going off into socialism, theosophy and things?"

Glen Harding rose quickly, her cheeks pink and her eyes bright. "I think I can explain that," she said. "Most single taxers have followed the letter of Henry George's teachings, and it has led to apathy, half desertion, or feverish spurts of energy—among a leaderless host. Mr. Wynn followed the spirit of the same great teacher, and it led to the discovery of a balanced land tenure."

"The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," proclaimed the voice of the Bible student.

"Now, see here, Mr. Wynn, I have been a single taxer for a good many years,"—John Lawrence was again on his feet, his mild eyes beaming pleasantly on the attentive faces about him—"and as such I believe in taking the full amount of land value for public purposes. Hence, as I understand it, the single tax is an equalization of privileges thru taxation—at least in its first principle and essence. What more is your statement of a balanced land tenure?"

"Have you forgotten what Henry George clearly pointed out in Protection or Free Trade?—that the value of land was a power of appropriation, of robbery?" Ernest Wynn retorted. "It is nothing but a tribute compelling power, made possible by an unbalanced land tenure. Further, the power to tax, as the United States Supreme Court has said, is the power to destroy. It is nothing more nor less than the power to take, regardless of returning an equivalent. Does nature give any person any authority to tax another? Does not the power to tax necessarily include the power to rule, to govern? Can there be equal freedom where some govern others? Is not the taxation of a tribute compelling power—whether a so-called 'franchise' or 'land value'—the same in effect as the fines policemen inflict on houses of ill-fame—practical license? On the other hand, in a balanced land tenure there is simply a rendering of an equivalent for services received; that is, the payment for labor by those who receive the advantages of that labor."

"It looks like a fair proposition," cried a voice, "and its worth putting before the people to see what they make of it."

Here the single tax woman from Colorado rose to speak, smiling, but with a firm line about her lips. "I would like to say," she began, "that while I feel with Mr. Wynn that there are matters which need remedying, and I agree with him about some of these, still I must claim the right to withhold my support from any effort to get a balanced land tenure before the people."

"Matters which need remedying! Oh, Mrs. Bell!" Glen Harding rose beside her. "How can you speak so lightly when the whole industrial world is in a ferment, and there are people everywhere who are looking about desperately for a practical way out of the evil and corruption that is daily being brought to light? Think of your own State—Colorado!"

"It's small wonder that Colorado gave the world such an exhibition of lawlessness during recent years," exclaimed a voice, "if the rest of the cultivated, educated people there, especially single taxers, think so little of a matter as vitally important as the settlement of the land question as to refuse to try to understand a balanced land tenure!"

Ernest Wynn rose quickly. "May I ask a question, Mrs. Bell?" he said. The Colorado woman nodded pleasantly as she sat down. "Have you read my explanation of a balanced land tenure with sufficient care to understand its relation to the industrial problems we are all facing—each in va's own line—at this moment?"

"Of couse I think I understand the drift of your present views," Mrs. Bell answered pleasantly, but I had only time to merely glance over the literature you sent us. You see, we women vote in Colorado, and I've been so busy the last few months over some city improvements and civic federation work, I really had not the time to take up this other line. We women saved quite a lot of money to the city."

"That is, Mrs. Bell," came the voice again, "you were so busy wrestling with the parasites in the tiger's paw that you did not notice the animal was putting in the time chewing up your own children!"

"I am beginning to wonder if we have not all been doing a little too much of that sort of thing," said Will Dennison seriously. "We have been so busy over the little things that we wholly neglected the foundation on which they rest, and that is now being undermined so rapidly that the whole industrial and social concern is tumbling about our ears."

John Lawrence had been stirring uneasily in his seat for some time, and now rose again, a slight flush on his smooth, round face, but only mild kindliness in his tone, as he began: "Now, Mr. Wynn, I want you to understand that when a community—city, state, or nation—acting in its corporate capacity thru representatives elected by the free vote of the members of such community, collects from each individual in the community, including artificial individuals or corporations, a payment which will equalize privileges—with especial reference to land held in exclusive possession or used in a special manner by right of franchise—and collects no other tax. Such taxation is just. The right of a community to collect such a tax in the way indicated is not a right to rob or destroy. That is my idea of the single tax. And I absolutely and irrevocably deny your right to tell me that I must not think so. I have given you what I believe to be a fair hearing. I would ask you kindly to desist from seeking to convince me that my honest thought is wrong."

Glen Harding rose, smiling brightly, her musical voice holding a coaxing cadence: "But you will not mind my trying, just once, will you?" she began. "Suppose, Mr. Lawrence, that you honestly think it is ten miles from here to a certain point, and I honestly think it is eleven miles between the same points. Then along comes a surveyor and measures the distance between the two points and finds it to be exactly ten and one-half miles. What becomes of our 'honest thought'? It's not a question of honesty of thinking, but of accuracy of knowledge. It is not a question of opinion or preference, but solely of the discovery of a fact—depending on natural law. In the case of the law underlying a balanced land tenure, the matter is of most vital concern to every one of us, for upon the accuracy of our knowledge of that law depends our ability to live in harmony."

"It concerns all of us," added Mrs. Fujita, looking around an instant as her friend sat down, "for the quicker we understand that law the sooner we can all become freed from the weight of the dreadful conditions around us today—thru their total abolition!"

''However did you become a single taxer, Mr. Lawrence?'' questioned a voice. ''You must have changed a good deal since you welcomed a new idea.''

''And worked faithfully to spread it broadcast thru the newspapers, as I can testify,'' added Horace Franklin.

''You need not listen to me, Mr. Lawrence,'' Ernest Wynn was up again, smiling and bright-eyed, ''But I want to call the attention of the rest of you,'' he glanced about the room, ''to a few points in Mr. Lawrence's remarks about corporations. As just stated, Mr. Lawrence's idea of the single tax involves the existence of 'artificial individuals,' called corporations, and property in privileges called franchises. Do you not all know that corporations are composed of natural persons, and that they can do everything, in unincorporated voluntary association, that they can as a corporation, except the one thing of exercising advantages granted by corporation legislation? Natural individuals cannot possibly be equally free when any number of them can take advantage of others thru the legislative fiction of 'artificial individuals.' The 'special manner' by which land is held 'by right of franchise' is that by which some persons—usually 'artificial' ones—are granted legislative authority to hold exclusive possession of land that must be used in common. This is legislative creation of property in privileges: and its sole object is to enable some persons to collect tribute from others. It is a physical impossibility to equalize such privileges. The advantages of exclusive possession of land can only be equalized when the possession is of locations which are not necessarily used in common. Portions of the earth necessarily used in common cannot be exclusively possessed without that power of exclusion giving the possessors the other power of collecting tribute from the users. Exclusive possession is a form of land tenure equitably applicable only to locations which are subject to exclusive use. Common possession is the only form of land tenure equitably applicable to those portions of the earth which must be used in common. Mr. Lawrence's idea of the single tax therefore involves two inequities—both legislative interferences with normal human relations; the fiction of 'artificial individuals,' and the fiction of the 'right of franchise.' Neither of these can possibly fit a balanced land tenure. A balanced land tenure is a tenure of land that is balanced—that is perfect—which allows no one to retain any advantages over any other. Mr. Lawrence's idea of the single tax not only allows, but necessitates, an unbalanced tenure of land; and the perpetuation of the advantages of some over others."

Will Dennison looked a little startled: "I had not thought of that phase of the question, Wynn, but it does appear as tho the artificial persons called corporations can exist only where the machinery of government is used to enable some persons to levy tribute from others."

"That seems plain enough to me," Glen Harding rose to say. "Civilization, thru government machinery, creates fictions and artificial persons to profit by them—but real live people attend to spending all the money involved. As far as the work itself is concerned, exactly the same persons can unite their efforts and build a railway or operate a coal mine, or dredge for gold. The sole reason for the artificial-person arrangement is to enable the real people composing it to obtain some sort of tribute compelling power. There is something wofully strange in the blindness which hinders people from seeing that Tom, Dick and Harry can do exactly the same work—neither more nor less—in a plain partnership, as they can when called a legal corporation. The vastly greater returns that they actually get as a corporation simply measure the tribute compelling power given them by legal enactment."

A man seated near the chairman rose hastily, exclaiming, "I don't see it that way at all. I would not tax corporations merely because they are such. I would tax only those corporations that have extraordinary privileges. If the opportunity to incorporate is open to everybody with only a small fee to pay, I cannot see that there is any special privilege involved."

"Why need we have corporations at all, Mr. Pardue," asked Jack Romaine.

"So that everybody will be 'at liberty to avail themselves of the continuous existence and freedom from personal liability obtained by corporate organization'," was the prompt reply. "This invention of the corporation makes it convenient for many people to join in an enterprise when it is impossible for all to help in the management.''

''So you consider,'' said Ernest Wynn, quickly, '' 'the continuous existence and freedom from personal liability obtained by corporate organization' 'no special privilege' over the discontinuous existence and personal liability of natural persons? Do you not see that, whenever the number of people who can co-operate conveniently, in an organized way, reaches the point where the addition of another member would necessitate a special privilege, it has reached the limit of normal organized co-operation? The investor in a corporation who participates only in its dividends, merely buys a share in a tribute compelling machine.''

''I think Mr. Pardue's point well taken, and that we ought not to tax unprivileged corporations,'' said a voice that caused Will Dennison to turn around quickly in his seat and give a nod of pleased recognition, as he caught the speaker's eye.

''It's Lewis Demos, of Chicago,'' he whispered to his sister-in-law. ''I didn't know he was in town; Wynn knows him well.'' Aloud, he said: ''I'm glad to see you here, Mr. Demos, but I don't see how you make out that there can be unprivileged corporations!''

''Oh, Mr. Pardue's statement settles that; tho I admit that the corporation may not be the best way for people to combine. But the point is that we ought to tax only 'the value of extraordinary privileges such as are unavoidable.' We should never tax useful occupations, whether corporations or not.''

''In that case,'' retorted Ernest Wynn, ''if 'extraordinary privileges should be abolished, there would cease to be any 'public revenues,' hence you assume the necessary perpetuity of 'extraordinary privileges.' You thus identify 'public revenues' with useless occupations, and assert the unavoidability of such occupations. Evidently you do not consider the laws of nature as in any way applicable to humanity; or a sane and harmonious human association as possible. To assert that there are any 'unavoidable' 'extraordinary privileges' is to assert that there is no law of equity—equal freedom. For where freedom is equal and there are any privileges, they are not only ordinary but equalized—balanced. A so-called 'unavoidable' 'extraordinary privilege' is an unbalanced, unequalized privilege, beyond the reach of ordinary persons, the advantages of which, instead of being equalized, are appropriated by the extraordinarily privileged. To exterminate such by taxation would prove them to be avoidable. To tax them short of extermination would be to license—and thereby authorize—them. To exterminate them by taxation would be to transfer their 'value'—power—from them to the government. The inequity of their existence would remain untouched.''

''You don't understand me, Mr. Wynn,'' Lewis Demos protested, ''I mean that Mr. Pardue's doctrine is sound 'with reference to the desirability of equalizing opportunity by divesting extraordinary privileges of their extraordinary profits.''

''Natural opportunities, Mr. Demos,'' Ernest Wynn quietly insisted, ''cannot be equalized by merely 'divesting extraordinary privileges of their extraordinary profits.' As a matter of fact, so long as any privileges are extraordinary their profits are sure to be of the same nature.''

''The idea of sane conditions involving the existence of such things as our modern corporations, is foreign to any true conception of real freedom,'' Glen Harding took up the word. ''You see, Mr. Demos''—she glanced toward the Chicago man, and he wondered at the serene hopefulness of her smile—''we do not need corporations. All that we need to make this world a veritable garden, is to establish equal freedom—equal opportunities—and thus all have a chance to grow! The time and energy we now have to worse than waste over extraordinary privileges, either in trying to secure them or in struggling against them, would suffice, if spent in useful work and rational recreation, to provide ourselves with all the wholesome enjoyments of life, and leave us a vast fund of energy to spend in learning and growing.''

''That reminds me,'' Mrs. Fujita eagerly added. ''of a remark made by Ernest Crosby: 'Perhaps the greatest advantage which the wage worker possesses over the slave is that he thinks he is free, and freedom is such a quickener and vivifyer that the mere belief that you have it is a tonic in itself.' If that is true of a mere belief while people are actually working under slave—tribute paying—conditions, what will the real thing be—the glorious life of genuine freedom for every one of us?''

''We must work with all our might to find out inside of the next ten years!'' cried Jack Romaine, fast becoming the irrepressible, yet with a ring of serious determination in his still youthful voice.

''Single taxers think they are doing something now; that they have something practicable,'' exclaimed a voice, ''and I think that it would require an inner circle, a sort of esoteric group, to educate the single taxers, and that your efforts for a balanced land tenure would therefore tend to confuse them.''

''Oh, come, now, Norman,'' Will Dennison smilingly protested, ''don't make single taxers out too foolish! I was a single taxer, and yet I understood a balanced land tenure pretty quickly, and any other single taxer can do as much who will give the subject the serious attention its importance demands.''

''I think Mr. Wynn is too anxious to make single taxers take up a balanced land tenure!'' John Lawrence had risen again, his comfortable dignity unruffled, but his mild eyes showing a trace of impatience. ''Probably, Mr. Wynn,'' turning towards him, ''you are right in your estimate of the capacities of single taxers, but single taxers form but an insignificant part of the population of the United States. Therefore, in my opinion, it would be better to address yourself or the truths you have discovered to people regardless of what single taxers—including Mr. George—may have said or written, and also regardless of whether your audience may include a few single taxers or not.''

Ernest Wynn rose hastily, and there was a look of wonderment in his eyes and a note of appeal in the voice that said: ''Am not I, a follower and admirer of Henry George, justified in expecting that all who are worthy to be classed as such ought to be, of all people, the most ready to bring accepted theories to the test of first principles whenever any new discovery may seem to make that advisable; or in expecting them to be the last to shrink from logical conclusions, or to turn back when those conclusions challenge the institution of taxation, so long deemed wise and natural? Is it possible for one who would 'follow truth wherever it may lead' to ask to be excused from discussing fundamental principles? Shades of Henry George! Has it come to this—that a single taxer should beg me not to appeal to single taxers in behalf of a perfect land tenure!''

''Mr. Lawrence spoke only for himself, Mr. Wynn,'' said the chairman. ''Some of us wish to learn all the new truths—newly discovered truths—we can get hold of.''

''Yes, indeed, Mr. Wynn,'' Jack Romaine asserted, valiantly. ''Lots of us will go to work like beavers for a balanced land tenure—and get it, too.''

''And that will be working to get people to live in accord with natural law,'' began Ernest Wynn, with a quick look of appreciation toward the single taxers who were unafraid. "John Stuart Mill was right when he said that 'In political economy the greatest errors arise from overlooking the most obvious truths.' I have found a truth in regard to legislation which is obvious enough to have been pointed out before, but which is overlooked in actual legislation. The verbal formula, 'Two straight lines cannot enclose a space,' is human made, but the fact of nature thus described is entirely independent of human thought and action. There is the same difference between human legislation and natural law—that is, that the BEST that humanity can do is to formulate the description of the laws of nature."

Glen Harding rose and looked around at the wide awake faces about her. "I would like to explain the reason for, or the way human legislation came to be, but it may take more time than I am entitled to?" she looked enquiringly at the chairman, who smilingly replied:—

"We have no time limit tonight, Miss Harding. Just go ahead and we'll listen."

"Originally people, all the people on earth," Glen Harding began, "were—literally, thru the laws of vibratory movement—controlled, and every action of their lives was regulated by, divine law—the orderly trend of canopy movement—and they lived in harmony. This time of peace and plenty and friendliness has come down to us in traditions of a Golden Age.

"As the old environment passed away, the direct control was broken forever, and the interpretation of divine law—another name for nature's orderly trend, or the physical laws of the universe—passed more and more into the hands of priests; and when the old environment was forgotten, those divine laws became so misread and misunderstood that, in an effort to gain freedom, the people set up human statutes in the vain attempt to correct mental error by physical force.

"If there had been no error there would have been no religion as now known, for all would have been pure science—the recognition of natural law as the one controlling power necessary to harmonious human association. In place of the fear of the Lord as a feeling of terror of an unknown power, the original meaning of fear—reverence—would have been retained, and the fear of the Lord would have shown forth in a reverent regard for—a striving to live in harmony with—known natural law.

"Those tribes—as some of the Amerinds—who lived in closest harmony with the divine law had the fullest measure of happiness. Every genuine effort to understand and conform to natural law, every really scientific discovery, is a movement to get back to that equitable condition which was lost thru the misreading and misinterpretation of canopy scenes and canopy memorials.

"Of all living things, persons alone possess the power to live in harmony with, or to disregard nature's laws. It is because of the absence of this power—this free will—on the part of other living things, that we can have natural sciences. If other living things possessed the free will of persons and used it in the same way most persons have done, we could have no natural science about them. We would have plant chaos; and animals, birds and insects in an indistinguishable snarl of confusion—just as we have the hideous conglomerate of cruelty, misery, graft, poverty, riot and war we call 'advanced civilization.'

"Oh, I do beg of you! Listen to the simple message which tells us how easily and quickly we can adjust the affairs of our everyday lives to a plain natural law that any sensible person can understand. Why should we go on in this straining, struggling, rioting mode of life, when the way is now easily open to a life of peace and plenty for all; a life of rational enjoyment and genuine friendship among all peoples? All that stands between us and that goal is the necessity for giving a little time and thought to a clear understanding of the simple message of a balanced land tenure, and then working a while to send the news thruout the land—thruout the world," she hastily corrected herself, as she caught Inazo Motora's significant glance and smile.

"It's a new gospel of glad tidings! Count me as one of its preachers," interjected the Bible student's voice.

"Most gladly," Glen Harding smiled and nodded toward a young man with serious eyes and curly hair. "There can be but one result to the going forth of this plain message," she continued. "It is a message of hope to ALL persons, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. ALL will be benefited, and no one can be injured, by the establishment of equal freedom on the basis of a balanced land tenure."

"That's a rock bottom truth, Miss Harding!" exclaimed a voice which caused the chairman to stare in the direction of the speaker, and made Will Dennison turn sharply in his chair to look at the same spot, as tho he could not trust his ears.

"It's Jackson, one of our multi-millionaires. I don't know how he came to be here," he whispered to Mrs. Fujita. "What's got into Glen? She is going on again!"

"I am quite sure that every sane person on earth wants real freedom, and by going at it in the right way we can speedily tell the good news of how to secure it, to all the world. Somewhere in each person there is—latent or active—that instinct for freedom which will respond to the call. This gathering here tonight is merely the world in miniature—" Glen Harding paused and glanced slowly about the room as tho comprehending in that one long look the story of each separate face—"for I see there are here representatives of several races." She gave a friendly nod toward Jake Harris, beside the door, bestowed a pleased look of recognition on a dark-faced man in the middle of the room whom Ernest Wynn knew to be an Amerind, caught for an instant the intent look of the cultured Japanese seated near her, and then smiled slightly as she saw the surprise in the face of her handsome brother-in-law.

"We are a little world, in race and wealth," she resumed. "There are some here who have more money than they know what to do with, and others who are out of work and know what it is to be strained to the point of endurance to keep body and soul together, and—"

"Let me say a word right there, please, Miss Harding," Jack Romaine, who had been for some moments busily whispering to his mother, now interrupted, as he rose to his feet.

Glen Harding nodded, smiling, and sat down.

"I only want to say," and his friends felt the subtle sense of a new resoluteness in the tall form and square shoulders, the frank smile and fearless eyes of the young man who now glanced quickly about at the little crowd of interested faces, and began again: "I want to tell all of you here that I used to be one of those people Miss Harding says have more money than they know what to do with, but I won't be bothered that way any more, for I will put all the money I have into the work for human freedom—I detest riot, and I don't want poverty. All I ask is a fair field and no favor."

"Thank God!" fervently exclaimed the Bible student.

A young man in the rear of the room, as tall and broad-shouldered as Jack Romaine, but showing the signs of the day laborer in his sunburned face and roughened hands, now rose hastily, as with a sudden resolution: "I've been idle most of the time for weeks," he said, "and I have not a dollar to my name, but I'll work for real freedom with all my strength, if some of you will tell me how."

Ernest Wynn sprang up. "Stop after the meeting, friend, till I can have a talk with you."

Mrs. Moreland, a pleasant-faced woman who, in her seat beside Jack Romaine, had been listening with interest to the talk, now rose to suggest: "Would it not be a good idea to try Mr. Wynn's plan somewhere in a colony? That would give us an illustration of the theory, just as Fairhope and Arden are so beautifully illustrating the single tax."

"Oh, no, you are sadly misinformed as to those colonies, Mrs. Moreland," exclaimed Glen Harding. "The use of the words 'single tax' and calling themselves 'single taxers' has so misled the followers of Henry George that they have ended by a complete reversal of his suggested single tax. Henry George proposed to take ground rent in the form of a single tax, abolishing all other taxes. But the two so-called 'single tax colonies,' Fairhope and Arden, take all the State and County taxes and the ground rent, from tenants, in the shape of ground rent—no taxes whatever being abolished. This leads them into other errors, and instead of self-government thru the town meeting, we have seen, in the one community, government by the landlord council, and in the other community, government by a group of philanthropic trustees."

Mrs. Moreland looked surprised, but insisted: "Could not Mr. Wynn's theory be tested in a colony?"

''No,'' Ernest Wynn answered the question. ''All colonies are dependent upon facilities for transportation between their locations and the rest of the world. Every colony in the United States, for instance, is subject to Federal, State and County legislation, practically all of which is inequitable. Tariff, money, tax, transportation, postal, and other legislation affects them. The smallest area to which a balanced land tenure can be applied is that of a nation sufficiently large and varied to be practically independent of outside control. It can easily be applied in the United States, for when an enlightened conviction, resting on scientific knowledge, becomes popular—dominant—there is no opposition except that of the ignorant, and that is soon dissipated. Hence, to realize this most desirable of all human conditions—equal freedom—requires nothing more than the persistent, intelligent and unflinching presentation of this truth—the law of human association based upon a balanced land tenure—until every sane adult person has been made familiar with it; until it shall so shape public opinion that nothing can prevent its application.''

''That sounds very well, Mr. Wynn,'' admitted Mrs. Moreland, ''but it seems people will have to be made over first. Everyone is so busy grabbing money, position, knowledge, pleasure, whatever that particular nature wants most, that nine-tenths of them don't know that down under it all they have the 'race consciousness.' It takes something like a great calamity to jar them into understanding. I guess the people would be all right if they could be educated intelligently."

"Of course they would," asserted Glen Harding. "As a matter of cold fact, persons are as capable today of learning how to live equitably—right here and now—as they ever were or ever can be. The capacity for equitable living exists in every sane adult; it is only the exercise of that faculty that is lacking."

"A good deal depends on what Mrs. Moreland means by being 'made over'," added Ernest Wynn, smiling. "Human nature cannot be changed, but the direction of its activities can be. Nearly all human energy seems now to be directed to what are called 'selfish' ends because the environing inequitable conditions make that the line of least resistance. Money represents wealth and power. Position and knowledge indicate power. Pleasure, so-called, as practiced today, is usually dissipation—a form of excitement. These things appear desirable because they are the possessions and practices of those persons who are privileged to compel the rest to pay them tribute. The result is that both classes are demoralized. A great calamity may jar a people loose—bring them to a standstill, and enable them to think—but it cannot make them understand. Some people may be brought to a stop in their mad career by a sudden shock, and, in the interval of let-up from their headlong haste, may get an idea or two. But, undoubtedly, all that the people need is enlightenment; and the quickest way to secure that is to diffuse public discussion as widely as possible. One year's discussion of a balanced land tenure in one or two local weeklies in every county in the United States would result in making the subject the dominant one in the whole country."

"You are too optimistic, Mr. Wynn," exclaimed a voice. "It will take a hundred years—more likely a thousand—to get such ideas into people's minds. I grant they are all right so far as I have looked into them, but it takes too long for people to understand them."

"Not a bit of it," retorted Ernest Wynn. "It didn't take you an hour to understand what I said, when we talked over a balanced land tenure. Who are the people? Nothing in the world but other human beings with capacities and needs similar to yours and mine. All that is necessary is to get the truth before them, and they can understand it as easily as you and I can."

"But even if they do understand it, Mr. Wynn," a scholarly looking man here put in, "don't you think it is claiming a little too much to expect that such a small thing as a mere change in the tenure of land can accomplish the great results you predict?"

"Most assuredly not!" Ernest Wynn promptly replied. "Let us heed the lesson taught by another branch of physical science. The way in which things are combined or held together, may make vast differences in results. The same elements that compose air, when combined as nitrous oxide, absorb eighteen hundred times as many heat waves as air.

This vast difference is due to the difference between mechanical combination—cohesion—and chemical combination. It is a mere difference of adjustment in the relations of the elements. Why then, should we hesitate to believe that as slight a difference in the adjustment of the relations of persons to each other on this earth is capable of producing as great a difference in human affairs? The combination of error and human brain matter has made the whole world a seething hell of insanely struggling, striving humanity. Change the combination, by mixing a fundamental truth with the same brain matter, and the result will be just as surely a world full of sane human beings, living in friendly harmony, and enjoying to the full the rational pleasures of a beautiful world. And the speed with which this change can be brought about is measured only by the difference in degree between working against every natural instinct of persons, and working in line with the normal desire for genuine freedom which exists in every human being. Full and free discussion will easily accomplish the change."

"But who do you expect will carry on such a discussion?" asked Carl Plater. "Don't you see that while you are trying to convert a few people to your idea, we will be getting the single tax into operation and do some practical good in the world? The single tax is plenty good enough for me, and it will take too long to make people understand your plan, for it to amount to anything for some generations, at least."

Ernest Wynn sprang to his feet, his eyes shining.

while his voice rang out with the firmness of intense conviction: "On the contrary. We can have a balanced land tenure in a very few years, if we go about the work in the right way. I am absolutely certain—I will stake my life on it—that I can convince—not silence, but convince—any person that a balanced land tenure is not only a perfect land tenure but a perfect solution of the problem of human association, if va will give me the same kind and degree of attention that va would have to give to the solution of an algebraic problem. If any one will take up the subject with me, point by point, proceeding from one point to another only after settling and agreeing upon it; starting from fundamental axioms as universally acceptable as that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, or that the whole cannot be less than the sum of its parts, I will bring va with the absolute certainty of unerring accuracy to the unqualified conviction of the all-sufficiency and potency of a balanced land tenure to permanently establish equity."

Jack Romaine was up the moment Ernest Wynn ceased speaking. "I move that we organize the first Equitist Club right now, and get to work for a balanced land tenure."

"I second that motion," sounded Will Dennison's voice.

"Very well," said Horace Franklin. "I will put it to vote," and the discussion turned speedily to plans for the Club and Club work.

"Were you not surprised, Mr. Wynn, at Mr.

Murray's statement about the Single Tax Conference not being the proper place at which to discuss a balanced land tenure?'' asked Glen Harding, as the two stood together a moment during the confusion of the breaking up of the meeting.

''Yes, I confess that Murray's remarks did stun me for a moment, and yet I ought to have been prepared for them. I declare to you, Miss Harding, I was never more surprised and shocked in my life by anything than I have been during the last few months by the moral cowardice and obstinate blindness among single taxers, leading them to ignore and refuse to seriously discuss the land tenure question, when confronted with a clear explanation of the source of ground rent and the only equitable mode of its disposition, with its consequent plain and definite line of demarcation between public and private concerns.''

''It seems to me, Mr. Wynn, that single taxers are illustrating the fatal results of a wrong choice in the name of the movement. The suggestive power of the words 'single tax' has reacted on the minds of single taxers with such force as to actually lead them astray to the extent of diverting the land tenure reform movement, Henry George started. into a mere tax reform movement, within ten years of his death! If the movement had been called by a name suggestive of land tenure—instead of tax—reform, the present condition of the movement would, I am sure, have been impossible.''

''I think you are right. Both thoughts and spoken words are actual vibrations, so that every misuse of words—the use of vague and indefinite words—produces vibrations that tend to degradation and slavery. Single taxers have not realized this, tho there has always been more or less protest against the name, you know, among single taxers; yet it was retained, until now 'the single tax' conceals a great truth in such a way as to make that truth appear crooked."

"And too many single taxers," was the quick response, "have become temporarily crooked in their minds, thru their hopeless efforts to make the phrase 'single tax' synonymous with that great truth. As it has actually worked out, the chief effect of the term 'single tax' has been to concentrate the attention of single taxers on methods of taxation and how to apply them, until they have almost lost sight of the land tenure question in the maze of their petty efforts to change methods of government."

"It looks that way, Miss Harding. Mistaking the means for the end, they have been dazed by the——"

"Mr. Wynn, I want to speak to you a moment," Will Dennison broke in, as he hastily made his way around the little group nearest them. "It will be good news for you, too, Glen," he added as he joined them. "Mr. Murray has only a day here on his way north, but I've secured him for lunch tomorrow, at one, sharp. Mr. Wynn, can we count on you? Yes, that's right. Mr. Demos has promised to come, too. I phoned Birdie just now, Glen, and she says O. K., so I've invited Mr. Motora also.

Mrs. Fujita wants him to hear the discussion we are sure to have. Among us we must manage to give Murray and Demos some pointers before we let them go."

"Indeed we will," assented Mrs. Fujita, who had followed her host thru the crowd, "and the talk is sure to give Mr. Motora and me a lot of arguments we can use in Japan."

"But, Helen, how did you come to make that remark about the conference, just now, in the meeting?" her friend asked curiously, while Ernest Wynn looked interested.

Mrs. Fujita laughed. "I hardly know, myself. I suppose seeing Mr. Murray reminded me of my New York experiences, for the thought popped all at once into my mind how splendid it would have been if I could have told that crowd of single taxers about a balanced land tenure, and so given the conference a glorious incentive to energetic work—and I jumped up to speak before I fairly thought, then I had to go on. I'm glad I did, for otherwise we might not have learned what strange ideas some single taxers now hold."

"Yes," agreed Ernest Wynn, "the talk that followed has made several things clear to me, and I will be that much better prepared for my work."

"Still," Mrs. Fujita said, with insistent longing, "I do wish, Mr. Wynn, that you could have been at the conference."

"So do I," was the ready response. "I had planned to be there, and was, in fact, about two weeks before the conference date, as far east as

Cincinnati, missionarizing along; when my father wired me to come home; that my mother was very sick. Of course I went back at once—I had not been home for several months. I found my mother very ill, and needing me, so that I could not leave her. As soon as I saw that I could not get to New York I wrote to Hugh Murray and sent him a brief statement about my discovery of how to have a balanced land tenure, asking him to bring the subject before the conference. Then, for two weeks I had neither time nor mind for anything but my mother. The last ten days I was hardly away from her bedside. She suffered terribly and no one else seemed to suit her, as a nurse. She died the second day of the conference."

"Oh, I'm so sorry for you, Mr. Wynn," exclaimed Mrs. Fujita, while Glen Harding's quick glance of sympathy held more of feeling than her friend's words, tho she only said:—

"Then it was too late to go east?"

"Yes, it seemed so. I had to stay home several weeks, helping father settle up business matters. Then I started west, hunting for live single taxers—and you know how I found them at last," he smilingly concluded.

CHAPTER 13.

TWO OPINIONS.

"Well, Birdie, who are to be invited to our dinner party this time?"

Mr. and Mrs. Dennison were alone on the upstairs pergola. The warm June sunshine, filtering thru the vines, made spots of shining gold on Mrs. Dennison's fair hair as she sat, considering.

"It must be in the early afternoon, on account of Madam Wortley, and not too large," she said.

"Yes, Birdie, that's my idea. Just a few nice people that Mrs. Fujita will like to meet—or see again—and that Madam Wortley can enjoy without fatigue. It's a great thing that you and Glen succeeded in coaxing her to come. When a woman of her age takes a live interest in work for the good of humanity and shows such a bright mind and keen sympathy, it acts on me like a tonic—or an inspiration. I think she will like Wynn."

"Then we must invite Mr. Wynn to this dinner?"

"Certainly. I want him to meet Morgan, and this will be a good chance to bring them together, and maybe open the way to enlist Morgan in the propaganda."

"I don't see how you can expect to do that, Will, when you know that most of his fortune is invested in real estate."

"I know, but he's inclined to the single tax and has done some good work for the people."

"Very well; then I'll put down Mr. and Mrs. Morgan."

"And Motora, we must have him."

"Of course. I don't wonder that the Japanese are making such a stir in the world, if there are many of them like Mr. Motora."

"Birdie"—Will Dennison looked over the parapet on which he was leaning and surveyed the garden. It was quiet and empty, and he continued, in a lowered tone—"do you think we are to have him in the family?"

His wife smiled: "Sometimes I think so, and then again I don't—it is hard to tell what Glen will do. I know she admires and likes him, but maybe not in that way. Then there is Mr. Wynn."

"Wynn! Why, Birdie! You don't suppose Glen thinks of him? He is so absorbed in his work for freedom that he has no thought for anything else. He is not a bit sentimental. I don't believe there is a grain of sentiment in him. He romps with the children as readily as he talks with Glen—and he never talks anything but propaganda to her, anyway, seems to me."

His wife looked at him thoughtfully: "There are some women, Will, who enjoy a genuine, frank comradeship more than what is ordinarily considered love-making. Anyway, whether Glen thinks of Mr. Wynn or not, I am quite sure Mr. Wynn thinks very seriously and constantly of Glen. But we must get on with our list if there are to be more. I have five names now.''

''How about Mrs. Romaine and Jack?''

''Fine! Madam Wortley likes Mrs. Romaine, and Jack is always agreeable company.''

''Yes, that he is, and now Wynn's energy and enthusiasm seem to have inspired him. He worked hard to help get out the single taxers for our meeting, and is now putting all his energy into pushing our Equitist Club—and that reminds me! Jack was in the office this morning and mentioned that a college chum of his was stopping with them a few days on his way to Alaska. Jack has been trying to interest him in a balanced land tenure, but says Bruce Ericson—that's his name, and he is several years older than Jack—is an ardent socialist. He is a great admirer of Upton Sinclair and thinks his Industrial Republic the finest thing out. He knows lots of it by heart, and Jack says it's great to hear him rattle it off. We must have him at the dinner and see how Wynn comes out in an argument with an up-to-date socialist.''

''Evidently we are to have a sociological dinner! I wonder if I had better mention it in the invitations?'' said Mrs. Dennison, smiling, as she added Bruce Ericson's name to the list. ''I know Madam Wortley will heartily enjoy hearing them talk, and I may learn something. Honestly, Will, I'm actually getting interested in listening to Mr. Wynn, and I really think he would not be a bad sort of brother, if Glen——''

''Oh, come now, Birdie,'' interrupted her husband, "I'll admit that Wynn is a good fellow. I like him myself. But I'm quite sure you are off in thinking he cares particularly for Glen. Just think how different he is from those other men! Tremont is entirely devoted—whenever he gets a chance to be. Motora shows the height of polite chivalry in every act, and it's perfectly plain that he looks on Glen as a sort of superior being. A woman likes that. Wynn does not show a bit of that sort of feeling. He talks to Glen just as he does to me, or to Jack Romaine. He does not strike me as at all the kind of man likely to marry."

"He will not marry an ordinary woman; but Glen would just suit him, and I am quite sure he wants her—tho I don't know how she feels. Mr. Motora is such a fine man, too."

"Wynn has no chance against either of those men, Birdie. A woman likes a man who realizes her fineness and superiority, and who feels that she is to be carefully guarded and protected. Wynn shows nothing like that. He treats Glen as merely his equal!"

Mrs. Dennison looked off a moment across the Arroyo. Was it to hide a certain wistful longing in her eyes? But she only said, quietly: "So you have noticed that, too?"

"Yes, Wynn has not a particle of sentiment, Birdie. His whole heart and soul are in his propaganda work. He does not think of anything else."

"Mr. Motora is deeply interested in sociology, too, Will. He was here for a long call on Helen this morning, while Glen was busy in the garden.

I heard them talking about ways to get the Emperor's attention to Mr. Wynn's discovery."

"That would be a big thing, Birdie. I hope they'll succeed."

"Did you know, Will, that all the Japanese names mean something? Helen told me this morning, after Mr. Motora left. It's so interesting! She says Fujita means wistaria field—and that brings to one's mind such masses of lovely purple bloom. You know they have gardens full of wistaria in Japan."

"How about Motora? His name mean anything?"

"Yes, indeed. Helen says Inazo means a producer or farmer; and that Motora is original good. Glen came in just then and she said Mr. Motora's name was very appropriate, because he is now busy writing—producing, Glen said—a book about original good."

"What in the world is that?"

"I don't know, Will, but I think it has something to do with the old paganism that Glen calls 'ancient religion.' But I can see that she enjoys studying with Mr. Motora."

"It looks as tho his chances of winning Glen are pretty strong, Birdie. But let's get on with our list." He glanced at his watch. "I have only five minutes more. Any others?"

"One more. Do you know if Dr. Lloyd has come home yet? He was an intimate friend of Mr. Osmond's, and Helen wants very much to see him. She has not seen him for years."

"I wish I'd known that when I saw him this morning. He had just come back. However, I'll phone him from the office if I don't see him on my way down. Can I tell him Mrs. Fujita will be home tomorrow?"

"Yes, until towards evening. They are going up to the Observatory with Jack, if the sky is clear. Tell Dr. Lloyd, too, that I tried twice to get him on the phone this morning."

"He was at the Maryland, his folks are all at the beach. I'll get him, or see him, and tell him about Mrs. Fujita. Good bye, dear." He snatched a hasty kiss, and was off.

Left alone, Mrs. Dennison sat a little time looking thoughtfully off over the hills, now turning to their summer brown under the glow of the warm sunshine—for the day was so bright and fair! She smiled happily as the sound of merry voices and children's laughter came to her from the garden; then there was a quick rush of little feet on the cement walk, and the call came up: "Mama, Mama!"

She looked over the railing into the bright little upturned faces of Merwyn and Fay. "What is it, dears?"

"Mrs. Moreland and Jack Romaine have come," began Merwyn, "and——"

"And 'nother lady, Mama," finished Fay.

"We don't know her, Mama," explained Merwyn.

"Auntie Glen said to call you, Mama, so we did," concluded Fay.

"That was right, dears. Now run back and tell them Mama will be down in a minute." She started up, then paused, and a great love shone in her eyes as she watched the little ones race away around the corner of the house. "For the sake of the children I must learn all I can," she thought, as she went toward the stairs, stopping before the long mirror in her room to see that hair and gown were in perfect order.

She found the visitors, with her sister and Mrs. Fujita, in the pleasant front pergola.

"My friend is interested in sociology, Miss Harding, so I brought her over to see you. It's too bad we were out when Mrs. Dennison called the other day," Mrs. Moreland was saying. "Oh—Mrs. Dennison, my friend, Mrs. Burns, from Iowa."

Mrs. Dennison gave the guest a cordial greeting. "I'm getting a little interested in sociology myself, since Mr. Wynn has come among us," she remarked.

"Isn't he great!" cried Jack Romaine, enthusiastically. "I want you to join our Club, Mrs. Dennison."

"Not yet, Jack," she shook her fair head at him and smiled indulgently. "I must know a good deal more before I join any sociological clubs."

"Jack is fairly carried away, and wants to put himself and all he has into helping Mr. Wynn spread the idea. I think that is going too far, don't you? Mrs. Dennison," queried Mrs. Moreland.

"Tell Aunt Kate she ought to be glad I have an object worth living for now, Mrs. Dennison."

"I'm heartily glad of it, Jack," Glen Harding exclaimed, before her sister could reply.

"Mr. Romaine has been trying to make me understand this new idea, Miss Harding, but I'm afraid it's too new yet to me,'' observed Mrs. Burns. ''Indeed, I never thought anything about such things—I mean, that I could do anything to help change public matters—until a short time before I left home. My home is in a country town where we almost vegetate along, but a few weeks ago a man lectured before our Chautauqua Circle, in the interests of the forests. He said we must save them before it is too late.''

''Indeed we must,'' assented Glen Harding, ''but that is only one of the many things that need to be done.''

''I realize something of that whenever I read the big city papers, but I never thought I could do anything until I heard that man talk. Surely it is a great thing, Miss Harding, when so many of us 'common people,' not only in my town but in hundreds of others, can hear such men tell us facts we knew, but had accepted as a necessary thing because we thought we could not change things, and have them tell us that public opinion counts, and that we are the public.''

''Blessings on that man and all like him!'' exclaimed Glen Harding, fervently. ''Did you hear, Jack, how the forest service is preparing the way for us? If they can only get the people in the towns and small cities—and the country people—to realize that they are the public, and that there is no power on earth stronger than public opinion, they will make it easy for us to show the same people how surely and quickly a balanced land tenure can be established, thru the power of intelligent public opinion.''

''That man set me thinking,'' Mrs. Burns went on. ''I had been trying to do some good along 'New Thought' lines. For awhile I agreed with Elizabeth Towne that there could be no greater work than to help and heal the sick and suffering about me, and I devoted myself to that.''

''I understand that feeling perfectly,'' said Glen Harding, ''for I felt that way myself before I saw the greater light and realized that it was a far nobler work, and more useful, to remove the cause—to so change conditions that there would be no such suffering to relieve—only joy to share together; the joy of living as free, growing creatures.''

''I don't see how we are going to get anything like that,'' put in Mrs. Moreland. ''Just think of the masses of poor, ignorant people in every city. How can they be helped? Even among ourselves there is a lot of unhappiness and sham. We have to pretend to enjoy a lot of things we don't care a straw for—or even actually dislike.''

''I'm going to quit that, Aunt Kate, and be in earnest, like Mr. Wynn,'' said her nephew, his boyish face glowing with a high resolve.

Glen Harding gave him a glance of strong approval, as she turned to Mrs. Moreland. ''The very fact that all—rich and poor—are living such unnatural lives, proves that the trouble is universal and not a matter of individual character, or even any so-called class. The whole brood of evil comes from the creation of property in privileges, based on an unbalanced land tenure.''

''That may be, but I don't see how you are going to get people to understand; it's so hard to make them listen to anything worth while,'' persisted Mrs. Moreland.

''I found a bit of encouragement this morning, in an address by the President of the Simplified Spelling Board,'' observed Mrs. Fujita, smiling. ''It seems to me something like preparing the way, in the minds of students of sociology and professors of economics, for the reception of a balanced land tenure. Shall I read it to you?'' She looked about, and the others nodded, some interest and curiosity showing in their faces. ''Please hand me that white pamphlet, Mr. Romaine, that's it, the top one,'' as he turned to a nearby stand covered with magazines and papers. ''Here is the item. Now just listen and see how well it fits the work we have to do: 'There is still another way in which we have reason to congratulate ourselves upon the advance which has been made. A subsidiary, tho by no means unimportant, function of this organization is the propagation of intelligence among the educated classes. This is a task peculiarly trying and difficult. It is no easy matter to enlighten the illiterate. But with them, after all, you have a blank page. They not only do not know anything of this particular matter, they are aware of the fact that they do not know anything. This self-consciousness is denied to the educated. In consequence, with them a stubborn crust of misapprehension and misinformation, with the violent prejudices engendered of their combination, has first to be removed. It is only by slow degrees that it dawns upon their perceptions that they know nothing about a subject of which they fancied they knew everything'."

"That is encouraging, Helen, and I'm glad you found it," said her friend, seriously. "When once the educated classes become intelligent, the way to equal freedom will be opened wide."

"But does it not seem to you, Miss Harding, that the world is gradually growing better?" asked Mrs. Burns. "Just think how much kinder people are today than they used to be."

Glen Harding looked at her sister, and it was Mrs. Dennison who spoke first: "I used to think that way, Mrs Burns, and I was proud of our Children's Aid Societies and organized charities. But somehow, the more we did the more the need seemed to grow. Then I took my sister about with me, and she made me feel many times that the things I once thought kind are not really a bit so—we just made ourselves feel good by keeping a few people from starving."

"Our charitably inclined and philanthropic people need to learn the truth Ruskin pointed out long ago," remarked Mrs. Fujita, "that we must be just before we can be truly kind."

"But think how savage and brutal people used to be," said Mrs. Burns, insistently, "and now there are lots of humane societies and ways to help the poor."

"The very existence of such societies is itself evidence that there is a monstrous wrong somewhere,'' returned Glen Harding. ''They could not exist under equitable conditions.''

''But who would take care of all the orphans and poor people,'' queried Mrs. Burns.

''You are keeping in mind the present inequitable environment, Mrs. Burns,'' said Glen Harding, smiling brightly. ''Put that away. Imagine all the injustice of today removed—as a tree is removed when pulled up by the roots and carted away—and where would you find any poor people to put into orphanages and charitable institutions?''

''There simply could not be any destitute—orphans or others—under the harmonious living based on a balanced land tenure. I am convinced of that much now,'' affirmed Mrs. Fujita. ''Think it over a bit, Mrs. Burns, and you will see how impossible it would be to have any destitution in a land where all the grown people were busy either producing things they liked to grow or make, and exchanging for other things they wanted, but did not care to produce, or enjoying other things. With our modern knowledge of machinery, and how to treat the soil so it can be made to grow more and more each year, instead of wearing out, we could easily produce enough for all our actual physical needs by a few hours work each day, and have all the rest of the time in which to improve our minds and enjoy the thousands of things to be seen and heard and learned in the great out-of-doors, as well as in the laboratory and library.''

''Oh, that reminds me of such a nice little book

I've just finished reading," said Mrs. Burns. "Seventy Years Young. Have you read it? It's about what to do, so we can keep young, by having a stationary birthday and keeping the right sort of thoughts in our minds, and so on. It's real good, I think."

"I read it," said Mrs. Dennison, "but it seemed to me that to do as the author says, we have to keep trying and trying, and doing something all the time. Why cannot we just feel young without thinking about it at all?"

"That's exactly what we ought to do, Birdie," said her sister, "and would do if we were living normally, just as naturally as the birds fly. They never look to me as tho they counted their wing beats, or had to compel themselves to fly from bush to tree. It is the horrible slavery under which we are all struggling together that makes most people old and worn out—whether rich or poor—while still young in years."

"I know some of those among ourselves," interjected Mrs. Moreland.

"Of course," continued Glen Harding, "nobody wants to be crushed, and yet the existence of property in privileges makes it unavoidable that a mass of people shall be ground down, and a few come out on top. The inevitable result is a frantic effort on the part of the few to wring out more and more tribute, and a chaos of struggle among the many to pay that tribute and keep alive. The only possible way out is to totally abolish the cause of the evil—property in privileges—and thus bring all people into harmony with natural law. Establish equal freedom in the use of the earth, thru a balanced land tenure, and the crushing weight of tribute paying, with the still greater degradation due to tribute receiving and spending will be done away with forever. A thoroly sane lot of people will then find themselves in a world packed full of rational enjoyments. In that world healthy bodies will reach the maximum of efficiency; and growing, expanding minds, reach the utmost of symmetrical development.''

''It would be easy to keep young in such a world. Glen,'' exclaimed her sister.

''Then join in and work awhile for it—all of you—'' Glen Harding included the visitors in her glance, ''and you will see that all the keeping young that we now have to think about will take care of itself. It will be ours without thought, beyond the simple, normal care of the body which requires no conscious compelling effort. Just think of the strength now wasted in compelling ourselves to do things that ought not to be necessary. All that strength will be freed for the joy of living and learning in a free air, among a lot of equally joyous and comfortable and friendly people.''

''Oh, Miss Harding, you don't really think such a thing possible? Not in our time?'' cried Mrs. Burns, incredulously.

''Yes I do,'' was the decided reply. ''It is entirely and speedily possible, now that we know exactly what is necessary to secure and maintain equal freedom—a balanced land tenure. There is no other way by which we can live honestly and peaceably together, than by recognizing and living in harmony with natural law. Now that we know exactly what that law is, in relation to persons, it can be applied as soon as enough people know about it to put public opinion in its favor. The propaganda we are now starting is merely to make known to all people, as speedily as possible, the discovery of this natural law. It needs only to be widely known to be gladly accepted, recognized—by rich and poor alike—for all people want to live in a world of comfort and happiness."

"I wish we could have such a world right now, Glen," her sister said, wistfully. "I try to do all I can for those little orphans—but there are so many. It makes me feel helpless."

"Of course I'd like everyone to be well off," observed Mrs. Moreland, "but such a time is too far off to think of. I believe in taking things as we find them, and being practical."

"We have to take things as we find them, Mrs. Moreland; but we need not leave them so," retorted Glen Harding.

"The world is surely growing better all the time," remarked Mrs. Burns. "There's so much now in books and magazines, telling us how to live higher and nobler lives; how to improve ourselves in every way; and to be more helpful to each other in different ways."

"Knowing, as I do," began Glen Harding, earnestly, and with the far-away look in her eyes that seemed to belong to certain thoughts, "seeing as plainly as I see, the origin of traditions and conceptions—of human history; I know there never was a time on this globe, when human conditions were worse than they are today. The whole world is now, for the first time, practically civilized; and civilization is dominated by the concentrated power of property in privileges; and this power is daily growing more despotic and aggressive.''

''I believe you are right, Glen,'' agreed Mrs. Fujita, gravely, ''and that all the literature aiming to show the way, or help individuals to rise above the power of their existing environment, is like the charitable societies to which Mrs. Dennison belongs—merely evidence of the disease that needs to be rooted out and destroyed. What the world needs now is the removal of the cause of all this degradation and suffering and pinching—a change of environment—so that all may attain to the best for which they are capable, without any conscious struggle for a chance to rise. Then all the energy can be put into the rise itself, and every effort count as a step toward the goal.''

''I don't see how you can expect such great things from just one little change, such as Mr. Wynn proposes,'' Mrs. Moreland observed; ''tho I should not object to any real improvement.''

''You don't realize that the beginnings of all great things look small,'' said Glen Harding, smilingly. ''To turn half way round, when walking, is a very slight change, and yet it alters the whole direction of your walk. That is what the change from an unbalanced to a balanced land tenure means—a change of direction. A change from non-conformity to natural law, to conformity to natural law, makes all the difference between war and peace, distrust and friendship, suffering and happiness."

"I read a queer book on economics lately, Miss Harding, to please Mother's friend, Miss Wilmore," said Jack Romaine. "You know Miss Wilmore? She's lovely, but the book is a queer jumble—about the worst I ever tried to read. The author is a professor in the University of Pennsylvania, and the only definite thing I got out of his book is that an ideal civilization—he meant by that something worth having—is not possible in the twentieth century. He says it will take a thousand years, or maybe many thousand years to 'make the multitude of material adjustments necessary' to enable us to live peaceably together."

"It is almost unbelievable," exclaimed Glen Harding, "that even university professors can be so ignorant as to hold and teach such false notions. There is ample proof everywhere around us—shown by hundreds of immigrants every year; by the work of men like Luther Burbank; by demonstrations in a host of laboratories and workshops; and spectacularly displayed all over the country where prarie or forest or valley land, with its natural beauty and bloom, is transformed in a few years to the artificiality of brick and concrete we call the modern city. There's more than enough of all this now to show that the whole country could be changed in five years—by merely changing the direction of the same amount of energy—into widespread townships of happy, comfortable people, living in wholesome peace with each other and all the world."

"To help make such a world, and then live in it, will be something worth while!" Jack Romaine's young enthusiasm burst forth. "And I, for one, mean to pitch in and help get it. You need not shake your head, Aunt Kate, I'm in earnest. I'll concenter on it with all my might, Miss Harding."

Glen Harding laughed. "You have been reading Mr. Tremont's book, Jack," she said. Then her tone became serious: "You cannot do anything better with the power you gain than use it to help secure true freedom. I know——"

"Now, Miss Harding," Mrs. Moreland hastily interrupted, "please don't encourage Jack in any such rash fancies. You know I am interested in Mr. Wynn's theory, and I'd like to see it tried somewhere. I would contribute something to such a plan myself, but it is quite another thing to talk of throwing away a fortune on an untried scheme."

"That point is quite settled, Aunt Kate. You heard what I said at the meeting in Mr. Dennison's office. I meant just that."

"Of course, Jack, I understand you meant to help. People often make such pledges at meetings. I've heard them in church, at missionary meetings, and other times. It encourages the cause—whatever it happens to be. But no one expects them to be taken literally—they just give any reasonable sum of money, when it comes to paying."

The broad shoulders squared themselves, and there was a resolute look in the bright eyes of the young man, that gave a world of hope to Glen Harding, as he answered quietly: "I'm not built that way, Aunt Kate."

"Maybe not, but you ought to be more practical. Don't you think so, Mrs. Dennison? A man's first duty is to his family, and—"

"Oh, come, Aunt Kate"—Jack Romaine stopped her, laughing, and yet with an earnest thrill in his tone—"you know I have no family except Mother, and she often says she has more than enough money of her own."

"Of course you are too young for that yet, Jack," replied his aunt, quickly. But you will have in a few years, most likely. Your father was only two years older than you are now when he married my sister. You ought to look forward and think of your wife and children. You don't want to find yourself a pauper and out of work like those men in the bread lines in the cities, do you?"

"Nobody can want such a thing, Aunt Kate, and that's just why I am going to work to help abolish the property in privileges that forces smart, industrious men into poverty."

"But just suppose you fail? It is not at all sure yet that Mr. Wynn's theory can be made to work, or that you can get people to listen; and then you see, Miss Harding"—she turned from her nephew in the effort to win a helper—"Jack would have lost all his money and be stranded, with his life spoiled —and no good done."

"But I could work for my living, Aunt Kate. I'm strong and well."

"But it is not an easy thing to get a place now, Jack. Don't you remember what Mr. Morgan said yesterday when I asked him about a place for Mr. Burns?"

"You see, I like it so much out here," Mrs. Burns put in, by way of explanation, "that if my husband could get a job—he is an expert pressman—that would keep us, we could move right out here."

"Couldn't Mr. Morgan do anything?" asked Mrs. Dennison. "He has such a large business, I should think he could find a place for Mr. Burns."

"He said not, that they had to cut down their force lately—on account of the panic, or something. I tried some other places he told me of, but couldn't find anything."

"I wish I could stay here! It's such a lovely country." Mrs. Burns' gaze wandered from the nearby beauty of the garden to the far background of mountain peaks, showing thru the trees.

"It is a lovely land, Mrs. Burns," agreed Mrs. Dennison, "and I'll see if Will—my husband—can do anything to find a place for Mr. Burns."

"Oh, thank you! I do believe there is a place somewhere. My husband knows his trade thoroly."

"I have seen lots of statements lately, in magazines and papers, to the effect that employers—in all sorts of work—were always looking for especially skilled men. How can it be hard to find a place for Mr. Burns?" It was Mrs. Fujita who put the question.

"Those statements don't agree with the facts, if we are to judge by our experiences of the last two days, Mrs. Fujita,'' was Mrs. Moreland's prompt reply. ''I took Jack with me, and it ought to be a lesson to him not to risk throwing away his money on any untried theories, and then, maybe, find himself hunting for a job.''

''It was a lesson to me,'' admitted Jack Romaine, and Glen Harding noted a new seriousness in his eyes, and a grave determination in his voice, which proclaimed that the youth was taking on the coloring of the man. ''It was a good deal of a lesson to me, tho not just as Aunt Kate wished to have it. I never understood before, never realized, you know, that men who honestly wanted work could not find it. I thought, as we tried one place after another, that if we who had money and position, and friendship, even, to back us in the hunt, couldn't find a place for one man, what hope of work was there for that crowd of friendless men on the streets? I saw a lot of things in the Los Angeles streets that I never noticed before, and—well, I'm going to work with Mr. Wynn to make things different, so people will have a chance to live and not just be everlastingly hustling to keep body and soul together. I believe that is the greatest thing to live for—until it is won. Then we can be anything we like.''

''You are right, Jack,'' said Glen Harding, warmly. ''All of us ought to do everything we can to establish a balanced land tenure as quickly as possible.''

''I'm perfectly willing to do what I reasonably can,'' said Mrs. Moreland, ''but it is folly to risk all one has in a cause that may fail, and leave us all stranded.''

''I don't ask you to risk anything, Aunt Kate. I speak only for myself.''

''I do not admit, for one moment,'' Glen Harding began, slowly and gravely, as tho weighing each word with care. ''I do not admit, for one moment, that failure in this cause is possible. Knowing the past of human life as I now do, and having learned, thru Mr. Wynn's discovery of a natural law, exactly what it is necessary to do in the present to secure, and in the future to maintain, a balanced land tenure, I can see the way quite clearly. We have a perfectly definite path to follow; a plain and simple message to deliver. The people everywhere are waiting for the news we have to give them, of a practical and permanent, a speedy and peaceful way out of conditions with which no one is really satisfed. Every living thing needs freedom in which to grow, and persons are no exception. Consciously or unconsciously, the spark of freedom burns somewhere in every human being. In some, the fire burns brightly; the flames fed with the oil of rational thought. In some, the light is almost quenched under the fetid mass of despotic power with which property in privileges has clothed its owners. In some, the weight of the oppression under which they exist is so great they never imagined such a thing as the word freedom brings to our minds, yet the tiny spark is there and will burn brightly the instant the weight is lifted off. Then there are the vast numbers of people—neither monstrously rich nor abjectly poor—who vaguely desire the freedom to be and to do, and who are struggling, some with, and some against the current of commercialism and sham that is wrecking all alike in the muddy river of its flow. Differing in everything else, all these people are exactly alike in their need of genuine freedom—equal freedom. All want it, tho few realize the want by name and nature. The normal impulse toward equity in every person today is waiting and longing for the message of redemption we have to tell. All that is lacking now is the money with which to carry on the work of getting that message to the people—and if Jack furnishes the money, Mrs. Moreland—Jack Romaine—'' she turned abruptly to the young man: ''Jack Romaine, if you do that, a free people will bless you to the end of time!''

''Oh, I don't bother about that, Miss Harding. I want a chance to work at something in a free land myself.''

''Will is going to help Mr. Wynn, too, Glen,'' her sister said, eagerly. ''We have been talking about it, and I want him to, for the sake of our own precious children.''

''I should think you would want Mr. Dennison to be more careful on their account, and not make rash investments,'' said Mrs. Moreland.

''But nothing seems to be really secure now,'' returned Mrs. Dennison. ''We came near losing an awful lot of money in the panic. Will had just changed to something safer a little while before the crash came. He told me about it last night when we were talking over ways to help Mr. Wynn and the new Club."

"Well, if Mr. Dennison is going to encourage Jack in his recklessness, nothing but his mother can stop him. I don't believe she realizes how serious he is, and I had better go and talk the matter over with her at once." Mrs. Moreland rose hastily as she spoke, and Mrs. Burns followed her friend's example in spite of Mrs. Dennison's protesting:—

"Oh, Mrs. Burns, don't go yet. I want you to tell me more about Mr. Burns, so I can explain to my husband what he wants. There might be other things Mr. Burns could do, for awhile, anyway."

In the midst of the little flurry Jack Romaine laid a detaining hand on his aunt's arm, and again Glen Harding noted the manly seriousness in his tone, tho there was a glint of fun in his eyes, as he said: "If that's all you are going for, Aunt Kate, you might as well sit down again. I talked the whole business over with mother before that meeting, and she entirely agrees with me. You know," appealing to Mrs. Dennison, "I would not have mentioned such a thing in public unless my Mother knew all about it beforehand?"

"Of course you would not, Jack," she said, heartily. "Do please sit down again, Mrs. Moreland. I will have some lemonade out in a minute." She touched an electric button near her. "The rest of you can visit a little, while Mrs. Burns tells me what to explain to Mr. Dennison."

CHAPTER 14.

THE DINNER PARTY.

Masses of feathery ferns in pots, and a few glorious roses in tall, quaint vases, added to the cool charm of the large, airy dining room at Arroyo Vista, when the little party assembled there a few days later.

Ernest Wynn noticed that Glen Harding was wearing the rose-hued gown he had seen once before, and to him she seemed even more lovely in the bright afternoon sunlight than she had appeared in the paler radiance of the electric lights. Could he possibly win her? Involuntarily his glance turned to the animated face of the handsome Japanese who sat beside her, and who at the moment had half turned to listen to some word she was saying. He could not deny that Inazo Motora had all the attractions any woman might reasonably ask for—and he knew that he himself lacked some of the things possessed by the Japanese, and yet—well, given time enough and he would make himself more fit, he was studying and working every day—and hope rose again. He turned, smiling, to answer Mrs. Fujita, who sat beside him.

"I had to take a day off in the midst of a regular fight, in order to be here, Mrs. Dennison; but I couldn't resist the temptation to be one of such a company as you get together," announced Abbott

Morgan, with a bow to his hostess and a genial smile for the group gathered around the table.

"You don't look like a fighter now, I am sure," said Mrs. Dennison, with a responsive smile.

"I don't feel like one here—in such delightful company. It's a rest, I can tell you."

"I really cannot see why we should quarrel, and fight each other, at any time or place," Madam Wortley's cheerful voice put in. "Surely we would all be happier at peace with each other."

"Competition in the business world is too keen, my dear Madam. It pushes us on in spite of ourselves."

"It certainly looks so, Mr. Morgan," observed Jack Romaine. "Every paper I pick up is full of accounts of some sort of war or strife, political or industrial, or among the nations. Is it not a sure proof that there is something radically wrong somewhere, when people cannot get along peaceably together?"

"Of course we think so now, Jack, but don't forget how much we owe to the wars of the past," Bruce Ericson spoke up, briskly. "You all know," he smiled companionably as he glanced around the table, "it is to that struggle and bloodshed that we owe, as Upton Sinclair well says, 'our physical being, with all its perfections . . . a swift foot and a dexterous hand, an ear attuned to every sound, an eye that adjusts itself to every distance, a mind quick and alert, a spirit bold and enterprising.' When we remember all that, we can readily understand that all the horrors of war were once necessary and right—you can all admit that?" He glanced again around the table, and encountered the indignant flash in Glen Harding's eyes.

"I do not admit anything of the sort, Mr. Ericson," she said. "How can any person ever have the right to deprive another person of life? One of the most terrible errors of our civilization, and one that has been most disastrous in its effects, is that very teaching that war and all other evils were once right and necessary, and that we can only slowly—thru a million or two years more—get rid of them. Right human association has always been one of peace and friendship. What is right today was right from the beginning of conscious human companionship."

"Miss Harding is right," asserted Ernest Wynn. "War can never be a step in an upward path. The unity of the human species should teach us that there is no excuse for one race supplanting another by exterminating wars on any possible plea of right or necessity. Yet there seems to be a tacit belief that the white race is somehow divinely inspired to drive the rest of the people off the globe—a monstrous idea."

"That error is due to a misreading of the records of the past," said Glen Harding, quickly.

"But you will surely admit, Miss Harding, that the struggle for existence has been one of the greatest forces in the natural development of all peoples?" insisted Bruce Ericson.

"Indeed, I do not," was the prompt retort.

"Of course not," added Ernest Wynn. "The struggle for existence between human beings has no natural cause, Mr. Ericson. Its cause is wholly artificial—the work of persons—and can be eliminated by persons at any time they set about it in the right way. It originated in, and has been continued thru, the misuse of human faculties and natural forces. It never had any place in the natural order, and it has served—and serves today—only to retard human progress and degrade human beings.''

''I don't see how you work that out, Mr. Wynn,'' protested Bruce Ericson. ''How could we have had our grand civilization today if there had been no struggle?''

''We would be living in a lovely world full of happy people, Mr. Ericson, if there had been no errors to hide the natural law of human association from us for so long,'' said Glen Harding.

''Civilization is a tissue of legislative fictions, and civilized people are governed by those fictions,'' put in Ernest Wynn. ''Legislation has created the fiction of property in privileges, by which some persons are endowed with the power to rob others, and thus wantonly ignore the natural law of property in products. A truly enlightened people can have no legal fictions.''

''But we must have laws to go by!'' exclaimed Bruce Ericson.

''Nature provides us with plenty of laws,'' retorted Ernest Wynn, ''and there is no need of legislation in support of natural law. Just imagine a State legislature enacting a 'law' to control the times of rain or the phases of the moon! Natural law needs only discovery, and recognition by conformity, while any other sort of 'law' unavoidably works out in oppression, because it creates discriminations.''

''I am quite sure the normal association of people is that of friendliness and mutual helpfulness,'' spoke up Mrs. Fujita.

''Then why don't they practice it?'' asked Dr. Lloyd, across the table.

''They do, far more than we realize,'' was the quick retort.

''Yet we must admit that the constant struggle is most prominent today,'' said Jack Romaine. ''Why, coming over from Los Angeles on the car this morning, I heard two men talking about the prospect of a war with Japan. They insisted that the many Japanese now in this country are here on purpose to make war.''

''They were entirely mistaken,'' said Inazo Motora, quietly. ''I am sure that I desire peace above all things, for it is only thru peace that we can have freedom; and I am confident that peace is the wish of my countrymen, here as well as in Japan.''

''Of course it is,'' put in Mrs. Fujita, warmly. ''I am acquainted with many of the Japanese in this country, and I know that they look upon the people of the United States as their friends. They don't want any war. They come over here to learn from the people they hold in high esteem. They admire their own ruler so much that they think to please Americans by praising their President, and they overlook the things they cannot praise. That shows their eagerness to keep on friendly terms. They have nothing to gain by war with the United States.''

''Or with any other country,'' added Inazo Motora, with an appreciative glance at the fair American who was to spend the rest of her life as his countrywoman. ''I am sure that Count Okuma, one of our greatest statesmen, voiced the thought of our people when he recently said: 'Now that peace has crowned the tremendous effort which Japan made in the war with Russia the effect upon herself will be that she will be able to make still greater progress in the paths of civilization, and the true spirit of the Japanese nation will have more room to display itself. Japan has never been an advocate of war, and will never draw her sword from its sheath unless compelled to do so by the pressure of foreign powers. She fought to secure peace, not for the sake of making war, and was only too glad to lay down her weapons as soon as peace was obtainable, and to devote herself to the promotion of interests of a nobler kind. The eminence of Japan is ascribable to no mere mushroom growth; it has its roots in the past, and her progress is to be explained by natural causes which anyone may comprehend who cares to study her history attentively. The late war was not one of race against race, or of religion against religion, and the victory of Japan points to the ultimate blending into one harmonious whole of the ancient and modern civilizations of the East and West."

"That is the much desired harmony toward which all good people are working," said Madam Wortley.

"You don't mean to say that the Japanese are quite perfect?" Bruce Ericson looked incredulous.

"Certainly not," replied Inazo Motora, with a reassuring smile toward his hostess, who looked a little troubled at the turn the talk was taking. "People in Japan, Mr. Ericson, are the same as people everywhere. Some are good and some bad."

"I am quite positive that there is not the shadow of a shade of excuse for war among any nations today," Glen Harding gravely asserted. "It is an insult to the assumed enlightenment of this age to talk of war as anywhere necessary."

"I agree entirely with that, Miss Harding," said the Japanese. "It has been a matter of much regret to me to see that the necessity Japan felt for keeping up the study and development of war knowledge, in order to prevent encroachments from other nations, has tended to develop a spirit which has hindered internal ethical and peaceful progress."

"I saw a news item this morning, about your people, Mr. Motora," said Madam Wortley, "that pleased me very much. It was given as an official statement by Minister Hayashi, and in it he claimed to voice public sentiment in Japan, when he said that he was convinced that the cause of civilization, as well as a community of interests, 'demands lasting peace and friendship between the two nations bordering the Pacific'."

"That is true," said Inazo Motora, earnestly. "It is really education that people need most of all, and in Japan we are thoroly alive to that necessity."

"I have heard, Mr. Motora," said Madam Wortley, "that some of your great patriots had given or were giving time and energy and money to the founding of good schools, industrial and musical, as well as ordinary high schools and universities. I regard that as a very good omen for a bright future in Japan."

"Of course people need education—lots of it—and that is part of the work we socialists are doing everywhere," remarked Bruce Ericson. "We realize fully that there are laws governing the processes of time, and that the records of history, showing so much cruelty and crime and misery are consequences of 'the fact that man has to be lashed to his goal thru the darkness, instead of marching to it in the light.' We can now see the object of all past and present suffering is 'to get some kind of an organism that shall be capable of maintaining itself in a world of ferocious strife,' and 'be able to withstand all enemies that may come against it, and all rebellions that may arise within it,' and——"

Glen Harding caught the look of distress in her sister's eyes, and broke in with an earnest, "Do please stop repeating those horrible errors, Mr. Ericson. This world is a delightful place, and there never has been or can be any reason in nature's laws for persons to live in it on any other terms than those of friendly association."

Bruce Ericson smiled a little—he had not seen the distress of his hostess—and continued, "Really, Miss Harding, when you realize the constant struggle for life, and that no one can get rid of this curse of living—continual change——"

"Excuse the interruption, Mr. Ericson," Mrs. Fujita exclaimed, "but do tell us what you mean by calling change a 'curse.' Would you be better off today if you had not changed any since you were, let us say, five months or five years old?"

"I don't mean that sort of thing. Of course we all grow. I mean that I want Miss Harding to see the important part that the age-long struggle has taken in bringing to perfection an organization that now gives people the power to choose—they must choose soon and suddenly—'between an Industrial Republic and a political empire. Either they will take the instruments and means of production and produce for use and not for profit; or else they will forge themselves into an engine of war, to be wielded by a military despot'."

Jack Romaine laughed. "Now see here, Bruce, don't waste your breath carrying coals to Newcastle. If I had not sworn off on betting"—here Glen Harding cast a quick glance at Mrs. Romaine, and the new look of happiness in the older woman's eyes told her one reason why Jack's mother had so heartily seconded Mr. Wynn's efforts to enlist her son in a great cause—"I would wager a good deal, Bruce, that Miss Harding understands socialism better this minute than you or I ever will."

Glen Harding smiled brightly on her champion, as she remarked, "I can at least claim to have read Mr. Sinclair's Industrial Republic very carefully."

The young socialist looked pleased: "Then, surely, Miss Harding, you will acknowledge that the book is a remarkably strong one."

Glen Harding shook her head. "Self-contradiction is hardly an evidence of strength," she said, gravely.

"Self-contradiction! What can you mean?" The young man's voice expressed genuine surprise.

"Take, as an instance," Glen Harding hastened to illustrate, "Mr. Sinclair's statement in the first part of his book that 'the productive possibilities of the soil have not only not been attained, but are, so far as science can now see, absolutely unattainable.' Further along he lays stress on a point he wants made 'absolutely clear,' that 'the Industrial Republic will be an organization for the supply of the material necessities of human life,' because 'the products of industry are strictly limited in quantity,' and 'no man can have more than his fair share . . . without depriving his neighbor.' Mr. Sinclair then adds that, 'it is in consequence of this fact that laws and systems are necessary with the things of the body'."

"Nature is quite impartial in its operations, even today," observed Inazo Motora.

"It ought to be, but is not, or I would not find it necessary to work for equal freedom," said Ernest Wynn, quickly. "Human legislation prevents nature from operating impartially, and nothing but the abolition of that legislation will make it possible for it to so operate.''

''How's that, Mr. Wynn?'' questioned Abbott Morgan. ''Legislation cannot interfere with the law that it rains alike on the just and unjust.''

''That's true, Mr. Morgan.'' Ernest Wynn smiled with the rest. ''Nature yields as bountifully to the slave as to the free person, regardless of the human legislation which robs the former. But human legislation enables appropriators to utilize natural forces to rob producers.''

''Under any sort of just conditions that could not be, and I assume that Mr. Sinclair considers socialism just. Then how can it be correct to say that 'the products of industry are strictly limited' when the bottom of our resources is 'absolutely unattainable,' and we are all supposed to be free to dig out as much as we please?'' queried Will Dennison, with a twinkle in his eyes.

A smile flickered over several of the faces at the table, but Bruce Ericson only looked puzzled, and rather blank, as Madam Wortley said: ''If we had equal freedom in the use of the earth, it would, by Mr. Sinclair's own statement, take away all grounds on which to base a socialist system. I shall consider myself an equitist hereafter.''

''Now that's good news, Madam Wortley,'' said her host. ''It's a big thing to count you one of us.''

''Indeed it is,'' exclaimed Glen Harding, her face lighting up with pleasure. ''Oh, Madam Wortley, your taking a stand for equal freedom will mean so much for the spread of the truth—the law of human association based on a balanced land tenure, real equal freedom—among Club women everywhere.''

''I must confess that I don't understand what you are all driving at.'' The young socialist still looked blank.

''I think I see the point, Bruce,'' said Jack Romaine. ''Shall I try to explain?'' He looked toward his hostess.

''Yes, do, Jack,'' she smiled, brightly, as she met his eager glance.

''Don't you see, Bruce,'' looking across the table at his friend, ''that if the limits of production of the soil are 'absolutely unattainable' and we are all equally free to get at it, we could not, any one of us, get more or less than that one chose to earn. With plenty of land—and nature provides that—we could have no excuse for interfering with each other. Nobody could get more or less than a fair share under such a condition—and I think it's one decidedly worth working for,'' he ended, with a glow of enthusiasm.

''Oh, well, that may be all right,'' retorted his friend, ''but you cannot get it by any jump from capitalism. I know the people will—they must—choose the Industrial Republic, and do it soon.''

''How soon, Mr. Ericson?'' asked Inazo Motora, looking interested.

''I cannot tell exactly, but probably within ten years, maybe five; but it is 'safe to say that there will be as little change as possible in the business methods of the country . . . so little that the man who should come back and look at it from the outside, would not even know that any change had taken place.' "

"How can you say that, Mr. Ericson?" exclaimed Madam Wortley, in surprise. "That is certainly not what I had understood as socialism, or what socialism would be. We need such a decided change in our business methods—outside and inside—that the difference will be visible at least as far off as persons and business houses can be seen," she concluded, with spirit.

"That's so, Madam Wortley," emphasized Will Dennison.

"But really, don't you see there is no choice for us except between socialism and capitalism? Surely, no one here wants the continuation of the present unjust conditions?" Bruce Ericson glanced around the table with a little smile of triumph.

"Assuredly not," said Mrs. Dennison, as she met his glance, "but I thought you just said socialism would not bring any visible change—at least in business; and that is perfectly dreadful now!"

"There is a third possibility which Mr. Ericson has not mentioned," Ernest Wynn quietly observed. "That is to secure equal freedom, and actual self-government, thru the establishment and maintenance of a balanced land tenure."

"I told my friend all about that yesterday, Mr. Wynn, and gave him some of your leaflets to read," put in Jack Romaine. "Didn't you read them, Bruce?"

"Oh, yes, certainly. But they appear to contain only far away, impracticable ideas. Now socialism will give us equal freedom at once, and——"

"Excuse me, Mr. Ericson, but how cen there be equal freedom when some persons are given the privilege of ruling others?" broke in Ernest Wynn.

"You don't understand! 'The Industrial Republic will be a government of the people, by the people, for the people. . . . It will be administered by elected officials and its equal benefits will be the elemental right of every citizen.' "

"But that is neither equal freedom nor self-government," objected Ernest Wynn. "Rulership of some by others—whether the power is obtained by election or otherwise—is necessarily a special privilege, and it is avoidable only thru a balanced land tenure."

"I thought you people were single taxers, but it seems that you are some sort of anarchists?" The young socialist looked inquiringly about, from Glen Harding to Mrs. Fujita, then on to Ernest Wynn and their host, who answered the question:—

"We used to be single taxers, but now we are equitists."

"What is that? I don't see any difference."

"There is a very considerable difference, Mr. Ericson," Ernest Wynn took up the explanation. "The governmentalist, whether a capitalist or a socialist, says there is a natural law, but that it is out of order and must be patched up by human legislation. The anarchist says there is no natural law, either to follow or to patch up, so that we must abolish human legislation and go blindly on. The equitist says there is a natural law, that it is in perfect working order, and that all we have to do is to discover it and conform our actions to it—without coercing one another."

"I think you are right, Mr. Wynn," Madam Wortley's pleasant tones broke in. "It is freedom we need, not rulership of any sort."

"It is self-evident," continued Ernest Wynn, "that whatever is either more or less than necessary to maintain equal freedom will produce unequal freedom, which is inequity—advantages for some and disadvantages for others. It is demonstrable that political action for anything more or less than a balanced land tenure is not necessary to equal freedom."

"That sounds as tho you were at least a hundred years ahead of your time, Mr. Wynn," remarked Abbott Morgan. "It's a state of perfection you cannot hope to attain with any present-day people."

"Come now, Morgan, you don't really believe that we people here are as stupid as all that?" his host smilingly retorted.

"A great many people have made that remark to me during the last few years," said Ernest Wynn. "To me it seems that the assertion that any one is one hundred or more years ahead of va's time is of that innumerable host of mantrams that are used to justify and excuse the neglect to recognize one's responsibility for current inequity, and is of the same sort as that assertion of inherited savagery, and slow evolution by which nature will right all wrongs and we be relieved from exerting ourselves to do the simple things necessary to change conditions we all admit are wrong and growing ever more unendurable.''

''I have read some of your leaflets, that Mrs. Fujita gave me a few days ago, Mr. Wynn, and, to my mind, your balanced land tenure seems merely a matter of fine distinctions and hard to understand,'' remarked Dr. Lloyd.

''Does it not seem so to you because of its very simplicity and clearness?'' questioned Ernest Wynn, with a slight smile.

The doctor looked puzzled. ''What do you mean?''

''I think I understand,'' said Mrs. Fujita, eagerly. ''We have been so long accustomed to look upon our complex civilization as a great and wonderfully progressive thing that when a simple truth appears before us in the midst of our complicated machinery of living, it seems a strange and mysterious thing to us—the contrast is so sharp.''

Dr. Lloyd laughed pleasantly. ''That's well put, Helen, and maybe you are right.''

''Don't you see, Dr. Lloyd,'' said Ernest Wynn, returning to the charge, ''that an imperfect tenure of land must necessarily involve imperfections in human association? That perfectly equitable relations cannot exist between persons subject to an imperfect land tenure system.''

''It's the fine spun distinctions you make between the single tax and what you call a balanced land tenure that I'm objecting to,'' explained Dr. Lloyd. ''The people are easily educated to see the unearned increment of wealth by the landlords as I advocate it, for I have made hundreds of converts; and your theory is hard for me to see the point to. It will take too much study for average persons to pay any attention to it.''

''Yet one of the most ardent converts I've made so far,'' said Ernest Wynn, ''and one who is proving his sincerity by putting his whole soul and most of his earnings into the work for a balanced land tenure, was—and is—a plain day laborer. He is a young man who had no previous knowledge of sociology, and very little book education of any sort. Yet he had no difficulty in understanding my explanation of a balanced land tenure, and the necessity for its establishment and maintenance as the only way to have equal freedom.''

''That proves my point, Dr. Lloyd,'' said Mrs. Fujita, earnestly. ''The young man understood so readily because his mind was free from the errors and prejudices, on sociology, which our so-called education has fixed—all too firmly—in the minds of most of us.''

''I suppose the young fellow liked what was told him, and maybe thought he understood it,'' was the reply. ''But such articles as those you loaned me do not appear to add anything to the real knowledge of the world.''

''How can you say that, Dr. Lloyd?'' exclaimed Mrs. Fujita. ''It is quite plain to me that in discovering the source of real rent—that amount we cannot escape paying without unbalancing the land tenure—and therefore of exactly what constitutes a balanced land tenure, Mr. Wynn has added an item of the most vital importance to the world's stock of knowledge. It is nothing less than a clear statement of the law of nature controlling harmonious human association."

"But, really, Helen," insisted the placid doctor, "I don't see that Mr. Wynn's opinion on such a question has any more weight than yours or mine."

"Certainly not." Ernest Wynn took up the word. "But this is not a question of opinion, it is a question of fact. If my discovery is true, the law always existed—since persons lived on earth—and always will exist. It was there for anyone to discover. It is there now, for anyone to prove."

"I constantly see accounts of new discoveries in the daily papers and technical journals," said Dr. Lloyd, "and I believe this prompt publication is one of the causes of the rapid progress of today. If this discovery of a balanced land tenure is so important, why haven't I seen it in the papers? At least I ought to have seen it in our single tax weekly."

"Our single tax weekly! What's that? I did not know we had one any more," said Will Dennison, with interest.

The doctor looked surprised. "I thought you took it, Dennison. Perhaps I ought not to have called it a single tax paper, for the editor says it is not a single tax paper, and I presume he knows.

He calls it a 'journal of history in the making,' but it seems to depend on single taxers for its contents and finances, and most of us read it, so the misnomer slipped out."

Glen Harding looked up quickly. "I think a 'journal of history in the making' is a misnomer for a periodical that refuses to make any note of the most important discovery ever made in sociological science."

"It is quite clear to me," said Ernest Wynn, "that one of the causes of lack of progress in sociological science is the conspiracy of silence supposedly sociological journals maintain regarding new discoveries in that science."

"I read the paper you left at my office for me the other day, Mr. Wynn," Abbott Morgan's genial tones now sounded again around the table, "and there is one thing in it with which I fully agree; where you said that people were moved by their emotion and not by their reason. Go out to talk to the people, and appeal to their emotions. and they will crowd to hear you; but try to talk reason to them and hardly anyone will listen to you. You may make a martyr of yourself, trying to get people to reason, and two or three hundred years later, perhaps, someone will erect a monument to your memory."

"And yet every sane adult is capable of understanding the plain truth," affirmed Glen Harding.

"Possibly, but I've had my experience trying to reform the world, and I don't care to try anything more in that line now."

"But, Mr. Morgan," spoke Inazo Motora, thoughtfully, "Ernst Haeckel shows clearly that it is only thru reason that we can attain to a correct knowledge of the world and solve its problems. He points out that 'emotion has nothing whatever to do with the statement of truth,' that, in fact, the working of our emotions rather hinders the interests of truth."

"I freely admit that the imitative state that belongs to immaturity is still all too evident among adults," said Ernest Wynn. "Here and there some one or more individuals have developed the reasoning capacity to the point of dominance over the imitative tendency. But humanity has not yet entered the age of reason: it has not awakened to a consciousness of its mature mental capacity. The reason for this is to be found only in the fact that human relations have been erroneously based on a disregard of, or failure to recognize, nature's orderly trend—on an unbalanced land tenure; thru which the satisfaction of those desires that are necessary to human life is made difficult for all but the advantaged few. Until these essentially fundamental desires can be easily satisfied by all humanity, the necessities of human existence on the earth exhaust all received vibrations in mere imitative actions, and the comparative and reflective brain capacities are not developed beyond the point of seeking to satisfy these fundamental desires."

"The Japanese are using some mature reason, as well as their imitative faculties," remarked Mrs. Fujita. "So they find it easy to change right now."

Inazo Motora glanced smilingly around the table, saying, "Fifty years ago we looked upon other peoples as barbarians. Now we look upon them as neighbors."

"That is the right spirit, and all nations ought to have it," said Glen Harding, warmly. Then she turned to Abbott Morgan: "If we cannot obtain correct knowledge thru our emotions, Mr. Morgan, then is not 'an appeal to the emotions' of persons distinctly playing the part of a tyrant or would-be ruler—trying to get them to follow us in slavish, irrational obedience?"

"I admit that it looks a little that way, Miss Harding," was the prompt reply, "but I've learned the lesson well, that to try to do anything that depends on the intelligent sympathy and co-operation of any great number of the people is to invite disappointment. I'm letting the people alone now and attending strictly to business."

"Have a care, Morgan," their host's good natured voice broke in, "or you will find yourself as hard up as our multi-millionaire friend Jackson. He told me not long ago, that he had lost the power to be happy, to enjoy life. His whole life had been given to the effort to pile up wealth, and now he has more than he knows what to do with, and there is no longer any pleasure in accumulating—and he finds no enjoyment in anything else."

"I'm going to see to it that Mr. Jackson has another chance to be happy, Mr. Dennison. Didn't you see him at the meeting the other night?" Jack Romaine asked.

"Yes, and I was never more surprised," answered his host. "How did he come to be there? He got away before I could get to him, after the meeting."

"It was Jack's doing, Mr. Dennison. Mr. Jackson has always taken a special interest in his namesake." Mrs. Romaine smiled happily on her tall son. "And he chanced to call, on the afternoon of that day. He happened to say something similar to his remark to you, Mr. Dennison, and Jack urged him to amuse himself by going to that meeting—I confess I was a bit surprised, tho much pleased, to see him there."

"I told him it would at least pass away an hour or two of his good-for-nothing time, and he might hear something worth while," and Jack Romaine laughed, tho Glen Harding caught a resolute glint in his eyes as he went on: "I was sure he'd be there, and I'll keep at him now till he's a thorogoing equitist. He will get lots of pleasure out of having something real interesting and worth while to do; and I owe many a good time to my father's old friend."

"You are a brick, Jack!" his host beamed on the young man.

"I have often wondered"—Dr. Lloyd leaned comfortably back in his chair as the maid removed his plate—"if there is not some principle in nature that will make things come out right sometime, even tho persons do nothing."

"As tho there was any principle in nature that could repeal legislation without human action!" exclaimed Ernest Wynn.

"Well, anyway," persisted the doctor, "if you are going to help the poor, how can you expect to do it without being one of them? Have you seen the new single tax novel, 'A Broken Lance'?"

"I read it on the way out here, Dr. Lloyd," said Mrs. Fujita.

"I have a copy, what about it?" questioned Ernest Wynn.

"A lesson in methods for you, Mr. Wynn," retorted the doctor, with a slight smile. "The author says of one of his principal characters—you must have noticed it—that 'he felt himself weighed and measured and valued, and classified as a reformer who wished to accomplish reform by writing and talking about the poor, rather than living their life, or meeting them heart to heart;' and then he has the man go to the slums to live and work. You don't do that?"

"Why should I?" smilingly retorted Ernest Wynn. "I'm not working for the poor. I'm working for freedom. It makes no difference to me whether John Smith is a pauper or a millionaire. He needs freedom, and I need freedom, and that is what I'm working for."

"It was not by going to live in a fetid slum that Henry George won his followers, Dr. Lloyd," his host observed, smiling. "You and I read his books and papers, and got together the best dressed crowd we could to hear him, when he lectured out here. It's an enlightened public opinion we need now, not mere charity work among the poor."

"Charity work seems so hopeless, Dr. Lloyd," said Mrs. Dennison, earnestly, "that I am beginning to take a great interest in this new discovery. If its application will do away with poverty, then the quickest way to help the poor is to aid in the new propaganda."

"But must not reform come gradually, step by step, when it does come? Is not that the best way?" asked Mrs. Morgan, who had been listening, silent but attentive.

"I have watched many movements, and am quite sure that is not the way real—permanent—reform will come," answered Ernest Wynn, gravely. "Not the least of the evils of step by step reforms is their inevitable tendency to concentrate attention on the next step, and then to be contented with even a partial success in attaining that step. One of the benefits of total, unconditional, abolition movements is the tendency to concentrate attention on the final goal, and to be satisfied with nothing short of its attainment. This latter is worth far more to the cause of human freedom than any temporary relief that a partial reform may bring, for it generates and sustains enthusiasm—the life of every movement."

"In working for a balanced land tenure," said Glen Harding, "we are merely pointing out a natural law, which has only to be recognized—understood—to be accepted by all intelligent persons. Patrick Edward Dove put the case tersely when he said that 'True freedom, however simple in its theory, is the highest' 'form of combined society. It is the whole body of society acting on the principles of knowledge and carrying truth into practical operation.' How soon that time will come is now only a question of how fast we can get the truth into the minds of people generally.''

''That need not take long,'' said Madam Wortley. ''News goes further in a day now than it did in a year in my youth!''

''A message can go round the world now in less time than it took a hundred years ago to get one to the next town,'' said Dr. Lloyd.

''Then think of the folly of supposing it will take a thousand years to secure changes which merely depend on getting intelligent people to recognize the discovery of a new—a hitherto unknown—law of physics,'' suggested Glen Harding.

''The slow step by step plan of trying to win anything makes it appear that the cause—whatever it is the reformers are working for—is not a thing to be won right here and now, but merely something to advocate as desirable in some indefinitely future time,'' remarked Mrs. Fujita.

''That's so,'' heartily assented Ernest Wynn; ''and that is one reason the Japanese move quicker than some other folks. The difference between the rapidity of progress of modern Japan and the modern occident is due to the difference in their real faiths. The Japanese have the faith they call Bushido—which involves the conviction that they can do anything they undertake. They can, because they think they can. On the other hand, we of the western world are largely dominated by the spirit of Darwinism, which involves the conviction that we can do nothing except thru the course of many generations—the slow evolution of time—and we cannot, because we think we cannot. The Japanese belief fills them with enthusiasm and develops all their energies. Our belief fills us with apathy and develops our inertia.''

Inazo Motora's expressive face lighted up with pleasure. ''You have a very clear conception of Japanese character, Mr. Wynn,'' he said.

''I'm afraid that picture of American character is also true,'' observed Will Dennison. ''But we can change it mighty quick, now that we have struck a solid rock to stand on, and have something worth working for.''

''That we will,'' exclaimed Jack Romaine.

''But, Mr. Dennison, there are many other people, besides Mr. Wynn, who think that they have found the only solution,'' said Mrs. Morgan.

''Well, what if there are?'' It was Ernest Wynn who smilingly put the question.

''Why, how is one to know who is right? or that any of them are?'' Mrs. Morgan looked serious.

''By using ya's own judgment, after carefully considering and comparing them. There is no other way for a person to form a really intelligent opinion. I ask no one to take my word for it. I ask no more for the proposition of a balanced land tenure than any rational person should ask for any proposition. I have carefully considered all the propositions professing to solve this problem, that I have yet heard of, and I am prepared to show why they are all inadequate.''

"Of course there are many ways in which we can improve ourselves," said Madam Wortley. "But do you actually see any hope, Mr. Wynn, of securing a balanced land tenure in our own day?"

Ernest Wynn turned upon the speaker a glowing face and shining eyes as he answered: "I would stake my life on it, that with the means for the right sort of propaganda—and we are now assured of that—a balanced land tenure can be made the leading question in the United States in five years—and become fully established within another ten years."

CHAPTER 15.

AT DEVIL'S GATE.

"You enjoy Glen's outings so much, Helen, that I've planned one of my own for you," said Mrs. Dennison, one morning, at breakfast. "It's to be a real, old fashioned picnic, and is coming off today. We will take Mrs. Dent and the children along, so be ready to start when the others come. I expect them about nine o'clock."

"That's fine, thank you heartily, Mrs. Dennison. I'm sure to enjoy anything you get up for me."

"Where are we going, Birdie?" asked her sister, "and who are the others?"

Mrs. Dennison laughed. "Only to Devil's Gate, Glen—we can come back thru the hills—and the others are a few friends. You will see when they get there. I thought Helen might like to see the yuccas in bloom—close by—and there are a lot of them now up there on the western hills. Besides, you have taken her about everywhere, from the top of Mount Wilson to the other side of Catalina Island—except to our wild little gorge right here at home."

"True enough! We have never stopped there. I don't see how I came to miss that, Birdie! I'll fly round and get my work done and be ready by nine."

"Auntie Glen! Auntie Glen!" Merwyn came

rushing around the house. "They are coming! Such a big car, and full of people. Papa is going, too. Won't it be fun?"

"Yes, indeed. We will have a fine time today!" She took the little hand held out, and they raced around the house, to find Jake and the maids carrying hampers and baskets toward a large, sight-seeing car at the entrance. It seemed already pretty well filled. However, when their own little crowd reached the car, they found plenty of room, and managed to exchange lively greetings with their friends as they climbed into the waiting seats.

Glen Harding looked about as the car started. Yes, they were all there! Mr. and Mrs. Norwood, Grace Knight, Motora, Tremont and Wynn! Yet the whole thing had the air of a family jaunt. She Found herself seated beside Inazo Motora, with Grace Knight on her other side. "When did you get back?" she asked the latter.

"Only last evening. Daisy wrote that Mrs. Dennison especially wanted me for today. So I hurried back. Your sister does plan the most splendid times!"

"Indeed she does," was the hearty reply. "I think Birdie has made up a very good crowd this time. You have not been at Devil's Gate yet?"

"No, it will be new to me."

"Now," said Mrs. Dennison, when the car was under the live oaks at the side of the top of the gorge, "I want you people to scatter about and enjoy yourselves. You will hear the horn blow when it is time to get back for lunch. Helen, there are lovely yuccas over there," and she pointed to the western hills, where the tall, white, waxen points showed here and there above the chaparral.

"Oh, Glen, I would so like to climb up and get a picture of that yucca," exclaimed her friend, after scanning the hillside to which Mrs. Dennison had directed her attention. She indicated a particularly large plant some distance up the mountain. "Do you think we could get it? I must leave Irene?"

"Mrs. Dent and I will take good care of Irene. You go and get your picture—but don't get lost in the chaparral," Mrs. Dent concluded, smiling.

"It is quite possible to get lost in such a growth as there is over there—in more distant parts of the mountains," confirmed Glen Harding. "We can get to that yucca if you don't mind a few scratches."

"Not a bit, I want the picture—and we have on strong gowns."

"All right. Who wants to go with us?" Glen Harding looked about, and Arthur Tremont was instantly at her side, while Grant Norwood joined Mrs. Fujita and offered to lead the way. "It's likely to be pretty hard getting thru the bushes—the growth is so thick after the rains we've had," he said.

Merwyn and Fay were coaxing their father and Ernest Wynn to go with them down into the gorge and let them slide on the rocks, and the group finally turned off that way.

"You had better go up the mountain, too, Grace," said her sister. "I am going to stay here and visit with Birdie."

Grace Knight was talking to Inazo Motora, and tho he decidedly preferred to follow the lead of Glen Harding, he was far too polite to show any trace of impatience, or appear to notice that the others had started, until his companion remarked: "Let us go over on the other side, too, Mr. Motora. I don't care to scramble thru the bushes, but there's a good trail and some fine views, my sister told me."

Inazo Motora started after the others with an alacrity that did not escape the quick eyes of Mrs. Norwood, who noticed also the lingering stop on the bridge to look up and down the Arroyo.

"That man's manners are perfect, Birdie," she said, as she and her friend scrambled about among the piled up rocks, looking for comfortable seats that would command a view of as much of the gorge and hillside as could be secured from one point. "I know Mr. Motora wants to go up there with the others, and Grace is just tantalizing him by keeping him with her; but he is too polite to show a bit of it. Do you think he will get Glen?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Daisy. I cannot make Glen out a bit, when it comes to those men! I don't feel near as afraid of her marrying Mr. Tremont as I did for a while. I feel sure Mr. Wynn's coming has put an end to that—if it ever could have been possible."

"I never had any idea she would marry Arthur Tremont, Birdie. I cannot make out why Grant is so bewitched over the notion. Now, Grace would be much better suited to him—and try to enter into everything he liked."

"Yes, she seems to admire him as Glen does Mr. Motora. Arthur Tremont appears to be a fine enough man, personally, and Glen is certainly interested in some of the things he is, and yet I feel sure she could never be quite contented with him."

"There's one queer thing about it, tho, Birdie. When Grace and Grant, and even Mr. Tremont, are talking about their metaphysics and things they sound to me as tho they didn't really understand, half the time, what they mean themselves; but when Glen starts in on her ancient religion, or recollections of the past, it sounds as tho she knew exactly what she was talking about! It sounds just the same as when she tells us this plant is poison oak, or those gray patches over there are white sage."

Mrs. Dennison looked a little startled. "Why, Daisy, I've had that same feeling several times when listening to them. I wonder what it is?"

"I believe Glen knows more than Mr. Tremont does about some of the things they discuss—tho I'm not a very competent judge, I admit."

"Well, Daisy, I will have a talk with Glen the first chance I have, but we are so on the go now, and everything is rushed, to give Mrs. Fujita a good time to remember, of her last days as an American. Of course she will be likely to visit here again when Irene is older, but it will never be just the same after she has made a home in Japan."

"I wonder if Glen will go, too? Sometimes, when

I have seen them together, I have felt sure of it," said Mrs. Norwood. "There, Grace is starting on at last."

The others had already climbed the steep trail leading up from the road. "Now, Helen," said her friend, "we must keep in mind the points we located, or we cannot find your yucca. It's fortunate that Mr. Norwood is so tall! He can get his head above the chaparral now and then, and act as guide."

Grant Norwood started on, and they all followed the trail for some distance, until they reached its highest point, from which there was a glorious outlook, over the tree-embowered city, and down thru the narrow, precipitous gorge at their feet, to the wider sweep of the Arroyo beyond. Far down, in the bottom of the gorge, a tiny stream flowed, and the merry shouts of Merwyn and Fay came up to them; a part of nature's sounds of joyous freedom. The birds sang about them; they even caught a fleeting glimpse of a coyote disappearing under the bushes on the farther side of a little gully. Looking down again into the gorge, they saw Will Dennison and Ernest Wynn apparently engaged in an animated conversation, and seemingly oblivious of their surroundings. The two figures on the bridge had disappeared, and as Glen Harding caught sight of them lower on the trail, she called out:—

"Miss Knight, Miss Knight! Do come up here. It's fine!" Which had the effect, to Inazo Motora's delight, of starting them toward the others. They, however, could not wait on Grace Knight's slow movements.

''We must leave the trail and take to the bushes here, Helen,'' said her friend, and they started up the steep hillside, with Grant Norwood in the lead, and the two friends close behind, while Arthur Tremont brought up the rear. It was a decidedly scrambly, scratchy walk, for the chaparral was a perfect tangle in places, and the thorny branches and unkempt stems caught on hair and hats and gowns, and even on the coats of the men, threatening to tear to shreds the thin material the heat of the day had compelled them to wear. The four kept on, pushing aside the branches, stooping almost to a crawl in places—in fact, they had to descend to hands and knees for two or three yards in one place, where the live oak shrubs fenced them in and left only a green tunnel for them to get thru. Everywhere they had to look out for the hundred bayonets of the old plants; now a single dry stem with its surrounding armory of points; then whole groups and rows of the sharper than needle-weaponed plants. But they enjoyed it hugely—all but one. Other thoughts than getting thru a tangle of bushes occupied the mind of Arthur Tremont, and he was waiting for an opportunity.

On they went, up the mountain; then veered toward the yucca, seen an instant, to be lost as quickly. They slipped and sprang down one side of a rather deep gully, then climbed up the other, and again plunged into the bushes for another struggle toward the goal. It was a sort of surprise to come out suddenly onto a wide, open space, carpeted with bright green grass and with masses and mats of lovely wild flowers, in pink and blue and yellow.

"How perfectly delightful it is here!" exclaimed Mrs. Fujita, as they all paused to take breath and look about. "But I must find my yucca. Is not that it, Glen?" She pointed to a tall, white taper, a little higher up the mountain side. "Can we get to it, Mr. Norwood?"

"Certainly, if you are not too tired—or scratched."

Grant Norwood started on again, closely followed by Mrs. Fujita, with her friend beside her; but that did not suit Arthur Tremont, at all, and when the tangle of chaparral again separated the friends, he managed to delay Glen Harding by asking the name of a particularly bright, aggressively cheerful pink flower, which grew in wide patches and straggling groups, and even single bright stars, thru the open space and all about, where it looked especially pretty against the dark bushes. He had been rather diligently engaged in that form of botanical study all the way up. It was so pleasant to be near her and to note the glow in her face and the brightness of her eyes as she turned to answer his questions. Was it all due to the sunshine and exercise? Oh—dared he hope that she shared his pleasure in the companionship? His heart beat faster at the thought, and he wished he could be sure the others had gone beyond hearing. He looked about. They were nowhere to be seen. Should he speak.

"What flowers?" Glen Harding was saying. "Oh, I see. That is the Canchalaria, or California Centenary. I like it so well because of its bright, wide awake look."

Arthur Tremont stooped to gether a few of the flowers as he said, "I'll keep these to help me remember the name." He took out a note book, and, rather deliberately, found a place in which to press them—if only he could keep her there a few moments until he was more sure the others were out of earshot he might say some of the things that were almost choking him in their effort to get out.

Possibly Glen Harding read something in his face and eyes, for she started forward, saying, "We must go on, or we will lose our friends entirely in this wind tangle. I cannot see them anywhere." Then she called: "Helen, where are you?"

An answering call of "Right here, to the left," made Arthur Tremont glad he had remained silent.

"I cannot see you, Helen! Mr. Norwood, do hold up your hat! Oh," and Glen Harding laughed as a Panama waved above a clump of chia not four yards away. "I see; come on, Mr. Tremont."

"It's the worst tangle we have found, and Mr. Norwood is cutting a way with his knife," explained Mrs. Fujita. "We must be quite near my yucca."

"Have you a knife, Mr. Tremont? Then lend a hand here a moment, please. There, now we can get thru," announced Grant Norwood.

They reached the yucca a few moments later, and found it to be a fine specimen, holding aloft its long panicle of white waxen bells, giving out their overpowering fragrance. Mrs. Fujita took several pictures of it, from different points of view; Grant Norwood, with more energetic help now, from Arthur Tremont, trampling down bushes and cutting away branches, to enable the photographer to focus on the thousand blossoms of the candle of our Lord. Mrs. Fujita insisted on having her fellow climbers in one picture, and to please her, they stood close about the tall shaft, risking some pricks from the hundred needle points that make the name of Spanish bayonet so apt.

Then they began the descent. "It's easier going down, Helen," said her friend, "for it does not matter where we come out on the trail; so we can take the easiest openings."

Arthur Tremont did his best in the pursuit of botanical knowledge, but failed to get Glen Harding again out of sight of her friend. Instead, she seemed to be encouraging the same line of study in Mrs. Fujita, in spite of Grant Norwood's efforts to divert the attention of the latter from her friend. Was it intentional on her part, Arthur Tremont wondered. Was she trying to avoid being alone with him? It did not seem so, for she appeared to be only interested in answering his questions, or Mrs. Fujita's, in regard to the name of flower or shrub, and in pointing out to her friend places of interest whenever a space of lower bushes brought their heads above the varying greens of the chaparral and gave them views of the "Crown of the Valley;" with the long range of the Sierra Madre to the north, seeming so close by, with its peaks outlined against the cloudless sky, and its barren-looking mass broken by the greener lines showing—where the canyons penetrated —deep gashes in the mountain wall.

They were only half way down the hill when the toot, toot, of the horn reached them. But a few moments more of winding among the bushes, then a slide and a jump down a steep bank, brought them out on the trail, and a quick walk took them back to their friends and the bountiful lunch spread out most temptingly under the shade of a great live oak. The spot commanded a view of the desolate waste of the Arroyo at its widest, and of parts of the city encroaching on its eastern brink.

"Your lunch looks so good, Mrs. Dennison, and I'm hungry as a bear! Such a scramble as we had! But I secured my pictures," said Mrs. Fujita, as the party gathered about the feast and seated themselves on rock or cushion or grass, as came handy.

Arthur Tremont found himself seated on a bit of grass at the feet of Grace Knight, who was perched on a rock, and looked especially pleased about something as he glanced up at her. Somehow, his impression had been that Glen Harding would sit on that particular rock, but, in the little flurry of confusion in finding places, some positions had changed round. It was too late now to move, for everyone was comfortably settled; and there was Glen Harding just opposite him, sitting on a wide, flat rock, with Ernest Wynn beside her, and with Inazo Motora on a lower stone close by on her other side. The former was talking to her at the moment, and Arthur Tremont wondered what he could be saying that made her look so pleased.

While Arthur Tremont did not hear the remark, Inazo Motora did, and it set him thinking, tho it was merely a financial statement.

"We had a long talk, Miss Harding, and Mr. Dennison has promised to give ten thousand dollars to the propaganda fund as soon as plans are in shape; and he will give more later, if some investments he has recently made should turn out well."

"Did you enjoy your walk, Mrs. Fujita?" Will Dennison asked. "It must have been pretty warm work in this sunshine."

"It was fine, Mr. Dennison! Mr. Tremont and I learned a good deal about the wild flowers, and all the other growing things over there. Every bit of the time was delightful, and I'd like to go again. Wouldn't you, Mr. Tremont?"

"Sometime, perhaps," he said, and as he looked up at her—she was seated higher up than any of the others—he caught the gleam of a lurking spirit of mischief in her eyes, and he was more than ever glad that he had endured the choking. Some women saw too much, and it would probably be better to postpone all thoughts of looking for that opportunity until after Mrs. Fujita left for Japan. He understood that she was to go in a few days. Then things would go back to the old footing and the pleasant times come again, that had been disturbed by the constant presence of the visitor in the neighborhood of Glen Harding. He turned and resolutely devoted himself to Grace Knight, much to that young woman's satisfaction.

"Isn't it splendid, Mama," Merwyn asked, "to be all here together, eating our dinner outdoors? There's such a lot of things!" the child looked about over the ample supply of eatables.

"Yes, dear, and I want you to enjoy it." She smiled down into the happy little face, and then turned to Ernest Wynn: "How glad I would be to live to see all children as comfortable and happy as mine are now," she said.

"The papers say that school children are starving in this country today, Birdie. It does not seem possible," said Mrs. Norwood.

"It would not be possible, Mrs. Norwood, if the granting of property in privileges had not made it so," said Will Dennison.

"There's no end of idle workers, and even abject misery in every city in the land—even Los Angeles and Pasadena have their share—if that is what you are looking for," observed Grant Norwood.

"It's not what I'm looking for, I can tell you, Grant," retorted Ernest Wynn. "What I look at is the ease and speed with which all children can be provided with plenty of all the good things of life; and wide, pleasant spaces in which to play—right about their own homes, too, where they ought to be."

"Real homes," added Glen Harding, "in which they could grow up, as all children should, learning to love and enjoy each other, and to know by heart every tree and bush and flower, and all the wonderful insect and bird life of the home garden. Every child born into the world is entitled to that much, at least, of our mother nature's care."

"That sounds pleasant, Glen," said Mrs. Norwood, "but, after all, it's only a fancy picture."

"Not a bit of it, Mrs. Norwood," Ernest Wynn took up the word. "There is absolutely nothing in the way of making Miss Harding's picture the real fact thruout our land, except the existence of that property in privileges, which, on the one hand, is crushing the mass of our people daily into more and more abject slavery, thru its tribute compelling power; and, on the other hand, is ruining the few who try in vain to spend the heaps of tribute which roll up about them and swamp them, physically, mentally and morally. All these evils were made by human legislation and can be wiped out of existence at any time that the people of this country become sufficiently enlightened to abolish them."

"But if it is so easy to straighten things out, why was it not done long ago?" questioned Arthur Tremont.

Glen Harding laughed; and even Inazo Motora smiled, as Will Dennison put the counter question: "Why did not our grandparents ride in automobiles and use telephones, Mr. Tremont?"

"All nature's laws, all the facts in nature, are waiting ready to be utilized at any time they are discovered, Mr. Tremont," said Mrs. Fujita, smiling down from her perch. "But they must be found before they can be consciously utilized. It has been given to Mr. Wynn to find a bit of natural law that is of the highest importance to every one of us."

"Everybody naturally inclines to live in friendly and helpful association with others. That is the normal condition for all human beings," said Glen Harding.

"But they don't do it, Miss Harding," Arthur Tremont objected. "Most people, even in families, are as contrary as can be."

"The crowded condition of our cities causes too much friction, Mr. Tremont," observed Will Dennison. "We need room enough to move without having to elbow each other aside."

"That's right, Will," exclaimed his sister-in-law.

"You see, Mr. Tremont," said Ernest Wynn, smilingly, "we are brought back to the land question every time we try to understand human actions. An unbalanced land tenure produces advantages and disadvantages, and thereby develops the tendency, in human beings, to strive for advantages. This strife—miscalled competition by socialists—in turn develops suspicion; and so universally is this tendency developed today that it is well nigh impossible for persons to become really acquainted with each other while living under the influence of an unbalanced land tenure. The insidious power of inharmony thus developed is so great—so vast—as to seem incredible when first recognized."

"And every bit of it is due to human legislation," added Glen Harding. "What human beings have created, human beings can abolish—particularly as we boast every day about how much smarter and more advanced we are than were our parents or grandparents."

"Well, I'm sure we are, in some ways," Grace Knight spoke up.

"But the masses of the people are so ignorant, it is not worth while contending with them," lazily observed Grant Norwood.

"The ignorance is almost unbelievable," Will Dennison. "Yesterday I chanced to talk with a business man about the new issue of bonds the city is asked to load itself with. He seemed to think them all right. Then I asked him if he realized the close relation between the word spelled b-o-n-d-s and the word composed of the letters b-o-n-d-a-g-e. He looked surprised, and said he had never thought of that. Yet he is a college bred man, and esteemed as successful and rising in his line of business—and he has two children to think for."

"But I understand, Mr. Dennison, that the bonds are for new schools, and they will help on the education and evolution that will see a later generation out of the evils of today," said Arthur Tremont.

"Well, I think we are writing ourselves down mighty small if we cannot pay for the education of our children," returned Will Dennison.

"It makes me hot every time I think how the cities are fastening those loads of bonds on innocent, helpless children. Men selling their own children into slavery!" exclaimed Ernest Wynn.

"Do you really think, Mr. Tremont," Glen Harding asked, earnestly, "that it will be easier for the children of the future to get out from under millions of dollars of bonds—not to mention other chains about them—than it would be for us to use our brains a little today, in understanding and applying the one simple natural law which will, any time it is conformed to, abolish all bonds and bondage forever? The law must be recognized and applied in any event—it is the only way out, whether taken today or at any future time.''

''We will come out all right in time, Miss Harding,'' Grant Norwood hastily put in. ''The ignorant have still to work their way up.''

''Our whole work is really to penetrate that veil of ignorance—and thoughtlessness,'' said Glen Harding, ''and get in the knowledge of the simple and only way out. A great deal of what passes for ignorance is actually thoughtlessness, I feel sure, and once we set people to thinking it will be easy for them to see what is holding them down, and how readily and peaceably they can free themselves.''

''That's true,'' exclaimed Ernest Wynn. ''It is impossible to free people from servitude to others until they are capable of thinking for themselves. True freedom necessitates self-government, and none can be self-governed while under the dominion of any other power than that of reason. The first step toward freedom—real freedom—then, is to set people to thinking, by the discussion of the elements of freedom.''

''Our propaganda will do that,'' asserted Glen Harding, hopefully.

''Your plan seems unreal to me, Glen,'' said Mrs. Norwood. ''There are too many people in this country for you ever to reach all of them. To me it looks like a hopeless task."

"You see, Mrs. Norwood," Mrs. Fujita looked down from her higher outlook to observe, "Herbert Spencer was right when he said that 'The worse the condition of society, the more visionary must a true code of morality appear.' "

"It takes only a comparatively few people—who understand what they are about — to form and control public opinion," said Glen Harding, seriously. "This is proved by the fact that only a small number today get the largest share of the returns from the tribute-paying conditions under which all are living. These few use every avenue of public communication—pulpit, school, bookstore, postoffice and press—thru which to instill into and keep before the minds of the people certain ideas which form current public opinion; and which enable the holders of the greater part of property in privileges to grind our millions of people into a more and more abject slavery—under the forms of liberty. It is nothing on earth except the ignorance and thoughtlessness of educated people—like Will's business man—that makes the degradation of the rich, and the misery and want of the poor, possible today."

"Even if that is so, I don't see how you can stop it," insisted Mrs. Norwood.

"By publishing the simple truth," answered Glen Harding, quickly. "By showing how the establishment of a balanced land tenure will at once open, and keep forever, equal opportunities to life—real living, with all its enjoyments. The true path is so plain that any adult can see it, can understand it, and many people already know something of a genuine town meeting and its relation to true self-government."

"Public opinion is now largely a matter if imitation," added Ernest Wynn. "Owners of property in privileges set going certain thoughts calculated to tighten their power over the rest of the people; these thoughts are spread about by the immediate tools of the powers, as tho they were their own thoughts, and the general public imitates the movement and accepts the ideas, unconscious of the process. Unconscious imitation is really reflex action. The sane adult can, by a conscious effort of the will, refrain from imitative or reflex action. The thoughtless adult simply submits and imitates. Hence, the fact that public opinion today supports many things directly opposed to the welfare of the people—all the people—is ample evidence of the almost universal thoughtlessness in this country."

"I like the idea of having homes with large gardens for the children—and ourselves—to enjoy," said Mrs. Dennison. "Even large and handsome houses do not look a bit homelike when crowded so close together as they are building them now."

"With a balanced land tenure established, there would certainly be a prompt end to all that, Mrs. Dennison," Ernest Wynn responded. "People naturally like plenty of room and outdoor life. Just see how they are even now trying to get away from the cities, tho they only get to the suburbs and a little patch of grass."

"Even if all the people wanted such a change," Mrs. Norwood persisted, "it would take a long time to work it out."

"Stop and think a moment, Mrs. Norwood, of the changes that have taken place in Los Angeles and Pasadena—not to mention along the beach—since you came out here," suggested Will Dennison.

"I never thought of that, Will" eagerly spoke Mrs. Dennison. "Just think, Daisy"—she turned to her friend—"of the way Pasadena looked when you came out to visit me—and then see how it is now. Free people, with plenty to go on, could spread out and make this a land full of lovely homes in a very few years. That part will be easy. Then, think how splendid it will be to have the children grow up in a land where people are not afraid of needing anything, and can all be perfectly sincere and friendly with each other."

"You don't meet many such today, Mrs. Dennison," remarked Grant Norwood.

"Yet I believe everyone would rather be so, if not afraid," she returned. "But I see you are all about thru with the lunch." She smiled her satisfaction over the empty dishes. "If anyone wants to go down into the gorge, we can wait a while; but remember that we are to go back by way of La Cañada and thru the hills."

"I want Helen to see the gorge from below, Birdie," said her sister. "We will be back in plenty of time."

Arthur Tremont started up, but Inazo Motora, quick and graceful, was before him, and started down the path with Glen Harding. Ernest Wynn followed, talking to Mrs. Fujita, so there was nothing left for him but to bring up the rear with Grace Knight, who exerted herself for his entertainment, and seemed to succeed very well—especially as they all kept pretty close together after reaching the bottom of the gorge, while Glen Harding explained some of the geology of the region, and pointed out the curious markings of the rocks.

CHAPTER 16.

KARMA AND EQUAL FREEDOM.

An unusually warm Sunday afternoon, early in August, made the shady front pergola at Arroyo Vista seem especially inviting, and there the older members of the Dennison family and their guests—Mr. and Mrs. Norwood and Grace Knight—were gathered, after the early dinner. Glen Harding had just returned the evening before, after a few weeks' absence. She had gone to San Francisco to see her friend safely off for Japan, and then stopped on the way home to visit friends at Santa Barbara. Mrs. Dennison and the children had been spending the time at the beach, but all were now at home, getting ready for the social event of the month—to Jack Romaine's friends.

"I wonder, Daisy, if any of those men will be here this afternoon?" remarked Mrs. Dennison, in a low tone, to her friend, as the two sat a little apart from the others, on a quaintly carved, high-backed bench.

"Those men" needed no translation to Mrs. Norwood. "I'm sure Mr. Tremont will come, for Grant told him this morning that Glen was at home. Grant is fairly bewitched about that man, and was really disappointed that he could not give him a chance to propose to Glen at your picnic. He said he did his best to get Mrs. Fujita out of the way, but," and she laughed, "the bushes were too tangled—he was quite badly scratched—and Glen kept catching up. Have you had that talk with her yet? Do you think now that Glen cares anything at all for Arthur Tremont, Birdie?''

''Sometimes I have felt quite sure that she does not—yet only this morning she made a remark that puzzled me. I haven't had a chance for that talk with her yet. You know we only came home yesterday. Yet Mr. Tremont is a very attractive man in some ways,'' she ended, reflectively.

''Oh, he is a handsome man enough and very pleasant in his manners, tho they have not the perfection Mr. Motora can show,'' Mrs. Norwood laughed. ''But in spite of the queer way in which Glen goes on sometimes about the past, I'm sure she does not believe in that eastern mysticism Mr. Tremont teaches. I've told Grant so a hundred times, but he won't listen to me on that subject—says I don't understand it.''

''I don't pretend to understand it at all,'' laughed her friend. ''As for Mr. Tremont—oh,'' she broke off—'' 'speak of an angel and you hear the rustle of his wings.' There he is now, coming up the walk.''

Will Dennison chanced to be nearest the entrance and went to meet the coming guest. ''Glad to see you, Mr. Tremont. Come right up here, it's as cool a place as you can find in Pasadena this afternoon.''

The greetings were hardly over and Arthur Tremont comfortably seated among them, when Mrs. Norwood called her friend's attention to another figure coming up the walk, and, in an aside too low to catch the ears of any one but Mrs. Dennison, said, "Now Mr. Motora is sure to come pretty soon."

"It's pleasant to see you back, Miss Harding," remarked Ernest Wynn, frankly glad, as he was made welcome to a seat on the wide, cool pergola.

"I told you so, Birdie," and Mrs. Norwood looked again toward the entrance to the grounds, where a large touring car had just stopped beside the walk. Inazo Motora sprang out and came quickly toward them.

"This is fine," he said, after the first greetings were over. "I brought a party of friends over from Los Angeles, but they do not go back with me, and I hoped to find some of you here," he bowed to Mrs. Norwood, "so that I need not make the return trip alone. Will you do me the honor of returning in my car? You, too, Mr. Tremont."

"With pleasure, Mr. Motora," said Mrs. Norwood.

"Thank you," murmured Arthur Tremont, but the thought in his mind was, "I suppose I must accept, even tho it does seem to leave a clear field to Wynn."

"You will all have tea with us, and then the ride back to Los Angeles in the cool of the evening will be delightful," said Mrs. Dennison, "and there will be moonlight, you know."

"You are a perfect jewel, Birdie," exclaimed Mrs. Norwood, "and I will accept for all of us."

"By the way, Mr. Dennison," remarked Ernest

Wynn, as he moved to a seat in the midst of the group, now gathered sociably together, "you remember asking me to send my article on Freedom to your Chicago paper?"

Will Dennison looked interested. "Yes, is it out? I have not had time yet to look over the last number."

"No, the managing editor writes me that my article seems to be intended for single taxers, and they never address their readers as tho they were single taxers."

"But that is ridiculous!" exclaimed Will Dennison.

"I read your article very carefully, Mr. Wynn, and it did not seem to me to be addressed to single taxers any more than to any other lovers of freedom," said Mrs. Dennison.

"Ernest Wynn looked particularly pleased. "I am so glad you were interested enough to read my paper, and you are right about it; but single taxers now claim to be 'the only consistent preachers of freedom in a land dedicated to freedom.' "

"If they mean to live up to that claim they will have to study a balanced land tenure promptly, and for all they are worth," remarked Will Dennison, emphatically.

"I take that paper, too," put in Arthur Tremont, "and its editor seems to be always discussing some phase of the land question."

Glen Harding glanced brightly at the speaker. "I am glad to hear that you are reading up on the subject, Mr. Tremont."

"Oh, I don't read the paper very thoroly," he admitted, "but I have noticed that the editor seems to have a lot to say on money and land values lately."

"That reminds me to ask," and Glen Harding turned to Ernest Wynn. "Did you send them your article about Rent and Land Values, as I urged you to do, Mr. Wynn?"

A queer smile trembled for an instant on Ernest Wynn's lips, but he only said, quietly, "Yes, but they declined it because 'it raises a controversy which would be more appropriate for a single tax organ or some university publication.' "

Glen Harding's face showed her amazement. "Is it possible," she exclaimed, "that the editors of a paper claiming to be among the leading exponents of social service can refuse to publish the greatest discovery ever made in political science—the law controlling human association—when thoroly explained, and showing the exact source of ground rent? It seemed strange enough that they should make no note of it when you first called their attention to the discovery. I thought they would be glad to publish and discuss that article. Surely there can be no subject of more vital importance to the whole question of social welfare. What possible social service could the editors of that paper render to humanity greater than that of bringing to the front a discovery that shows exactly what constitutes a balanced land tenure—a complete and permanent solution of the land question!"

"That suggestion of a university paper looks a little like an effort to shelve the serious discussion of the land question,'' observed Will Dennison, thoughtfully.

''It is certainly trifling with a matter of the gravest importance. Why, Will, I am simply astounded! It does not seem possible they could fall so low in thought,'' and a pained look passed over Glen Harding's face.

''Do you suppose,'' Inazo Motora spoke with some hesitation, ''that the editor was, perhaps, afraid to come out squarely and face the possibility of an immediate and strong strike at the root of all the evil of our—and every other—time, an unbalanced land tenure? I have noticed in all your reform papers a tendency to discuss every sort of minor issue, rather than an earnest effort to get at the heart of the problem. Are they afraid of it?''

''I don't know about those papers,'' Arthur Tremont put in, ''but I do know that fear is the one thing we must all get rid of if we are ever to amount to anything.''

''We were at the Woman's Club the other day,'' began Mrs. Norwood, ''and the speaker, a very bright woman from Iowa, said that all the lesser reforms must be secured before the greatest could be won; and that we ought to work hard to win the small ones—perhaps that is why the reform papers give so much space to them?''

''How utterly absurd!'' exclaimed Glen Harding. ''How can we possibly cure the symptoms of a disease while we let the cause go on unchecked?''

''She said, too,'' put in Grace Knight, quickly, "that reforms must come slowly, so as not to make any sudden changes."

"I believe in striking out from the shoulder and telling the whole truth," said Will Dennison. "I don't think it better, or at all necessary, to take a generation or two to abolish a wrong when it can be done in much less time, under the false notion that a sudden change for the better could possibly be disastrous to the commonwealth."

"I agree with you, Mr. Dennison," remarked Grant Norwood. "But if I spoke out freely I would lose my job, and I cannot afford that; for a job lost in these days cannot be replaced by a better one. I've noticed that fact in too many cases to care to try it myself."

"That is, Grant, you are afraid of losing your position if you come out fearlessly for a balanced land tenure?" It was Ernest Wynn who put the question.

"Yes, Ernest, that's about the size of it," was the prompt reply. "And, honestly, now, do any of you," he glanced about the group, "know a man entirely without that fear?"

"I have been surprised to see so much of that feeling among a people I had supposed were entirely independent," observed Inazo Motora.

"A poor man certainly cannot afford to be outspoken," said Will Dennison. "And even among the comparatively well-to-do today, business relations are so complex and involved that we have to be mighty cautious, on occasion, as to what we say."

"Then I would like to ask our friend here," said

Ernest Wynn, turning to Arthur Tremont, "how we are to get rid of fear in any other way than thru the recognition of nature's law for the harmonious association of persons—equal freedom—based on a balanced land tenure?"

"The quickest way to get rid of fear, that I can think of," smilingly answered Arthur Tremont, "is to ignore his existence."

"I am glad to learn, Mr. Tremont, that fear is not feminine," Glen Harding spoke gravely, but the light in her eyes was dancing.

"What in the world do you mean, Miss Harding?"

"I mean, Mr. Tremont, that it is eminently accurate to personify fear by the use of the masculine pronoun, for the all-great fear—the fear of poverty—which underlies all others, is due wholly to man-made legislation."

"And if you will allow yourself to think seriously on the subject for a few moments, Mr. Tremont," added Ernest Wynn, "you will see the impossibility of getting rid of that fear by trying to ignore it. There is no possible way to actually and permanently get rid of it except by removing its cause; and that cause is clearly an unbalanced land tenure."

"Oh, come, now, Mr. Wynn, you know I don't care to argue with you on questions of sociology," returned Arthur Tremont. "I know, however, and I say it emphatically, that there is nothing to fear but fear. Our only chains are those we forge for ourselves. We are capable of asserting our individuality always and everywhere, and we are free right now, here and always. Nothing but fear can keep us from our birthright.''

''That must be true,'' said Grace Knight, eagerly, ''for we all made our own karma in a past life. I often think that our great teacher was very wise in saying that, when theosophy has restored a knowledge of the ancient truths of karma and reincarnation to their rightful places in our Western thought, the poor and ignorant people who are now discontented and always complaining about injustice or something wrong, will become patient and bear quietly whatever comes to them. They will know that it is all a part of the law, and that the law is always good, and that in time they will work out to higher and easier places.''

''I cannot agree with that statement, Miss Knight,'' Ernest Wynn spoke very seriously. ''Such a doctrine seems to me an unmitigated evil, for it tends to relieve all persons from any personal responsibility for the inequitable conditions in which we are all involved today. The truth is—and it is easily demonstrable—that those evils are wholly due to human statutes and human errors, and can be removed at any time thru securing real freedom—equal freedom—and that is not at all a question of time, or of individual character. It is solely a question of knowledge of the right way out; and that can now be quickly learned.''

''I feel that the only safeguard we can take in our daily lives, these days,'' observed Arthur Tremont, ''is to just accept gladly whatever may come to us and mentally exclaim 'I need this experience or it would not have come to me, but I must conquer it, and positively refuse to let it conquer me.' Then we can make everything a lesson to lead us on to higher things.''

''That is all right,'' assented Ernest Wynn, ''if we are careful to distinguish clearly between what is the result of natural forces outside of human control and those things that result from the working of natural forces thru the human mind and under human control. We should bear in mind that humanity is that portion of nature in which has evolved the power to consciously use—or abuse—all natural forces, including the human body itself.''

''Seriously, Mr. Wynn, we ought to remember that whatever is, is right,'' said Arthur Tremont. ''Even if it does not seem so to us, we can at least trust the Causeless Cause enough to act as tho everything was just as it should be. In this way we can grow a hope—possibly a firm belief—that the world is not so topsy turvy and perverse as it appears to be.''

The look of disgust on Ernest Wynn's face was unmistakable, and quite plainly visible, but his voice was gravely quiet as he said, ''That is a hideous mistake, a monstrous illusion, for it allows right minded persons like yourself, Mr. Tremont, to refuse to listen to the truth thru which alone we can ever have right human relations—a truth we can recognize and apply right here and now. The misery, the crime, the personal vices, and the political corruption that exists in our own country—and else-where thruout the civilized world—today is due to man-made statutes, and these can only be abolished by the conscious action of persons, working peaceably together. Persons now living are entirely competent to abolish the whole evil brood—to permanently eradicate it, root and branch—and to do it easily, peacefully and promptly, whenever the truth is known.''

''You do not seem to realize, Mr. Wynn,'' Arthur Tremont went calmly on, ''that the love of justice and the good of our fellows is a matter of very slow growth; a sort of steady unfoldment, a gradual opening, and it takes ages in which to evolve enough to operate at all widely. Doubtless the time will come when people will look back with amazement at the record we are making today, of war, murder, exterminating, and all the rest of the things you consider evil—but I say are good, as all is good—and will wonder why we allowed such horrors to continue and increase.''

There was a flash in Ernest Wynn's eyes, and Glen Harding noticed his momentary grip on the arms of the chair in which he sat, as he leaned forward to speak:—

''I can tell you one reason why such things continue to exist, Mr. Tremont. It is because you fear to take up and seriously study certain truths to which your attention has been called. You tell us we must get rid of fear. Yet you are afraid to investigate a balanced land tenure for fear you will become convinced of its truth and have to give up some of the errors you are now teaching.''

"I have become convinced that Mr. Wynn has found a great and glorious truth, Mr. Tremont," Inazo Motora hastened to say. "It is not a matter of evolution, but of knowledge and action."

Arthur Tremont's pleasant calm was unbroken. "Viewpoints differ," he said, "and we cannot all think alike."

"It seems to me, Mr. Tremont, that Mr. Wynn's remarks about fear and investigation apply as strongly to another subject as they do to the land question," said Glen Harding. And again Ernest Wynn noticed Inazo Motora's quick smile of comprehension. He must solve that mystery.

"I'm sure the teachings of the new thought are the most wonderful thing we have today," Grace Knight put in, eagerly. "They teach us how to attain to all joy, thru the wisdom that is higher reason, or is it something higher than reason?" Her appeal was to Arthur Tremont, but he only smiled, slightly—and kept still—while Ernest Wynn observed:—

"Very much now passes for wisdom because of the erroneous assumption that humanity is capable of attaining something higher than the rational, oblivious of the fact that what is not rational is irrational. Depend upon it, Miss Knight, whatever is expressible in human language is either rational or irrational; and any utterance that cannot be comprehended by the reason is the voice of insanity."

Grace Knight looked a little bewildered, but ventured to say, questioningly, "It looks as tho there were everywhere good and bad things, and we surely ought to try to follow the good? I like to think it is all good, because a Supreme Being could not make or allow any evil.''

Ernest Wynn shook his head. ''You can readily see, Miss Knight,'' he said, ''that all political institutions are of human make; that the statutes that legalize certain kinds of robbery are human-made, and do not conform to the laws of nature, and cannot therefore do otherwise than cause inharmony and human suffering. The laws of nature are real laws because they are authoritative—that is, they invariably punish infringements. Conformity to them brings satisfaction; non-conformity brings dissatisfaction and suffering; and there is never any deviation from this rule. This is never true of human legislation. The laws of nature we call good because of the results of conformity to them. For the same reason we are justified in calling almost all human legislation evil—bad.''

''It seems to me,'' Glen Harding said, earnestly, ''that one of the worst things about the teaching that the horrors of today are good—right—is the way in which it stupifies and paralizes the reason, enabling people to shirk their share of responsibility for the legislation which causes the evils. The belief undoubtedly sooths many persons into inaction in the face of appalling degradation and misery. But it is like the ease from pain produced by narcotics, and actually aggravates the trouble—while rendering the sufferer less able to meet it—to conquer it.''

''That's right, Glen,'' said Will Dennison, with emphasis. "I don't claim to be versed in metaphysics, but it strikes me that we can sell ourselves to his Satanic majesty about as well thru the mental morphine of 'whatever is, is right' as by the use, physically, of the drug opium."

"Exactly," added Ernest Wynn. "Soothing the mind and nerves to sleep is not always wise. It all depends on how—at what price—the peace is secured. Nerve peace produced by morphine is no more, no less, abnormal, than the mental peace produced thru the mantram, 'Whatever is, is right'."

"But, you know, our karma in this life is all made in some previous life, and we cannot change it now," said Grace Knight, insistently. "We have to take whatever comes, and bear it cheerfully, so as to make good karma for another life."

"I wish you would not talk such nonsense, Grace," her sister exclaimed, impatiently.

"It is all right, Grace, to believe in karma and reincarnation, but we should not argue about it," observed her brother-in-law. "I never do."

"Nor do I," said Arthur Tremont. "It is indisputable that in the theory of metempsychosis there is found the only possible explanation of the inequalities and apparent injustices of life. It is the only theory that squares with justice."

Glen Harding's eyes seemed to grow larger and darker as she turned them full upon Arthur Tremont. For an instant he met the look, then glanced away as she said: "How can you say that, Mr. Tremont, when you have repeatedly heard the true explanation? Think of your responsibility as a teacher."

Arthur Tremont was saved the necessity of replying by the timely appearance of a maid, bearing a tray filled with glasses, and followed by Jake Harris carrying a great glass pitcher filled with the lemonade which made him famous among the visitors at Arroyo Vista.

Her friends declared that the fair Mrs. Dennison never seemed more beautiful than when she beamed her pleasure over a group of guests who seemed to be really enjoying her hospitality. Certainly those now clustered about her appeared to be enjoying their present occupation. She looked from one to another, then a sudden thought struck her, and she spoke it out, holding up her half-emptied glass: "Wouldn't we all enjoy this more if we knew that everyone else could have lemonade as good as Jake's whenever they wanted it, and could drink it in just as pleasant a place as this?"

Her husband turned quickly toward her, exclaiming, "I never thought of that, Birdie, but I do believe we would."

"What an odd notion, Birdie," cried Mrs. Norwood. "Tho, of course, I'd like to have all people enjoy life."

"I think you are quite right, Mrs. Dennison," said Ernest Wynn. "We could not help feeling a greater enjoyment in every detail of life if in a truly free country. Then just think that it needs only a few years of earnest work on the part of a few of us, in the right way, to make that enjoyment—the joy of real living—an established fact!"

"I'm sure we would all like to have life easier, more satisfying in its accomplishment,'' remarked Grant Norwood.

''Life would expand for every one of us if we realized that all persons were comfortable and happy, neither burdened by excessive wealth nor abased by poverty,'' said Inazo Motora. ''There is visible a wide-spread discontent with present conditions, and, in places, also a feeling that these conditions are becoming unendurable, and that a change of some sort must come soon. This is now felt even in Japan.''

''That is true,'' said Ernest Wynn. ''A vague sense of an impending crisis is spreading thruout not only this country, but all the world. Individuals and sects are now beginning to prophecy—even to set definite dates for revolutions. This is the reflex effect of the pressure producers feel, without recognizing its source. This state of mind is fallow ground for the successful sowing of the conception of a balanced land tenure, thru which alone there is any possibility of removing the pressure; for the pressure is none other than the tribute compelling power generated by an unbalanced land tenure.''

''I wonder now,'' said Glen Harding, thoughtfully, ''that we have been so long in realizing that there must be a natural law controlling the association of persons, just as there is a natural law controlling the orderly movement of the stars; and that all we had to do to secure the most perfect conditions for human development was to discover that law and live up to it.''

''The orderly movement of the stars was easily seen and studied, for the stars have no choice but to obey—to conform to the law," answered Ernest Wynn. "With persons it is different, for they possess the power, and are therefore compelled to exercise the responsibility, of choosing between conformity to or disregard of nature's laws. No other thing in nature possesses that power, or is subject to that responsibility."

Arthur Tremont's face lighted up, as with a ray of hope. "I am sure nothing can be more immoral than to teach disregard of law, yet when people are educated enough to do without it the eternal law will appear before them. When we have mastered our fate we rise mentally to an exalted station and see things in a different light. Many people talk of a bottomless pit, not realizing that they talk of a long tunnel into which we enter from the dark side of ignorance and at last come out on the bright side of knowledge."

"That is a fine illustration, Mr. Tremont," said Glen Harding, with an appreciative smile, "of the way we still use the ideas taught by their physical environment to those who lived in the childhood and youthtime of humanity. In those days persons had only to look up to see that they lived at the shaded end of a long tunnel, while a dazzling brilliancy illuminated the far away opening, where dwelt knowledge and wisdom and understanding."

Ernest Wynn glanced keenly at Glen Harding, but her gaze was fixed on Arthur Tremont, with what looked almost like a gleam of mischief in her eyes. He turned quickly to Inazo Motora and caught an appreciative smile lighting up his face, and again he felt, as once before that afternoon, and at the well remembered meeting at the Metaphysical Club, that Inazo Motora understood certain allusions where he was himself wholly in the dark. There was some mystery about that knowledge that he must clear up at the earliest opportunity. Now that he thought of it, he remembered a number of such passing allusions, which had bewildered him for the moment. They had all been so busy over propaganda plans that the other subject had not come up in his mind—only at such chance moments. Yes, he must now make an effort to understand it at once. He would have a talk with Glen Harding the first chance he could get, and solve this problem.

He was brought back to the present moment by his host's voice saying: "I was over at Los Angeles yesterday and called at the Van Nuys to see a prominent Boston single taker who has been stopping there a few days. I told him of your discovery, Mr. Wynn, and handed him your leaflet on a balanced land tenure. He glanced over it a few minutes and remarked that its language did not convey any definite meaning to him. I was surprised, and intimated that I thought the conception a very simple one. He said he did not see any simplicity in it, and added—I can give his own words—'The single tax seems to insure absolute equity, and I can see no possible merit in this scheme you urge. What we are after is freedom, a striking off of shackles, not creating machinery to run society'."

Ernest Wynn laughed. "I am not a socialist, and the idea of calling a balanced land tenure 'machinery to run society' is too absurd! It takes away all possible ground on which to rest any sort of social machinery other than a few clerks of the people—and the plain town meeting that a Massachusetts man ought to be able to understand. Surely he knows that any government other than real self-government can exist only for the creation of property in privileges—and its maintenance."

"I tried to argue the matter with him," continued Will Dennison, "pointing out that the single tax could not possibly bring 'absolute equity' because it did not solve the transportation question—but he said he had to leave for San Francisco in the evening— wanted him to have a talk with you—and was too busy to take up the subject. I could see that he did not consider it of any importance."

"It seems to me," and there was a touch of sadness in Glen Harding's tone, "that it is dishonoring the memory of Henry George for any single taxer to treat the land question in such a trifling, thoughtless manner. It looks as tho the sheeplike following of the letter of his teachings—or a part of them —has tended everywhere to crowd out all the life and energy Henry George's enthusiasm and devotion put into them. Every single taxer who wants to do Henry George the highest honor possible—that of seriously and earnestly carrying on the work to which he gave his life—ought to bear constantly in mind two things he said:—

" 'The tenure of land is the fundamental fact which must ultimately determine the conditions of individual, social and political life.'

" 'I propose to beg no question, to shrink from no conclusion, but to follow truth wherever it may lead. Upon us is the responsibility of seeking the law, for in the very heart of our civilization today women faint and little children moan. But what that law may prove to be is not our affair. If the conclusions that we reach run counter to our prejudices, let us not flinch; if they challenge institutions that have long been deemed wise and natural, let us not turn back.' "

As Glen Harding ceased, her brother-in-law said, quickly: "If that thought applies to older beliefs, why should it not to the single tax or any later belief we may have held? Or may come to hold? No matter if we did once work hard for an erroneous belief—that is surely no reason why we should cling to it when we have a chance to work for the truth instead."

"People don't think enough," remarked Arthur Tremont. "If they once realized the power of their own thought force in getting what they desire, we would have fewer thoughtless persons about us."

"That's solid truth, Mr. Tremont," heartily assented Ernest Wynn.

"I have noticed that thoughtlessness seems to be a striking characteristic of civilization," Inazo Motora began, "and yesterday I read an article in a recent number of Everybody's Magazine that seems to throw some light on the cause. The paper was on 'Brain and Body,' and written by a learned doctor, a scientist. He stated that the brain is a pair organ, having two perfectly matched hemispheres, but that only one 'becomes a human brain, that is, a brain with the special mental endowments that are human, while the other remains thoughtless for life.' He added that the reason for this one-sided development of the brain was the almost universal one-hand education among civilized people. Both hemispheres are equally good, and which of the two will be educated, in any person, depends on whether the left or the right hand is most used. That 'all the speech centers and all the knowing and educated places are to be found' 'only in the left hemisphere of the right-handed and in the right hemisphere of the left-handed.' It came to me as I read, Mrs. Dennison''—the Japanese turned to his hostess a thoughtful face and earnest eyes—''that in training them so thoroly in ambidexterity you are giving your children the foundation for a more balanced, a broader and higher, mental development than any person with a one-sided, half-thoughtless brain can ever attain.''

''I'm so glad you mentioned that, Mr. Motora,'' and Mrs. Dennison beamed with pleasure. ''We are all, especially Mrs. Dent, trying to train the children in the spirit as well as the letter of the suggestions given by J. Liberty Tadd in his New Methods of Education. If this about the brain is true, it gives us a stronger reason than ever for keeping up the plan. I want the children to have the best start in life that we can give them.'' She looked lovingly at the little group rolling and tumbling about with their ellies in the cool shade of a drooping pepper tree on the edge of the lawn.

''That idea is worth investigating, Motora. I don't want our little folk to be lop-sided and unbalanced in their minds,'' observed their father. ''We have too many such people already.''

"I'll get the magazine tomorrow, Birdie, and read the article with Mrs. Dent," promised the children's aunt.

Grace Knight looked toward the children and smilingly remarked, "I never saw happier looking little people than they are. What a pity that all children cannot have such free, glad times, controlled only by love! But the dualism of good and evil seems to hold in everything, and some children are happy while others are suffering."

"When we have secured a balanced land tenure we will have done away forever with that sort of dualism of good and evil," promptly retorted Ernest Wynn. "All children will then be healthy and happy, for people will live in harmony and genuine friendship, and develop to the highest limit of symmetrical growth possible on this earth."

"We could not recognize the good without the contrast of the evil," objected Arthur Tremont, "and therefore the best way is to believe that all that comes is good."

"People are a mighty queer lot," said Ernest Wynn. "Calling good that which is obviously all evil, and then denying the possibility of replacing the evil of this world with genuine good. We have learned so many erors that it is hard to grasp any simple truth—but that does not alter the truth or make it less needful to strive for it. We have to work all the harder to abolish the errors. If we abolish these in our conceptions, our acts will take care of themselves."

"I should like to live in a time when everyone was comfortable and happy," said Grace Knight.

Her eyes sought Arthur Tremont's face, only to find him intent on Glen Harding.

"You have given me an enthusiasm for equity, Mr. Wynn," said Inazo Motora, earnestly, "and I want some of your literature to send to my friends, in the hope of waking a like feeling in them."

"I'll be glad to supply all you can use," was the quick response. "I want to spread the knowledge of the truth as far and as fast as possible."

"I still think we must first get rid of fear, using a strong will, urged on by desire," said Arthur Tremont, "before we can hope to accomplish much in any line."

"In that case—if that is true—Mr. Tremont, fear and ignorance must be synonymous; and as knowledge is the only weapon with which we can kill ignorance, we at last hold in our hands the power to banish forever that enemy of humanity, and prove the wisdom of the seer who first said: 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.'" There was a ring of triumphant power in Glen Harding's voice as she continued: "The two discoveries—one giving us the key to all the mysteries of the past; the other showing plainly the way to banish all the evils and miseries of the present—open wide the door to an immediate peaceful and glorious future. A future in which the soul of the world—true freedom, equal freedom—will have room to expand and show us for the first time in all history the possibilities of human attainment and human happiness, under the influence of equity, harmony, and universal friendship."

CHAPTER 17.

WHICH SHALL IT BE?

"Glen, have you much to do in the garden this morning?" asked Mrs. Dennison, on Monday, as the family rose from the breakfast table.

"Only a little. Sue kept it in fine shape while I was gone. I'll be thru in half an hour if you want me for anything."

"Come up to my room as soon as you can, Glen, and I'll tell you."

The blue and white room in which Glen Harding found her sister a half hour later was large and airy, opening onto the family pergola, with its glass enclosed porch at one end. A full length mirror, its white frame sprinkled with blue forget-me-nots, had a place between the two long windows on the north side of the room.

Mrs. Dennison, seated in a large arm chair near the mirror and occupied with a bit of fine sewing, looked up and put aside her work as her sister entered the room.

"Now, Glen," she said, "I want you to stand in front of this glass and look at yourself."

With ready obedience, tho somewhat mystified, Glen Harding placed herself as directed and looked at the not unpleasant picture thus revealed.

"Anything the matter with my clothes?" she questioned, twisting herself about and looking over her shoulder in the effort to see the back breadths of her neat gardening costume.

"Your clothes are all right, Glen. I want you to look at yourself."

Glen Harding turned again to the mirror and studied her reflected self. A straight, trim figure, with the grace of health showing in form and motion. A bright face, somewhat tanned by exposure to the Southern California sunshine, crowned by masses of dark brown hair that rarely knew the weight of a hat. Two clear gray eyes, wide open and eager, glanced back at her with a question in their depths.

"Well, Birdie, what is it?"

"Just look at that young woman," her sister nodded toward the reflection in the mirror, "and then remember the tired-out old maid you saw in that same glass three years ago. I declare, Glen, you look at least ten years younger today than you did when you came out here three years ago!"

Her sister laughed gaily. "I feel that way, too. The old thing who came out here has gone forever. Perhaps you remember that I told you, Birdie," she added, in serious tones, as she seated herself in a low chair near her sister, "that the whole school system was so horribly artificial and grinding that it was wearing the life out of me; and it is worse for the children than for the teachers."

"I believe now that you were right, Glen," her sister assented, thoughtfully, "tho at the time I considered it merely your opinion. But I want to talk of something else this morning. When you came out to stay with us three years ago I thought you would be such a nice old maid aunt for the children—and now I have a young woman on my hands with three lovers to choose from!''

The older sister laughed heartily. ''It is a curious situation, Birdie, and I can just imagine your feelings. You expected a quiet, grandmotherly sort of person, to stay in the family; and now you find yourself with a lively, marriageable daughter to be disposed of! It's really too bad.''

''Not a bit of it, Glen. I like you ever so much better as you are.''

''So do I.'' Glen Harding rose impulsively and stood before the easy chair, looking down—with a world of gratitude in her eyes—at the beautiful woman seated there. ''Birdie, I can never thank you enough for having me come out here, and giving me this chance for real living, for doing something worth while in the world.'' She stooped, quickly, and kissed her sister, then sat down again beside her.

''You have done as much for me as I possibly can for you, Glen. I want to tell you, Glen,'' she leaned forward and spoke in lowered tones, as one communicating a valued secret: ''You know Will and I were always happy together; but since you came, and more than ever since Mr. Wynn has been here, it has somehow become different, and we are getting to be more and more to each other. You never said anything, but someway, you have been showing both of us the possibilities of a fuller and richer life together. Why, Glen, Will is beginning to tell me all about his business now, so I will know just how things are, and he talked over all Mr. Wynn's plans with me, and what we might do, and asked me to help decide about the amount of money to put in, and other things, just as tho my opinions counted as much as his own. It's a new life to me, Glen, to both of us, and now I am quite sure Will and I can never drift apart in that awful way so many married people do.''

''I'm so glad, Birdie, so glad for you—and for Will, too. He did not half realize the treasure he had. Now you will both live more and grow more, and so have constantly more to give each other and the children.''

''It makes life look bigger—more worth living. I want you to have a home of your own, Glen, and know the richer life for yourself. There are those three men to choose from.''

Her sister smiled. ''What are you going to do about that, Birdie?''

''I? Nothing, unless you want some advice. But I would like very much to know which of those men you intend to marry.''

''Then you are quite sure I will marry? Why should I? I have been happier with you, Birdie, than I ever was before—since we were children.''

''You have been, but you will never be satisfied again until you have a home of your own. I can see that. You can make a real home, Glen, and those men all want you. It will not be long before you will have to refuse at least two of them.''

''I don't intend to do anything of the sort, Birdie.

You may laugh at my notions, but if I am suited to any one of those three men, then two of them are mistaken when they think they want me. They want what they imagine me to be or what they think I could be to them."

"How queerly you talk, Glen. You know well enough that they are all in love with you, and that you can have any one of them you choose to take."

"But, Birdie, just think how different they are! I am not three different persons. If I could be thoroly happy with one of those men I could not make either of the others happy, or be contented myself if I made the mistake of choosing the wrong one."

"I never heard anyone talk so about lovers before," exclaimed Mrs. Dennison. "I am sure I don't want you to make a mistake, and be unhappy when it is too late to change. Those men offer you very—or they will pretty soon—" she smiled over her break and began again: "Those men can certainly offer you very different homes and prospects. I am sure I want you to marry the one who will make you happiest. But I honestly don't know which that is, Glen. 'Which shall it be?' " she quoted, half laughing, half serious.

"I have thought over the answer to that question a good deal, Birdie."

"You must decide soon. Mr. Tremont will surely propose the first chance he can get. He did not want to go back with Mr. Motora last night, but could not see how to refuse. Didn't you notice how relieved he looked when he found that Mr. Wynn was going at the same time?"

"No, I was not thinking of Mr. Tremont then. Do you think he is the right one, Birdie?"

"No, I don't!" The answer was prompt and emphatic. "You talk as strangely sometimes as he does, about that old paganism and far back times and oriental nonsense; but even Daisy and I can see that it is not in quite the same way."

"I should hope not," interpolated her sister.

"Now, I have watched them together," continued Mrs. Dennison, "and I think Grace Knight and Arthur Tremont are admirably suited to each other, and would be happy together, and she could help him in his work of teaching that eastern mysticism."

"I entirely agree with you in that Birdie, and if I don't have to refuse him, Mr. Tremont will see his mistake much quicker, and very likely win Grace soon. I am not at all the sort of woman he persists in thinking me to be. I will count on you to help me if he comes again before this question is decided."

"Indeed I will, Glen. You have taken a load off my mind," and the younger sister leaned back in her chair with a sigh of relief. "I felt sure you would not be happy with Mr. Tremont. Now, about the others. Did you notice that Mr. Motora got Will off alone in the library awhile, just before they left last evening?"

"Yes, and I noticed that Mr. Motora looked very serious. Was it anything important?"

"That all depends on how you look at it. Mr. Motora told Will—as your only visible male relative—that he wished to marry you. He has such high minded notions and does some things in such serious ways.''

''That's one of the things I like about him. But what did Will say?'' There was considerable curiosity in the look that accompanied the question.

Her sister laughed. ''Will says he told him to go in and win, with his blessing, if he could. That he and I had no voice in your decision in such a matter, but that we would heartily approve of your choice if you accepted him. So you see he will ask you the first time he comes, when he gets back.''

''Back? From where?''

''Didn't Will tell you? Oh, I remember now. You had gone out, and he was in a hurry to get off. Mr. Motora phoned Will just after breakfast, that he was called suddenly to San Francisco, but that he would be back in time for Jack Romaine's party, if not sooner.''

''Mr. Wynn is going to be there, too. He told me he had never been to such a party before, but Jack insists that he must not fail him. Jack is going to help him select a costume. I wonder what it will be?''

''Something appropriate, if they let Mrs. Romaine help decide. She devotes herself to Jack, and is so happy now, she would do anything for Mr. Wynn. But, Glen, shall you accept Mr. Motora when he asks you?''

''What do you think of him, Birdie?''

''He is a thoroly fine man, personally. Then his energy and ability, his rank and wealth, will give him a position of great influence in his own land.

It's a splendid opportunity for you, Glen. Tho we have known him only as plain Mr. Motora, he is now, thru his uncle's death, a count of the realm. Then there is Helen. You and she would be a great pleasure and help to each other if living near together in Japan."

"Then you would be pleased to have me marry Inazo Motora?"

"Yes, if you care for him in that way, Glen. The part I don't like a bit is the thought of your going so far away. But Will says we could visit you, and sometimes you would come back and visit us. The children will be dreadfully lonesome for you, Glen."

"The darlings! Yes, I would certainly have to come back sometimes, and you would all come over to Japan when the children are a little older."

"Then you don't care for Ernest Wynn?" There was a trace of disappointment in Mrs. Dennison's tone. "Has he never intimated that he would like to marry you?"

Her sister smiled. "Mr. Wynn has never asked me to marry him, and he is not at all sentimental in his manner."

"Will admires him ever so much, and I like him. He really seems, someway, like one of the family; and you can see how the children all love him."

"Yes, then there is evidently no need of my marrying him. You all have his friendship and can keep that up even if I go to Japan."

"Of course we would see him sometimes, but not so often as now. He will soon be too busy with his new plans. Besides, you are the real attraction for him here. I saw that from the start. If you are gone, of course he would not care to come so often."

"He likes the children so much, Birdie, he is sure to keep coming on their account."

"Then you do mean to go to Japan? Oh, Glen, I sort of hoped that it was Mr. Wynn you thought the most of. He does not act sentimental, I admit. But you can be certain that you are all the world to him. He talks plain propaganda, but he thinks propaganda, with you as the central figure in it. Glen, I cannot imagine how he is going to carry out those plans without you."

"You are eloquent, Birdie. Has Mr. Wynn asked you to plead his cause?"

"No, indeed! He has never said a word to me on the subject, nor looked a look. I just know from watching him and listening when you are all talking together. I know I am right. He is so different, in some ways, from any man I ever met before."

"Then you would like him as a brother?"

"Yes, indeed, I would! He would make an ideal uncle for the children, too. Just think, Glen, how splendid it would be for you to live out here near us, where we could visit each other any day, and the children could go to spend the day with you now and then. I just long to have such an old homey sort of plan—and it would be a great thing for the children."

"But think of the great work I might be able to do in Japan."

"You can do just as great work here, as far as that goes. There are more people here—in this country. But you cannot decide this question by the work, Glen. You have to make up your mind which man you care the most for. That is the only thing for you to consider, so as to make no mistake. They are both fine men, and—oh, I declare, Glen, I don't know which one you are thinking about, with that smile on your face! Shall you go to Japan?"

"Mama, Mama"—and Merwyn came running in. "Where is Auntie Glen, please? I've hunted everywhere. Oh, there you are! Auntie Glen, Mr. Wynn is down in the garden and wants to see you. Fay took him to our playhouse to show him something we just made. I'll show it to you, Mama."

"I'll come down and see it pretty soon, dear," said Mrs. Dennison.

"It's a machine we fixed up, Auntie Glen, because it's cloudy this morning, and we like the sunshine better," Merwyn explained, as they went down the stairs and out into the garden.

They found Ernest Wynn and Fay bending over and intently studying, with heads close together, a complicated structure of twigs and wheels and strings, erected in the sand bed. Several dolls were standing and sitting around in lifelike attitudes. Glen Harding paused a moment to listen to Fay's explanation, before the guest should see her.

"You see, Mr. Wynn," the child was saying, "Little Daisy and Wee Daisy can't work the weather. They can't make the weather the way they want it. They wanted the weather to shine. They tried to make the weather the way they wanted it by working their machines a certain way, but they could not make it work.''

''Maybe it's only working a little slow,'' said the visitor. ''See, the clouds are breaking and going away now, and if they keep on, the weather may be all right in a few minutes.''

''I'll try it,'' said Fay, and the visitor helped place the two dolls at the machine—then he looked up and saw Glen Harding standing near, and to him the light seemed bright enough.

CHAPTER 18.

A DISCLOSURE.

"I am particularly glad to see you, Mr. Wynn," said Glen Harding, as she greeted him with a cordial handclasp, "for I want to show you something I received in this morning's mail."

"Then I am not hindering your work?"

"Not at all. Sue Adams kept the garden so well that I am taking a semi-vacation of a few days longer, before getting down to real work again."

"I saw Miss Adams here several times while you were away. She told me you taught her gardening, and that she likes the work here."

"Yes, she adores Birdie, and is fond of the children. I found her about a year ago, clerking in a drygoods store on Colorado Street, for the magnificent sum of two dollars and a half a week. Think of it! She is very bright, and I became interested in her, and we were soon friends. She lives with her mother and a younger sister, and their income was so small that Sue's wages helped out. But it seemed outrageous to me, so I told Birdie about her. She offered Sue three dollars a week—to start with—if she would come here and learn gardening. Now Sue is ready to take my place whenever I resign."

Ernest Wynn started. "Are you thinking of resigning?"

"Yes, but not right away. Let us go over there where we can talk comfortably.'' They had been standing beside the playhouse, and Glen Harding now led the way to seats at the far end of the pergola, where the view was finest, and the vines made a pleasant retreat, while the warm air passed thru, and the morning sunshine—now rapidly driving the clouds away—made sharply cut shadows of the indescribably beautiful tangle of stems and leaves and flowers on the light flooring.

As they seated themselves Glen Harding remarked, ''I must first explain that since you began to get out your leaflets about a balanced land tenure I have been writing to a number of persons—single taxers and others—and trying to get them interested enough to want to be among the first to take up this final struggle for freedom—final, because there can be no stop now until it is won. Among others I wrote to this man,'' pointing to the upper left-hand corner of an envelope she had just drawn from her pocket. ''Of course you know him?''

''Very well. I met him at the first single tax conference. I was a very young man then, but quite old enough to receive and retain some vivid impressions. This man is a thoroly earnest worker, and his is one of the most widely known names in the movement, both on account of the literature he wrote, and his active local work.''

''I wrote to him,'' said Glen Harding, ''just a note, but as earnestly as I could, Mr. Wynn, calling his attention to your discovery of the source of real rent; and sent leaflets. I asked him to help spread the knowledge of a balanced land tenure.''

"And that is his reply?" Ernest Wynn looked, with the interested eagerness of one about to hear a message from a one-time comrade in arms, at the envelope Glen Harding still held in her hand.

"Yes," and she held it toward him. "Please read it and tell me what you think of it."

With a sense of wonder at the touch of pity in her tone, Ernest Wynn pinched the cut end of the envelope and two printed post cards dropped out. He picked them up and then shook the envelope open end down. "Is that all?" he asked in surprise.

"Yes, please read them, Mr. Wynn."

He glanced over them and found one to contain quotations from Harper's Weekly on "happiness" thru getting "rid of ourselves" and concluding with the statement that "there is no suffering, no struggle, no shame that may not justify itself, provided the issue be virtue and wisdom." The second card proved to be a sort of sermonette on "contentment," gained by ideals "above mere transitory things," and living "in touch and company with the Omnipotent." "A contentment which, mocking the world's mad rush and anxiety, pillows its head upon the bosom of the Infinite, and walks with him in daily living."

Ernest Wynn read the cards thru, while Glen Harding watched the changing expression of his face. As he neared the end, she asked: "Do you see any help in that for the children in the cotton factories of the South or the slums of the North?"

Ernest Wynn looked up. "It's damnable!" he exploded.

Glen Harding did not look shocked. On the contrary, she assented, promptly and gravely. "You are right, Mr. Wynn, there are no words in the English language strong enough with which to adequately condemn such teaching from one who has once seen the light on the land question."

Ernest Wynn glanced again at the name printed on the corner of the envelope he still held. "This man is a lawyer, and he knows that all the crime and misery about us is due to man-made statutes."

"Yes, Mr. Wynn. And I marvel how any one who has seen the truth as clearly and stated the case as plainly as this man once did, could have become so weak, mentally, as the sending of these cards to me would seem to indicate. It must be either that or——" she hesitated.

"Or he is trying to deceive himself and throw off all sense of responsibility for the injustice so flagrant everywhere—to excuse himself from further work for that freedom which alone can eradicate the degradation and poverty and suffering that he cannot avoid seeing around him," suggested Ernest Wynn.

"I begin to think, Mr. Wynn, that many single taxers have become dazed by the hopelessness of desultory work as a means of accomplishing anything. It is a growing wonder to me to know what has become of all the ardent enthusiasm of a few years ago."

"I believe it is really that sense of hopelessness that has led so many single taxers into going off after New Thought, socialism, Theosophy, Christian

Science, or such stuff as this,'' and Ernest Wynn glanced with disgust at the cards lying on the light stand beside him.

''That may be, Mr. Wynn; but,'' and hope sounded again in Glen Harding's voice, ''once let them grasp the fact that a balanced land tenure is based on a natural law, easily understood, and as impersonal as the law of gravitation; a law the working of which is as immutable and invariable as that of any other law of physics, and that thru the recognition of this fact in nature, and placing ourselves in harmony with it, we can secure a prompt and permanent settlement of the land question, and stand forth as self-governed, rational beings, in the fine, inspiring air of real freedom, equal freedom, then—oh, Mr. Wynn, then all the smoldering embers of their old-time fire of enthusiasm for the great cause of human freedom will be fanned into a new and brighter flame of active work and individual zeal.''

Ernest Wynn's eyes kindled for a moment with the brightness of assured victory. ''Yes, Miss Harding, it will burn brighter than ever before. Single taxers want freedom, and they want to work for it, and they will, as soon as they catch a glimpse of the truth we have found—for you helped me more than you knew in the finding of it.'' His thoughts went back to the letters he knew so well.

''I am glad to hear that. The question for us now is to find the quickest and best way to get the truth before the people, and I believe the new plans for the propaganda will do it rapidly. All genuine lovers of freedom will be with us, once they see that we are merely working to secure recognition of a natural law. Then, when the people generally get to talking about it, they will soon understand. The result is sure—for it is something everyone—rich and poor alike—can welcome gladly.''

''Yes,'' he companion assented. ''Once set a live discussion going, on this great truth, and no power on earth can stop it—short of the goal of established equal freedom. But we must get single taxers, and all other conscious lovers of true freedom, to see that their work is for immediate success. They must understand clearly that it is something to be won right here and now. Too many people talk and write as tho equitable conditions were something to eternally strive for—but quite unattainable in our time.''

''And that very suggestion helps to keep things as they are, or to actively make them worse, by its constant encouragement of inequity,'' interpolated Glen Harding.

''It seems to me,'' Ernest Wynn continued, ''that the almost universal acceptance of Darwinism, with its notion of slow evolution thru the ages, has much to do with this indifference and failure to recognize present possibilities.''

''But don't you see that annular evolution does away with all that and gives us solid ground on which to stand?'' Glen Harding spoke eagerly. ''Since you have been here we have been so busy over the immediate present that I have rather neglected the study of the past and——''

"That is exactly what I came to talk about this morning," broke in Ernest Wynn. "I have been so puzzled over it for sometime, and I want to get the matter straight in my mind. I noticed yesterday that when you spoke in a positive tone about things in the remote past, Mr. Motora seemed to understand you, but Mr. Tremont, as well as the others, looked rather lost."

"Mr. Motora has been studying Professor Vail's works for some months, and is going to study with him as soon as he comes home. I hope he will be back this week. You are sure to like him, but I've never been able to get Mr. Tremont to even read his books. He is always 'too busy,' or something."

"Who is this Professor Vail? I don't remember hearing anything about him before."

"Glen Harding's eyes opened widely. "Is it possible that I never mentioned him to you? But then, he has been away all this time, and we have all been so busy with Helen, and in starting the propaganda. I received his letter only this morning, saying he hopes to be home this week."

"But, who is he? I don't understand what you are talking about. Norwood told me," Ernest Wynn hurried on now, determined to have it all out, "that you were a living proof of reincarnation in this world, and that all you said at the Metaphysical Club was from memory, your memory of your own past lives, and——".

"Did you believe him?" she interrupted.

"Well, no, I did not, really. But I could not understand you, for I could not imagine where you found such ideas. Norwood had asked me at first not to mention him in connection with this subject, but said it did not matter, after the way you talked at the Club, as that was ample proof of the truth of his belief.''

''And that is the light in which the Club looked at what I said that night? Mr. Norwood had begged me to tell them something of that particular stage of the world, but,'' and she smiled, ''he never told me that I was a proof of reincarnation. The fact is, Mr. Wynn, that the whole theosophical structure is built up on a misconception of canopy memorials. All religions, eastern and western, had the same origin, and you will find that they all tell the same stories; whether you find them in the Sacred Books of the East, in the Christian Bible, or in the literature of the American Indians. The study is perfectly fascinating, and Professor Vail's discovery—with all that it involves—is of vital importance to the cause of human freedom, for in showing their origin it enables us to utterly overthrow the authority of all sorts of superstitious beliefs that are holding people in bondage today. In a way, it makes plain history of much that is called superstition.''

''That would be a decidedly good thing to get hold of,'' said Ernest Wynn, heartily. ''But I really do not understand what you are talking about.''

Glen Harding looked surprised. ''Did you not read Professor Vail's books? Those I sent you last winter?''

''I never received any such books. I was on the go all winter, and they never reached me. Possibly father got hold of them and has them stored away. I'll write him at once about them."

"Well, I declare! How we have misunderstood each other all these months, and how silly I must have seemed to you!"

"No, you never seemed silly, for you were too clear-headed and earnest on the land question. I confess, tho, that I was greatly puzzled, at times, for you never seemed the sort of person Norwood made you out to be."

"I should hope not, from what you say! But I'll talk to that Metaphysical Club again, and tell them some plain truths." Glen Harding's tone was emphatic, tho there was an amused smile on her lips. "Of course," she went on, "this misunderstanding could not have occurred if Professor Vail had been at home, for I would have had you meet him at once. I supposed you had read his books and understood my allusions."

"I see," he assented, "but what is this great discovery?"

"The discovery itself is not only that our earth once had a system of Saturn-like rings, which, in its progressive collapse, became the chief and all-competent agent in strata building, causing all the tropical eras, glacial conditions, and legendary floods the world ever saw; but that vast lingering remnants of that annular or ring system hung in the skies of primitive persons, and for thousands of years after they came into being, formed the celestial battle fields known in the shadowy ages, and gave color to all ancient legendary thought, and all ancient writings whatsoever; and that in this thought we have the long-sought-for Key to all ancient mythology; and in it also, the source of all thought, language and work, as I explained at the Metaphysical Club.''

''That is a great find, Miss Harding. It's bewilderingly so, at first glance! How does it bear so vitally—you said it did—on our work for a balanced land tenure?''

''It does away forever with the horrible 'struggle for existence' theory, and proves that Darwinian evolution—the slow development of persons from animals, and the belief that progress comes thru crime and war and slavery: all the horrors involved in the phrase 'economic determinism'—is without foundation in fact. You know, Mr. Wynn, that not socialists alone, but all sorts of people, now appeal to 'evolution' to justify all manner of inequity. The discovery of the annular evolution of the earth—now fortified by facts from every field of science—explodes the whole false assumption, and all the miserable, horrible doctrines built upon it.''

''That's a mighty big thing, and no mistake,'' her listener interjected.

''Just think of the importance of this knowledge,'' Glen Harding went on, ''in the light it throws on the possibility of immediate and rapid progress. You see, Mr. Wynn, it is thru the misreading of the records that justification for all the inequities of the past and present is found and relied upon, and the power of suggestion is used to perpetuate them.

Annular evolution proves that justification to be impossible, and does it in a way that opens wide the door to the immediate, total, and unconditional abolition of inequity. In the study of annular evolution alone is to be found the correct and rational interpretation of all ancient records, and a consequently correct conception of the origin of human institutions. The true conception makes it easy to see how equal freedom can be quickly and peacefully attained, in our own time; and this makes it a source of hope and enthusiasm, and we can so use it, Mr. Wynn, to inspire this generation to work for a balanced land tenure—for true freedom here and now!''

''That's great news, Miss Harding. I'll study up on this subject at once. Everywhere I have gone, that nightmare of Darwinian evolution has confronted me, and if this annular evolution really does take the foundation from under that doctrine, it will be an important aid in the work of securing a balanced land tenure.''

''There is not a doubt of it,'' was the quick response. ''There is not a weak link in the whole chain of evidence. Indeed, I have been almost surprised, at times, to see how the latest scientific discoveries—in widely scattered fields of research and experiment—all unite in strengthening the claims for the truth of annular evolution.''

''There is one question in which I have long been interested,'' said Ernest Wynn, thoughtfully. ''Does annular evolution throw any light on the origin of human beings? Does it explain that?''

"Yes," was the eager answer. "I was helping work out that very subject just before Professor Vail went off on this long trip—he is locating oil wells—and it interested me very much. We made out that in the process of earth evolution from a molten globe, life made its first appearance in the equatorial ring which was formed by the matter that was thrown aloft before the cooling process stopped the vaporizing one. As that ring cooled and its contents arranged themselves into lesser rings, according to their atomic weight, with the heaviest and least vaporizable materials nearest the earth's core, the rings which were protected by their position, from both the extreme cold of interstellar space and the extreme heat of the central molten mass, passed thru stages exactly suited to the evolution of all forms of life that could exist on earth. Each ring, formed out of the primary ring, contained different proportions of the material elements entering into the life and environment of the organic forms in it. The outside rings formed first, and were composed of the most sensitive substances—those having the lightest atomic weight; the inside rings formed last, and were composed of the least sensitive substances—those having the greatest atomic weight. The differences of chemical contents, weight and density, position and temperature, and so on, limited the germs contained in each ring to different possibilities from every other ring. These conditions were most favorable to high and varied development in the outermost rings which contained life germs, and least favorable in the innermost. You follow me, Mr. Wynn?"

Ernest Wynn had listened intently, feeling that he was getting hold of a new idea, and his reply was prompt: "Yes, life originated at some stage in that vapor mass, and the life germs separated as the rings did. Of course the innermost rings would have to come down first and would contain the simplest forms of life. That right?"

"Exactly!" Glen Harding looked pleased at his evidently real interest, and continued: "As the earth and its rings cooled, gravity brought the rings down until the innermost one met the atmospheric resistance; there it was spread out by the combined action of centripetal and centrifugal forces until its edges reached the latitudes north and south where the latter force was insufficient to hold it away from the earth. This made a canopy of the ring, with polar openings. The constant motion of the canopy caused it to fall chiefly about the arctic and antarctic circles, in sections, from time to time, with rythmic regularity. Each section brought down its contents chiefly in the form of snow. As soon as the condition of the central mass became suitable to the existence of life, the germs which came down in each section of a ring were washed equatorward when the further spread of the canopy restored hot-house conditions, and suddenly melted the snow containing them. During this hot-house condition—which a sun-concealing vapor world-roof necessarily made—the germs developed until the fall of another section so radically changed their environment, by changing the proportions of chemical, thermal, humid, and light constituents of their environment, as to mature and fix their possibilities, and——"

"Hold on a minute, please, till I get that last into my mind! You mean that the characteristics of each form of life were fixed in an environment that brought them to their highest point and was then destroyed by another wrecked ring? It looks as tho that might account for the 'origin of species'?"

"That is precisely what it does. It explains why all living things are so alike, and yet so different. They started out alike in the vapory mass, but developed to different points in an ascending scale according to the position of the ring in which they were contained. You understand that the earth grew larger, more nearly complete, with each fall of canopy matter, so it was gradually growing toward the world we know."

"I think I catch the idea, and I can see how the fall of such a succession of rings would make orderly strata—I've studied geology enough, Miss Harding, to be glad to get a solution of its problems. But how about human life?"

"Human germs were the last to fall. As the lightest vapors were the furthest from the central mass, you can see why every section of a ring, and every ring that fell, was followed by a thinner vapor roof, until the last section of the last one fell. The last germs to fall, which developed, were the human. They were the first to form; made of the most sensitive materials; were longest in the incubating environment of ring evolution; and reached a maturer earth, and finished their development under thinner canopies, which let in more light—more sun energy—than any other. The motion of the aqueous vapor, revolving around the earth several times a day, concentrated the energies of heat, light and motion in etheric waves, with rythmic regularity, upon the organic life on the earth. In reflex response to this the sensitive protoplasm reacted, and the repeated movements became fixed habits of action. As what we call light and sound are but different velocities of matter in motion, every motion has its necessary corresponding sound—whether our ears are attuned to hear it or not. Hence, the same vibrations which educed human actions evolved human speech."

"If that is the way it was done with people," put in Ernest Wynn, "then other vibrations must have caused other living forms to move and make sounds?"

"Certainly, and that habitual reflex action is what we know as unconscious imitation—you understand that, Mr. Wynn, and now you can see exactly how it originated. Every living thing formed its habits in that way. It was thus that nature taught all organisms their modes of action—formed their 'instincts'."

Ernest Wynn looked thoroly interested. "That's a great conception," he exclaimed, "and I want to get the different points clear. Did you mean to say, just now, that language was the direct result of vibrations of matter revolving around the earth?"

"Exactly, Mr. Wynn. In imitating the movements of the canopy world—as I described it at the Metaphysical Club, you remember — humanity learned to think, to do, to speak. The sounds they made were the necessary result of the vibrations that evolved them, and they are the roots of all words, and are perfectly intelligible when recognized as expressions of canopy movements."

"You mean that the vibrations caused by the swiftly revolving watery vapors set up corresponding vibrations in persons on earth, and these produced certain acts?"

"That's it, precisely, Mr. Wynn. You think quickly! Many scholars have almost found the truth; as when John O'Neill said of the ancients, that 'by turning objects of various kinds the movement of the heavens is imitated, these are outbursts of a once powerful instinct, of an imitative impulse which must once have swayed mankind with irresistible might at a certain stage of existence.' Or when Max Muller said: 'The concept of order and law' was 'at first no more than an impulse,' but the 'impulsive force' of which 'would not rest until it had beaten into the minds' of our ancestors 'the deep and indellible impression' which is 'more than a hope' 'in the ultimate triumph of that which is right.' Just see how near they came to the truth. Mr. Wynn, with their turning and beating! If they could only have known the turning of the vast vortex in the northern heavens, and the constant beating of the vibrations upon the sensitive matter of growing human brains! You can see how it came about that when human beings reached the stage of consciousness, they found themselves habitually doing many things. Only very slowly did they begin to analyze their actions and seek the explanation. Am I making it clear?"

"It's wonderful!" ejaculated her listener. "Yet it seems plain, as you state it. I must study into this subject at once," and Ernest Wynn looked bright-eyed and eager. "It may help in understanding how inequitable conditions were first started, and that would have a direct bearing on our work now."

"It does show that very thing! When you come to understand it fully—as much as any one person can find a chance to learn—you will see how it is mixed up with everything we do and think. The differences in the make-up of the rings, and the consequent conditions which followed, limited the possibilities of all other organisms which formed after the human germs were separated, in that early ring-segregating process, so that human beings are the only ones on earth which have evolved the power to ignore nature's orderly trend. All others conform automatically to their environment. Instead, human beings have the power to disregard theirs. But, fortunately, the consequences of non-conformity to nature's modes are just as inexorable, whether the result of conscious or unconscious action. And, also fortunately, human beings have, along with the power to ignore, the power to analyze and understand nature's processes, so that they can resume conformity to nature's modes whenever they choose —you see, Mr. Wynn. how you reached that same truth in your discovery, tho coming at it from another direction entirely.''

''It's grand! Miss Harding. It is that power to choose—to regard or disregard nature's orderly trend, that gives to persons what is called free will —the subject that seems to trouble our monist friends so much. I must follow out that idea ''

''I had not thought of it that way, but I do believe you are right, Mr. Wynn. There seems to be no end to the mysteries we can solve, with the clue to the labyrinth in our hands. But I wanted to say that this power of rational action makes it possible for humanity to put between itself and all other organisms a gulf that is absolutely impassable by any other being. We are today but at the threshold of human possibilities—a just-matured type of life, on a just finished world, with our powers, and their capacities, all waiting the proper use of reason in laying the right kind of a foundation. Whether those possibilities shall be sounded to the depths of destruction, as civilized people seem to be trying to urge them today, Mr. Wynn, or utilized to the highest development, depends on whether we can speedily get people to use their reason and establish a balanced land tenure. You see it comes back to that one point every way we turn!'' She smiled, but there was a wistfulness in her eyes that did not escape Ernest Wynn.

''We will do it, Miss Harding,'' and there was such a ring of determination in Ernest Wynn's voice as promised success. ''With Mr. Dennison and Jack Romaine to ensure the finances needed to start it, we will soon get the propaganda under way. You will help me to understand this discovery of Professor Vail's as speedily as possible, won't you? I'll study hard. If there is anything useful in Tremont's book, I'll dig it out, too. I've thought a good deal about the power of thought force, and sending out the right sort of vibrations. You understand all that, Miss Harding, and can help me comprehend it more quickly."

"I'll help you all I can, Mr. Wynn. And that reminds me of an encouraging bit I found lately, in reading about Professor Loeb's experiments. He says: 'Observations on the lower animals show that the co-ordination of automatic movements is caused by the fact that that element which beats most rapidly forces the others to beat in its own rythm.' He also says that 'the functional changes in the embryo itself are sudden, and not gradual or continuous. The heart beat, for example, starts at a certain time, suddenly, after a certain stage of development has been reached. The idea of a steady, continuous development, is inconsistent with the general physical qualities of protoplasm and colloidal matter'."

"How is that encouraging? I don't quite catch its connection with our work for equal freedom."

"Don't you see, Mr. Wynn," she answered, eagerly, "that the mind, being highly sensitive, can change suddenly and begin thinking and growing in the new direction given to it thru the compelling power of the more rapid rythm of a forceful, burning enthusiasm, when that is turned loose on the sluggish inertia of minds under the sway of inequity—yet, holding within them the instinct toward true freedom, the answering sensitive disc."

"It's a fine idea, Miss Harding! Once we get that printing plant going, we will send out vibrations at such a lively rate as to speedily stir up a lot of those sleeping minds into activity, and they will stir up others. In the meantime I must study up on annular evolution. You will tell me how to go about it, so I can get the gist of it as quick as possible?"

"Most gladly, Mr. Wynn. It is a most marvelously fascinating study. I wish——" she broke off, smiling. "You will learn for yourself, and see the wonders of it."

"You are as enthusiastic on this subject of annular evolution as you are on sociology, Miss Harding."

"Yes," she admitted; then added, impulsively: "I'll confess to you, Mr. Wynn, that if I did not so strongly realize the need of equal freedom; if I did not feel in every fiber of my being the suffering which inequitable conditions daily forces upon women and children, I would be devoting my life and energy to the study of annular evolution—with all the wonders it reveals as one penetrates at last into the deepest mysteries of the past of humanity, with a key that unlocks every door, even into the most hidden nooks and corners. But I fully realize that the most important thing in the world today—for every human being—is to secure a balanced land tenure as speedily as possible. When that is done we can go on—as there is no chance for any of us to do now—and learn all that we are, or can make ourselves, capable of knowing of nature and its wonders.''

''I understand, Miss Harding. We cannot be our real selves, the best we even now know how to be, until we are truly free. I will read up on annular evolution at once. Are Professor Vail's books in the Library?''

''Yes, some of them, but I will lend you the set I have, with some notes on them. When he comes home you will want to talk with Professor Vail himself. He has lots of important material yet in manuscript, and is continually adding to it.''

A great light had dawned on Ernest Wynn's mind. ''Then this is the source of your positive knowledge of the past, that has puzzled me so?'' There was a sense of relief in his tone.

''Certainly,'' and Glen Harding smiled brightly. ''I can say, with Eliphaz Levi Zahad, ''But when a thing has been clearly proved and made comprehensible to you, you will no longer believe it—you will know it.' I had always been interested in geology, and thru talking about that to a friend, I first heard of Professor Vail's Story of the Rocks. She loaned me the book, and I had read only a few chapters when I found that it held the key not only to geological puzzles, but also threw a brilliant light on all mythology, all religions, all historic and prehistoric problems and mysteries that dealt with ancient beliefs. I put in every moment I could on the study—until you came, Mr. Wynn, and brought me back to active propaganda work. But now that we clearly understand the natural law underlying a perfect land tenure, the two discoveries can go forward together. The knowledge of annular evolution will help us in a hundred ways in our work for a balanced land tenure. I will get the books,'' she rose as she spoke, ''and show you where to start in to get the gist of the thought as quick as you can.''

CHAPTER 19.

GLEN HARDING'S FAITH.

"You have done your hair beautifully, Glen! Sit here in front of the glass while I put on the ribbon bands and ornaments. That's right! When I get these done, and the shoulder brooch fastened in, you will look exactly like that picture of a Greek goddess," and Mrs. Dennison stopped in the process of adjusting a ribbon, to study a full-page picture, in a large book that was propped up on a light stand beside the mirror.

"I see now how it goes," she continued, resuming her work with quick, deft fingers. "You'll look lovely, Glen. I wonder what Mr. Motora will think of you."

"I wonder what I will think of myself when you get thru with me. What in the world possessed you to try to make a goddess out of your gardener, Birdie? It's one of the last characters I should have imagined you thinking of."

"I think of lots more things than you give me credit for, Glen. As for this costume; you have lived in the mythical past so much this last year that I thought you would feel entirely at home among the gods and goddesses," her sister said, half laughing, half in earnest. "When I went to Mrs. Morgan to ask her to help select the exact character and costume—so it would be sure to be just right—

she said a really ancient Greek goddess would be thoroly suitable. As for your being a gardener, that fits the character nicely, for Mrs. Morgan happened to mention that the more ancient gods and goddesses were always working at something or other—and lots of them busied about plants and making crops grow. There, now you are finished,'' she fastened a brooch on her sister's shoulder as she spoke. ''Are not these gold and jeweled ornaments queer looking, ancient things?''

Glen Harding looked at the reflection in the mirror. ''Yes, very quaint,'' she said, then bent forward, looking closer. ''I do believe, Birdie, these are some of Mrs. Morgan's treasures. How could you——''

''I didn't!'' her sister interrupted delightedly. ''I told her you would be sure to recognize them the first thing—and it will please her to know you did. I never dreamed of her lending anything from her collections, she prizes and guards them so, they are so rare. Now stand up and look at yourself,'' and Mrs. Dennison stepped back the better to survey the results of her work, as her sister stood before the long glass. ''You look perfectly lovely, Glen, that Greek style just suits you.''

Glen Harding laughed contentedly. ''Really, Birdie, I begin to think that anything you plan for me will be entirely satisfactory. The ornaments make me feel that it is more real, too, someway. How did Mrs. Morgan come to lend them, Birdie?''

''When we were planning the costume, I asked her to help me find something suitable in the way of ornaments to go with it. She told me to come with her, and took me right down into their basement—you know it's her museum now—and went straight to these and said I could count on having them, the brooch and all these ornaments, for the occasion. I protested against taking them, and said I could have something made or adapted that would do. What do you suppose she said, Glen?"

"I cannot imagine! I know these are among her special treasures, for she told me so once when we were going thru her museum together."

"She said there was not a grain of sham or pretense about you, Glen, and you must have genuine ancient Greek ornaments, tho she would not even think of lending them to anyone else. She sent them to me today, and we can give them back to her right after the party tonight."

"I must thank her especially for that, by trying to live the character. They will all be at the party?"

"Yes, she said they would not miss it for anything. They were at the first fancy dress party Mrs. Romaine had for Jack, when he was six, and Beth Morgan only three years old. The children were all fairies and elves. The party has been a yearly institution ever since, tho it is not very convenient that Jack's birthday comes in August. They have the party here, or wherever they may be for the summer. But Jack told me yesterday that this was to be his last 'birthday party'—and that he intended to quit 'make believe,' and live in downright earnest. So this is the last of the 'Romaine costume parties' and everybody will be there. We are always sure of a good time when Mrs. Romaine is hostess, and you will look as well as anyone there.''

Glen Harding's face expressed wholehearted enjoyment as she looked again at the figure reflected in the glass. ''I knew you would fix me up all right, Birdie, but I never thought of anything so fine as this,'' and she glanced down at the robe of richly soft material, which fell in graceful folds about her, the narrow colored borders outlining the long points of the upper garment. Then she studied the ornaments. Who had worn them? How long had they been buried? She turned to her sister, exclaiming, ''I like it so much better than any modern thing you could have thought of for me, Birdie. Why are you so good to me?''

''Oh, I enjoy the selecting and planning, and then you always appreciate things so, Glen. It doubles the pleasure of doing them. Did Mr. Motora—he told me not to call him Count yet a while—tell you he was going to wear a court costume of old Japan? Something gorgeous, no doubt.''

''No, but he can afford it. Seriously, Birdie, it does not seem right to let you spend so much on a gown for me—to wear just once—tho you know I thank you just the same.''

''It's not for only this once. You can wear it with other ornaments to lecture to that Metaphysical Club, or, if you don't like that, and want it changed, why, the material is hardly cut at all—they must have been sensible people in some ways when that was the fashion—and it will make over into a beautiful modern gown."

Her sister laughed. "You are sensible, anyway, and that may be a good idea about the Metaphysical Club. It will give emphasis to some things I have to say to them. I almost wish, Birdie——"

She was interrupted by a light knock at the door, and in response to Mrs. Dennison's "Come in," a maid appeared bearing a card. "For Miss Harding," she said.

Glen Harding took the card, and a shade of perplexity crossed her face, followed by a little smile as she said, "I will be down in a few minutes," and the maid disappeared. "It's Mr. Tremont, Birdie, and I'll have to dress up again!"

"No, indeed," exclaimed her sister, glancing at the clock. "There isn't time. Go just as you are, Glen. He will never think of proposing to such a divine personage as a Greek goddess," she added, wickedly.

"I believe I will," she said, with sudden decision. "It's time he understood, and the costume may help me out. You are sure it's all right, Birdie?"

"Of course it is, and you look lovelier than I ever saw you before. Do go right along, Glen; there's a dear. I'll come down and help you as soon as I am dressed. Mrs. Dent will help Marie get me up."

Arthur Tremont, waiting below in the long, cool drawing room, was thinking seriously as he stood beside a window commanding a wide view of the garden—sometimes the gardener was busy there in the afternoon. However, he looked in vain. All was quiet, and the garden untenanted, save for the birds and bees. He was thinking, with conscious earnestness, how best to present what he had come to say. He felt a strong confidence in himself and in the power of his overmastering desire. He felt that his will power, in this matter, at least, was well under control. Why should Glen Harding attract him if she was not for him? What if she was interested in sociology to an extent that he did not care to follow? That was only a passing phase, due largely to her present environment. Once his wife, and all that would sink to its natural level. Her mind would then rise and occupy, more and more, the high plane on which she had already shown herself to be thoroly at home. As his wife she would be a power in his work, pleasantly dominated by his masculine will. How glorious she could be! To possess such a treasure was worth putting forth his best efforts. He must win her. Of course he could win her, and that speedily. All that he needed was this chance to see her alone, so that he could talk freely. He smiled to himself, as he said, half aloud, "I can and I will."

"You are in a resolute mood this afternoon, Mr. Tremont."

He turned quickly, and for an instant stood amazed. Instead of the simply dressed, gray-eyed American woman he had come to see, there stood before him a lady with darkening eyes, in the robes and ornaments of an older time, and there was a subtle something about her attitude and expression which seemed to make her a part of the time to which the costume belonged. What was it? He felt that he had seen her before, somewhere, even the ornaments seemed familiar—but where was it? Then there flashed thru his mind the memory of a full-page picture he had once seen of a certain Greek goddess. It was in that very room. Yes, that was it.

The hint of a smile about the lips of the Greek goddess, as she noticed his bewilderment, brought him back to the twentieth century, A. D., and he said earnestly:—

"It is well always to be resolute when in the presence of one who inspires the best that I can give. But perhaps I am intruding this afternoon?"

"Not now, I have an engagement that will take me out with my sister at four, but it is early yet." She seated herself and motioned her guest to a nearby chair. "I was wishing this morning," she said, that I could talk with you about a bit of truth I have found that is of some importance to our work."

"Anything that tends to strengthen or widen the influence of our work"—his listener did not fail to catch his emphasis on the word "our"—"must be worth while. But, Miss Harding," he hurried on, "I came this afternoon especially to tell you some things of the greatest personal concern to myself, to both of us I trust, I believe."

There was no mistaking the ardor in his tone, nor the passionate glow in his eyes, and Glen Harding was neither deaf nor blind, yet the softly musical voice of the dark-eyed Greek goddess replied:—

"Indeed, Mr. Tremont, I am sure you will find light in this bit of discovery of mine, but in order to understand it we must put out of our thoughts—at least for the moment—all that pertains to the little local self. It is absolutely necessary to realize the oneness of all humanity, of all nature, and that we are merely integral parts in that whole, before we can understand the importance of the several present-day discoveries that enable us at last to comprehend the full meaning and possibilities of the truths so long shrouded in the occult teachings of the Orient. You see," she concluded, with the touch of a smile on her face, "I have been reading the little book by Edward Carpenter that you left with me last Sunday, and it has given me a new idea."

"Ah, she reads what I give her, and I don't have to read what she suggests." The thought passed thru Arthur Tremont's mind exultantly, and gave him added confidence, as he said aloud: "You are one of the chosen, Miss Harding, one of the few destined to keep the sacred flame alive thru our time."

There was a momentary flash, as from a spark of the sacred flame itself, in the eyes of the woman before him, and the tensely quiet voice said: "Upon us, who know the truth, rests the responsibility of making that fire of knowledge so bright that it will illumine the whole world—here and now—and in its light and heat all the degradation of riotous luxury, every vestige of oppression, every shade of vice and crime, every trace of suffering and misery, will shrivel up and disappear—as the morning mists fade in the light of the noonday sun. A few years of earnest work, in the right way, and this earth of ours will be a veritable paradise, filled with rational, happy human beings.''

''You have seen a vision of the coming day, Miss Harding, I am sure of it. Even now the note is sounding and men here and there are listening and looking anxiously for the time when they can quit fighting each other, and there will be peace, alike on battle fields and in the market place. That day may seem a long way off, but it will surely come in the fullness of time, and we who realize this will work together to teach these truths of freedom and brotherhood. Is it not so?'' He moved a little nearer Glen Harding, and in the brown eyes, turned full upon her, there burned a strong desire, held steady by the concentrated force of an overmastering will.

The answering glance of the Greek goddess was frank and fearless, and in her face there shone a power—the strength of perfect sincerity—that was wholly lacking in the trained expression of the man before her.

''Of course,'' she said, ''all those who realize how easily and quickly and peacefully we can win true freedom will work together to win that freedom—and do it right speedily. But are you quite sure,'' and her tone was like soft music in its grave earnestness. ''that you understand exactly what I am talking about? Have you, too, grasped the full meaning of this passage from Edward Carpenter? Let me read it, please.'' She had taken a little book from the stand beside her, where she had laid it on entering the room, and quickly found the place:—

''There must have existed in India, or in some neighboring region, from which India drew its tradition, BEFORE ALL HISTORY, teachers who saw these occult facts and understood them probably better than the teachers of historical times, and who had themselves reached a stage of evolution at least equal to any that has been attained since.

''If this is so, then there is reason to believe that there is a distinct body of experience and knowledge into which the whole human race is destined to rise, and which there is every reason to believe will bring wonderful and added faculties with it. From whatever mere formalities or husks of tradition or abnormal growths that have gathered round it in India, this had to be disentangled; but it is not now to be any more the heritage of India alone, but for the whole world. If, however, anyone should seek it for the advantage or glory in himself of added powers and faculties, his quest will be in vain, for it is an absolute condition of attainment that all action for self as distinct from that of others shall entirely cease.''

Arthur Tremont held his impatience well in check, but the instant the pleasant voice ceased reading, he took up the word: ''I know that time is surely coming because there is now unfolding in the minds of men a consciousness of the oneness of all. Sooner or later we will be in a majority and then every man will have the golden rule in his heart and Christ's mission will be at last fulfilled. But, oh, Miss Harding''—he clung to the plain American name as tho to hold her down to the moment of time in which he spoke—''that day is so far off, and we—you and I—are living in the now. I want to tell you——''

''That you have not quite found the truths hidden in that passage?'' the Greek goddess quietly interrupted, with a trace of pity in her tone. ''You had the same opportunities to learn them that I have had; the same sources of knowledge were open to you, and, for a moment, I hoped that you, too, had caught a glimpse of the glorious light!''

''I know there is light wherever you are,'' he exclaimed, fervently, ''and I want to live in that light!''

The Greek goddess smiled graciously, and her voice was frankly cordial: ''I am glad to share with you—and all others—such light of knowledge as I possess. In this passage of Edward Carpenter's,'' and she glanced at the little book she still held, ''there is both truth and error. The error is due to a misreading and misunderstanding of canopy memorials. This mistake has made 'higher beings' and 'higher intelligences,' and 'teachers' in human form, out of the physical phenomena inseparable from a globe enveloped in aqueous vapors.''

''I don't see it in that way, Miss Harding. To me it is quite enough that we should each be obedient to the divine urge within us, and study and work as we are led to do. It is on that 'innate urge toward the search for truth' that we must depend, not on geological studies or changes in political systems, for hope in the future—surely you can see this?"

"I see a number of things, Mr. Tremont; and among them is the fact that the original demiurgus—the divine urge—was the moving spirit or trend of the canopy, and it was therefore a most essential element in the natural process of evolution. People saw the divine urge pushing things along in the celestial world, thru thousands of years. What you call 'the innate urge toward the search for truth' is the instinct to conform to natural order that was beaten into the growing intelligence of humanity by the rythmic movement—visible to their eyes—of the world-roof of canopy times. This covering is spoken of in the Book of Isaiah, where it is written: 'And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.' The mountain——"

"But, Miss Harding, I want you to——" Arthur Tremont made a determined effort to interrupt, but the voice of the Greek goddess went quietly on:—

"I want you to understand this fact, Mr. Tremont. The mountain was the glorious Mount Zion, the golden Mount Meru, the sacred mountain of all peoples north of the equator; the vast mountain seen in the north polar sky. The face was the great face-shaped opening which has given to all people, the world around, the idea of a Great Head, a Divine Head. The veil was the covering of aqueous vapors which hid the brightness and wisdom beyond the canopy. Humanity had long been impressed with the idea that when the veil of ignorance was cast aside and the concealed sources and fountain of knowledge were fully opened to view that all its ills and pains would disappear. This was seen to take place in the celestial world, where the ills, and suffering features, were always in the darker and more confused aspects of the canopy. This teaching was an age-long work, for those watery heavens could only pass away after long ages of conflict, between sunlight and vapor, for the dominion of the sky. Those ancient records, of which Edward Carpenter speaks, are the story of that conflict and its ending, as the last vapors fell and gave place to the clear heaven we know. The 'teachers' who existed 'before all history' were scenes and features, formed by the interplay of sunlight and vapor in the heavens of canopy ages. Annular evolution is the key to the correct understanding of the original meaning of all oriental literature of the past."

"I don't care to discuss that matter, Miss Harding," said Arthur Tremont, smilingly. "Nor do I see how it particularly concerns us at this moment."

"But I do!" There was a look in the now unmistakably dark eyes of the Greek goddess before which the man quailed inwardly, tho the smooth calmness of his facial expression remained unchanged. He tried to turn his eyes away, but there was a power now in the eyes of the woman before him, which held his glance and compelled his attention.

"It concerns us to know, Mr. Tremont, whether we are teaching truth or error; and the truth is so glorious in its promise, that it deeply concerns every one of us to learn it as fast as we can."

"But we have to start where we are, Miss Harding. We cannot have a universal heaven on earth in our time—tho we might have a personal one!"

"Do not forget the condition of attaining the goal." The dark eyes still held his gaze from wandering, and the voice he heard was intensely earnest. "'All action for self as distinct from others shall entirely cease.' There is a truth hidden in that which has been misunderstood, on the one hand, by those who seek to identify themselves with all others by leaving those others and going away to live alone in woods or cave, meditating; and, on the other hand, in an opposite way, by those who think to attain the goal thru that perfect communism in which all products are brought together, and all belongs to all, and no particular thing can belong to anyone. That both ideas are erroneous is proved by the impossibility of attaining the goal—the rise to greater heights of knowledge and capacities of ALL the people—thru either of those methods. If all tried the first process they would soon starve off the face of the globe. If all tried the second plan the constant friction of continual interference with each other would generate those actions which result in degradation—not higher attainment."

"I don't care about either of those ways, Miss Harding."

"I am glad to hear that, for then you can the more readily grasp the idea that the oneness of all which vitally concerns each one of us at this moment is the necessity for uniting our efforts in the work to secure and maintain equal freedom in the use of the earth. All persons, without exception, must use land while in the physical body on this globe, and the only thing necessary to secure the foundation on which to build to the highest limits of human attainment—for ALL—is to establish a perfect land tenure—a balanced land tenure—and thus give equal opportunities to all. Think a moment, Mr. Tremont, of the light and hope there is in the thought that only a very few years of determined work, in the right way, on the part of a few persons, can result in the total and permanent abolition of poverty, with its attendant degradation of the rich and misery of the poor. Think of living in a world full of human beings who are unafraid. A world full of sincere, friendly people."

"I don't see this subject from quite your viewpoint, Miss Harding, and I think it is wiser to put from our minds all thought of the suffering and crime around us. If it is possible to practice 'the suppression of thought' in order to attain to a higher plane of living, surely we can make it help us now, also."

The Greek goddess smiled, and the far away look that betokened a mental vision of ages long past was in her eyes. "Mr. Tremont, I want you to understand that the suppression of thought—the effacement of all desire—in order to attain the highest stage, was originally an effort to imitate the expressionless sky. The watery heaven, with its unceasing solar-vapor phenomena, started imitative movements in persons. Nirvana, the place of extinction, was a visible spot in the north polar sky—all canopy hosts gathered there. Primitive persons imitated the movements of those on high. Please understand me, Mr. Tremont, I am not saying anything now about the psychological aspects of the performance. I am merely pointing out the actual physical origin of the idea. It was a mechanical effort to imitate certain natural phenomena exhibited in the heavens of an older time. The records tell of the action of celestial features—not of terrestrial persons. The idea of the suppression of thought, as necessary to a realization of oneness with the universal consciousness—among persons on our earth—was an effort to imitate the change from the canopied heavens, which were ever the manifestation of thought, to the expressionless blue of the clear sky, which was the total absence of any manifestation of thought.''

''Really, Miss Harding, I am not now interested in the past, the present is too precious to me, our present. Let us use the power we possess to put from our minds all thought of anything but the joy of living, of working together. The things we cannot approve we can at least ignore and dismiss from our minds, and thus go on to success for ourselves. We must be optimists, not pessimists, if we are to get any pleasure out of life.''

The fire of the sacred flame burned brightly now in the eyes of the Greek goddess, but she only said quietly: ''It is a false optimism to cry 'peace,'

'peace' where there is no peace. To ignore evil when a little attention given to its cause will enable us to remove that cause, and thereby permanently eradicate the evil, is not optimism. It is the worst sort of pessimism. The evil grows while we ignore it. When one has learned, as I have done—and you can easily learn this, also, Mr. Tremont—to read the records of the past''—the dark eyes held the brown ones now, and again commanded consideration—''and sees how things human came to be what they are, and to realize just how they can be made the way they ought to be; so that, not only a select few, but every human being on earth could—within a decade—be made happy and comfortable, one longs for the means of compelling the unprejudiced attention of them all. For nothing but ignorance of the way—Rita, the right path—prevents. That way is thru equality of freedom—the only equality possible to human beings. It is a kind of equality that will bless everyone and curse none. To point the way to its speedy and peaceful attainment is the truest optimism. There is no other possible way by which human beings can live in peace and harmony and well being. It secures unity—solidarity—just where, and only where, it is needed; and leaves the largest possible freedom everywhere else. That is the message of blessing and happiness, the message of hope and helpfulness—the gospel of glad tidings—humanity is everywhere looking for. Will you join us in spreading abroad this light, Mr. Tremont? Will you be one of the true optimists of our time?''

"Really now, Miss Harding, you know how busy I am, and that I am teaching the use of a great power thru the exercise of which individuals can secure prosperity. I don't see how I can take up anything more."

"You teach that we should not use that power to injure our fellows. What is it, when you use the power to form a mask before your own mind to keep out the truth which alone can set your fellows—and yourself—free? You teach the oneness of all. What is it when you hold yourself aloof—as in a shell of individual prosperity—from the woes you can help to speedily abolish? Oh, Mr. Tremont, I wish so much"—it was Glen Harding's gray eyes now that looked pleadingly from the face of the Greek goddess—"that you would join us in this work. You have the ability to be a power in the cause of true freedom."

"I would be glad to work with you in any way I can, Miss Harding, and if you think I can help—oh, Miss Harding, Glen, I must tell you what has been on my mind so long, and it may show us the way out, the way to work together, and——"

The slight rattle of a doorknob, and a rustle of skirts, caused Arthur Tremont to stop short and glance toward the far end of the room, where the doorway framed for an instant a vision of lovliness, as Mrs. Dennison, in a gown of blue brocade, with quilted satin petticoat, and her fair hair piled high and powdered in the fashion of 1776, entered the room. She greeted the guest cordially, then said:—

"Do please excuse me, Mr. Tremont, for the necessity of carrying off my sister, but I promised Mrs. Romaine to be there early, as we are to help receive, and my husband is waiting with the car."

"Miss Harding warned me that her time was limited today. I thank you for letting me stay till the last minute," as he glanced at the clock, "I must go or you will surely be late."

"Think over what I said, Mr. Tremont," was Glen Harding's parting word, as he held her hand an instant—but her sister stood beside her, and he huried off in some bewilderment of mind.

"You came just in time to help me out finely, Birdie," her sister said, as they donned the long, light cloaks which concealed their costumes and hurried out to the waiting car.

"He looked so bewildered and dazed I wondered what you had been saying to him."

"I was trying to make him see some truths that are worth while, and to keep him from saying things I did not wish to hear. You came just at the right moment, Birdie."

"I'm glad of that. I was afraid I would be too late to do any good, but I could not get down sooner. I had to help Will," and she laughed. "The poor dear was all confused, trying to get into that costume, there are so many parts; but he looks fine, now it's all on!"

They were not late, and Jack Romaine was jubilant over Glen Harding's appearance. "You will be the most fetching thing in the grounds, Miss Harding," he said, for the party was an out-of-doors affair.

She laughed heartily, yet pleased with his approval. "You say that because you like me, Jack, and you are so handsome yourself in that Louis XIV costume that I shall want you near enough to look at quite frequently."

"All right. I'll only need to follow Motora or Wynn around, then. Mr. Motora's going to be A-1. I saw his costume when I stopped at his rooms a moment this morning to see if he was back. He had just come. Oh, here comes Mr. Wynn. Looks pretty nice, doesn't he? I could not get him to wear anything more fancy—and that seems appropriate to him, someway, just as this does to you," and he looked in open admiration at the Greek goddess, who smiled her appreciation.

A moment later, turning to welcome Ernest Wynn, she was just in time to hear her sister say: "Why, Mr. Wynn, I am very pleased to see you here. It seems we have reincarnated backward to the same life—we must have a little visit and talk over old times, when I can get out of this rush."

"With the greatest pleasure, Mrs. Dennison," returned the voice of Ernest Wynn, tho it came from a figure in the knee breeches, long waistcoat and powdered wig of more than a hundred years before. Glen Harding noticed the fineness of the material of the suit, and recognized the silver buckles on the shoes as heirlooms in the Romaine family. The fine edge of lace on shirt frill and sleeve edge marked the Virginia gentleman—altogether, he looked very well, indeed, she decided.

Ernest Wynn had hardly passed on when Inazo

Motora appeared, coming up the broad walk toward them, with the manner and bearing of a Japanese nobleman of an earlier era, on his way to an interview at court. On he came, graceful and serene, and in the eyes of the Greek goddess, standing among those waiting to receive him, there shone a look of pleased admiration as she noted the beauty of the court dress and its perfect fitness to the wearer. The hitadare shozoku, or vertically hanging ancient costume, was of white and gold brocade, the red lining showing under the edges of the wide, flowing sleeves. The neatly fitting kutsu just showed, as he walked, below the long robe. On his head he wore a tate eboshi, or ceremonial hat, as clearly indicative of high rank as were the family emblems which formed the designs of the rich brocade. In one hand he carried an ivory shaku, or fan-shaped notebook, as ornamental as it was useful.

"Isn't he a stunner, Miss Harding! He makes me agree with Mark Twain that we ought to wear colors," exclaimed Jack Romaine, in a hasty whisper, as the stately figure neared the waiting group.

There was no time for talk. People were coming in such numbers as to prove Mrs. Dennison's "everybody" hardly an exaggerated statement; and the large grounds had never looked more lovely than that afternoon, when they formed the setting for a lot of happy looking people from all nations and ages.

Jack Romaine seemed everywhere, and Glen Harding exerted herself to help on every plan he suggested. Just after sunset, however, she found a moment alone, and hurried to the western edge of the high part of the grounds, where she stood, against a background of shrubbery, watching the lovely yellowing of the sky behind the western hills. As she looked, the sound of approaching voices came to her, and a moment later Inazo Motora and Ernest Wynn appeared.

"Now, this is good, Miss Harding," exclaimed the latter. "We were just wishing we could have your help in getting a good definition of true optimism."

She smiled as she replied, "I was talking over that subject with Mr. Tremont this afternoon, and I can tell you what I told him."

"I should like to hear it," said the Japanese nobleman.

"So would I," added the Virginia gentleman.

"Let us sit down where we can look at the sky as we talk, the coloring is so beautiful tonight." The Greek goddess led the way a few yards farther toward the edge of the slope, and found two benches under a well trimmed pepper tree, from which they had a fine view of the Arroyo as well as the western sky. Glen Harding seated herself on one of the benches, and the two men took the other.

"It is so delightful here," said Ernest Wynn, "and I always like the pepper trees." He glanced up at the fern-like sprays, and the long clusters of bright green and shining red berries over their heads.

"The feathery lovliness of the pepper tree adds much to the charm of Southern California," remarked Inazo Motora. "It matters not whether it is allowed to grow wild, or is trimmed and trained like this. It is always charming when in full leaf."

"And it is beautiful everywhere I've seen it," added Ernest Wynn. "A garden or a barren foothill or a hidden canyon are all one to this delightful tree."

"You are an outdoor lover, Mr. Wynn," said the Japanese, smilingly. "You must visit my home some day."

"It will be a great pleasure," returned the other. "But, Mr. Motora, did you ever look down an avenue of more graceful trees than those which meet in a high arch over the middle of South Marengo? Looking south, down the center of the street, those large pepper trees, extending for nearly a mile on both sides of the street, let just enough sunshine thru to relieve the vista from the darkness which might otherwise suggest a tunnel, and make of that smooth asphalt pavement a delightful elysian path to a point of clear sky at the far end. The pepper tree has charms for me that no other shade tree has. It alone will go far toward keeping me in this summer clime."

"That is a delightful street," said Inazo Motora, "and you will appreciate the beauties of Japan, Mr. Wynn."

"I like the pepper tree, but I love the eucalypts," remarked Glen Harding, laughingly. "I really don't know just why. How much more we could all have of the pure enjoyments of nature—of all out doors—if error had never come into the world. How much of natural beauty and grandeur—of the forests and the live things—has been destroyed and can never be replaced. I have tried to think out just how people came to let error dominate them as it does today. It is evident that during the infancy and childhood periods of humanity the vibrations due to canopy movement, the full power of the spectacular display and physical motion, controlled the movements of the growing human beings. During the youthtime of humanity the spectacular became more and more prominent, while tho vibrations due to canopy revolution became less powerful as the vapors became thinner and thinner and neared their end. When the end came, and the sky cleared, a mature humanity stood forth capable of controlling its own actions. That is, during the time of immaturity, canopy vibrations dominated and controlled human action. After the canopy passed away, the thought force in human beings dominated and controlled human acts. Natural law—from which nothing can escape—works on unceasingly, but human beings must discover it and intelligently utilize it. This is just as true when it is a question of the natural law controlling the harmonious association of persons, as when it is a law controlling the movements of an electric automobile.''

''But the disorderly movements of the canopy, when it was vanishing from sight, educed abnormal activities of humanity—necessarily evolved the selfward bias of their desires,'' remarked Inazo Motora, thoughtfully.

''But it seems that it has ever been in civilizations that the disorderly became prominent,'' said Glen Harding. ''It is only in our most highly advanced civilization that disorder is dominant. It is certainly not necessary that people should remain disorderly when they have once recognized that 'order is heaven's first law.' The reason that the tendency toward order is strongest, is because the orderly movements were age-long, and repeated over and over and over again, until an indelible impression was produced, and this became fixed. The disorderly was sudden, and, comparatively, soon over. It could make no such lasting impression as an orderly repetition necessarily does.''

''Still,'' suggested the Japanese, ''the latest impression is the one that controls, and the latest canopy vibrations were confusing in their disorderly trend, and left people with that character.''

''Not all, Mr. Motora,'' said Glen Harding, eagerly. ''Think a moment, how many uncivilized peoples have been found living peacefully and happily together. Your idea seems to hold the thought that people cannot help being disorderly—at war with one another—and I am sure that is a mistake. Mature people have the power to change their habits. Your conception seems like that of a friend of mine who, when past forty-five years of age excused herself for doing certain things because her mother taught her so—things she felt were unwise to do. Children are not responsible for the training they get from their environment. During youth they grow toward responsibility as the mind and body grow toward maturity. The day comes when each human being becomes responsible for va's own life"—Ernest Wynn smiled to himself as he heard his word from her lips—"to the extent that the individual can control it," Glen Harding continued. "I may find myself with a strong or a weak body, a well educated or a blurred brain, according to the way parents or guardians have done their part during my childhood and youth. But however I find myself, I am henceforth responsible for what I make of that self. I have the capacity to learn and to do. I have the power to throw away every belief instilled into me as a child and youth. It rests with me to retain the orderly and discard the erroneous. I am not obliged to retain the use of candles and kerosene lamps after I learn to utilize gas and electricity."

"No, but that disorderly tendency has to be eliminated by character education—thru the pouring in of the spirit of love," persisted the Japanese.

"Confusion and disorder among persons are evidence of an abnormal condition," said Glen Harding, insistent, in her turn, "and the only possible way out is thru the discovery of that phase of natural law which regulates that harmonious association of human beings, and then applying it promptly and thoroly. Then we will all naturally show the true friendliness and love for each other that will make this world a delightful home for all human beings—and other live things. We can now demonstrate that in the discovery of the exact nature and source of real ground rent, this law has at last been found. The discovery of this law makes possible the establishment of a perfect land tenure system—a balanced land tenure—which means equal opportunities for all, as quickly as people learn of the discovery and grasp its meaning."

"I believe you are right, Miss Harding," said Ernest Wynn. "But you were going to tell us how you defined true optimism for Tremont."

"Yes," was the smiling reply, "and I'll do it now." And the two men listened with very evident interest to her account of her explanation of optimism, and her find in Edward Carpenter's book.

"I shall follow up that line until I have it quite clear," said Inazo Motora.

"It is curious that Tremont should get ahead of us on such knowledge," added Ernest Wynn.

Glen Harding smiled appreciatively at the eager interest of the two men, as she replied, "Not at all, Mr. Wynn. Mr. Tremont was most in need of that truth and therefore attracted it to himself a few hours earlier."

"That man could be a great help in the work for true freedom if he would let himself study the subject seriously," observed Ernest Wynn.

"I told him so," said Glen Harding, "and I reminded him that he could not avoid seeing the strain and suffering and riot about him."

"When I think of all that, Miss Harding," and the face of the Japanese expressed the depth of pitiful sympathy, "of the unmoral, misguided state of affairs in the world nowadays—so atrocious and disappointingly miserable—so far from the goal on either side of the primary meridian planet, I feel a thunderbolt is almost needed to destroy the whole thing! But no! decidedly no! the quintessence, it still remains with even the lowest-trodden beggar's son!''

''What do you mean, Mr. Motora, by either side the primary meridian?'' asked Ernest Wynn, alert to catch a thought new to him.

''Something this way,'' was the quick response of the Japanese, the depths of his dark eyes glowing with the heat of fervent thought: ''Equal freedom is the goal of the occidental society, as faithfulness is the ideal of its oriental neighbor. The one is the natural product of the mind of a people objectively and practically inclined; while the other is that of the heart of a people subjectively and meditatively inclined. These ideals, tho they may seem to oppose each other, are, in reality like the wheels of a chaise, inseparably united to carry humanity over into a golden age under the present sky. Give 'Rita' her rightful upperhand, and, who can tell what a sweeping change might be accomplished in this veriest present day! Equilibrium of equity, I doubt not, is the Rita of the matured world, of this, our world.''

Glen Harding looked at him thoughtfully. ''That is true optimism,'' she said.

''Your idea of the two wheels of the chaise strikes me as fine, Mr. Motora,'' said Ernest Wynn, heartily.

There was silence for a moment as the three looked toward the still glowing brightness of the western sky, and then back at each other; each seeing the light reflected in the other faces. A thought came to Glen Harding. ''You two men are like the wheels of that chaise,'' she said. ''Will you two shake hands on it, in token of our all joining together in the work of bringing into conscious life the soul of the world—equal freedom—true freedom for all?''

The nobleman of old Japan and the American of 1776 rose with one accord and stood before her, their hands joined in a grasp that was firm and strong. Glen Harding looked up at the two men as they stood for a moment with clasped hands, the burning glow in the dark orbs of the orient answering the bright sparkle in the blue eyes of the occident. How unlike, and yet how alike, they were! Unlike in the mere shell of outer appearance, yet so completely one in the wide empire of the mind, the higher realm of the soul! Her sister's question, 'Which shall it be?' passed thru her mind as the men dropped their hands and turned with one accord to her. For a fleeting second she caught the sparkle in the blue eyes and felt an answering brightness in her own—and a slight smile parted her lips. Then she knew the dark eyes were bent upon her and she half turned to meet the glowing fire that seemed to light a path to her inmost thoughts. She felt the warm blood rising, and knew that her cheeks were flushed to their hottest, as she met that glance and held the dark eyes while she sent her message thru them to the innermost soul of the man. For in that moment she knew her choice was made. Did Inazo Motora also understand? She believed that he did.

Really, there was no choice. It was a matter of getting together two halves that accurately fitted each other, and together made a perfect whole. The old saying of the Qabala was true: "Chokmah, Wisdom, and Binah, Understanding, counterbalanced together in most perfect equality of Male and Female." Thus ran Glen Harding's thoughts; but what she said was:—

"There is Jack coming. I think he is looking for me. Yes, he has seen us and is beckoning. I must go back. But I am so glad," she added, as she walked along the broad path between them, "I am so glad we three had this pleasant little time together here."

"Yes, the memory of what passed among us in this clear eventide shall be my everlasting encouragement, my dear friends," said Inazo Motora.

"And to me, an inspiration," said Ernest Wynn.

CHAPTER 20.

NOT A PROPOSAL.

The morning after the garden party—which was over, and the last guest gone by eleven o'clock—Glen Harding woke very early, and found herself very wide awake. A glance from the window showed her the morning was clear, and that the garden was beautiful in the moonlight. She rose and dressed hastily—such a morning was too good to lose! A glance at the clock told her it was not yet four. She went noiselessly out onto the south pergola to its eastern end. The full moon hung like a gigantic ball of light low in the west, flooding the garden with its pure radiance. She looked down at the fairy-like network of leaves and tendrils and flowers that were drawn with clear-cut outlines on the broad walks of the garden, and in softer touches on the grass of the lawn. Every tree and bush, each vine and flowering plant, had its own characteristic beauty. Then she looked up and was almost startled at a sudden blaze of light—but in a moment she understood. It was Venus, seemingly larger and brighter than she had ever seen the planet before. Like a small moon, but with a more vividly brilliant light, it shone against the pure sky, framed in on three sides by the dark masses of tall eucalypts, the top open—like a ball of light in a well of life! Turning slightly toward the south, still looking into the eastern sky, she saw all the glory of great Orion. Every star still showing, with Betelgeuze and Rigel very bright, in face of the full moon and coming dawn. Looking higher, she found Aldebaran and the Pleiades, and Capella with the kids. She looked again at Venus in her frame, and wondered if there was anything more delicately lovely among the trees than the tops and outer edges of the eucalypts as seen against the dawn sky. A sudden thought struck her, and she went hastily to the western end of the pergola. Yes, Deneb and Vega were still visible, low in the northwest. She looked toward the north where the giant heaps of the Sierra Madre range showed a clean, sharp outline against the lighter sky. A shower two days before—the only one of the summer—had cleared the air, and it seemed to Glen Harding that she could almost see the individual rocks and bushes on the mountain side, as the dawn grew brighter. The coming day reminded her that there was work to be done, and she gave one long, final look at the loveliness about her, near and far, drew in a deep draught of the deliciously fresh and sweet morning air, then re-entered the house and went quickly down into the garden.

Glen Harding started about her daily work as usual, and yet she felt that everything was different this morning from all the other mornings she had known. What would the day bring to her? Something new and wonderful—she felt it so surely. Many possibilities passed thru her mind. Had Inazo Motora understood her message? Yes, she could not doubt it. The look in his eyes and the firm pressure of his hand, as he bade her good night the evening before, told her that, tho there had been a little crowd about them, and no opportunity for a private word.

Her work that morning chanced to be taking up bulbs from a bed near the front entrance. She paused now and then in her work to look about her and enjoy the freshness of the clear, delicious air, and to note the sheen of increasing light on trees and bushes. She watched the mocking birds as they came close about her, eager for the grubs her work might bring to light; smiling now and then, as one, more fearless than the rest, flew down almost at her hand to snatch a coveted morsel. Once, she even stopped her work and went across the garden to look at a clump of tall primroses, because she had discovered that the delicate tinting of the large yellow flowers was lovliest in the clear light just before sunrise.

As Glen Harding resumed her work, her thoughts went out to the thousands upon thousands of women and children to whom such gardens were unknown; to whom a flower was a luxury, and the delicious feel of the pure air a thing undreamed of. Yet how soon, how easily and peacefully, they could all have the enjoyment she knew. Nay, much more than she could know, until all those others could share it with her. How differently this garden would look to her, with that veil of the misery—the needless suffering of the world—out of her mind, because abolished forever!

How glorious life would be, with all standing on the simple, normal foundation of equal opportunities. How easily and peaceably and quickly such a life could become an established fact, if only a few intelligent people could be waked up to see the truth! A very simple truth, withal. How long she had thought of that! Now, at last, the way was opening for the work she longed to do. The knowledge they now possessed, the financial help of her brother-in-law and Jack Romaine—what a fine young fellow he was, and she smiled as she thought of his wholehearted enthusiasm—assured the chance to carry out the plan she had long dreamed of—if only——

"Good morning, Miss Harding, I thought I might find you busy somewhere about," and Ernest Wynn stood looking down upon her, smiling cheerfully.

She glanced up, as she returned his greeting, and realized at once that he had come upon some unusual errand. There was a new light in his eyes, and a suppressed eagerness in his tone and manner, and yet a certain hesitation she had never seen in him before. She thought quickly.

"Excuse me a moment," she said, "while I rake this bed smooth, and we will take the tools and bulbs—just see what a lot there are—to the garden house. Then we will have time to talk a little before breakfast."

She was working as she spoke, and in a few moments was ready to lead the way to her favorite arbor, overlooking the Arroyo Seco.

"Have you read Professor Vail's book?" she asked.

"Yes, as much as I could. I spent most of the last two days over it—till the party! I think the book is fine. I want to talk with the Professor when he gets home, as soon as you can arrange it. But I came about a more personal matter this morning. Do you happen to know the Welden Ranch? It's a five-acre place a few miles out."

"Yes, indeed! We are acquainted with the Weldens, and often called there before they went back to England. The place has been well cared for this summer. I took Helen all over it, when we passed that way on one of our rides. Did you notice the house? "It's a real old Southern California style, but built of good, solid concrete; just one story, and around three sides of a large patio, with a wide pergola across the open end. Helen and I had our breakfast there that morning. The house only needs some glass in the roof and a few little changes to make it just what I would plan for myself."

"Then you would like to live there?"

"Wouldn't I! How I could go to work in a place of that size! It's not too large and yet not crowded, as we are here, by the neighbors. And there is plenty of room for the printery. I know just the spot where it ought to go to fit in with the garden scheme."

"You think it would not be too far out to have the publishing house there? That has bothered me a good deal."

"With the right sort of auto it will not be too far out. The propaganda work can be done ever so much better in such inspiring surroundings. We need to live as near a normal life as is possible under inequitable conditions. Only as we do that can we see clearly enough to inspire in others the hope of sure and immediate results of the propaganda.''

''That is true. But I have no car and no money with which to buy one, Glen.''

It was the first time he had called her by her name, and she felt her face grow warm as she heard it in that tone—but she answered bravely:—

''But I will have one! Will long ago promised me an automobile when I—whenever I asked him for it. He said it should be built expressly. I shall hold him to that part of the promise—tho I think he has not forgotten—and we can have an auto to just suit our needs, our work.''

''Then you want me to take the place? Grant told me about it, among others, on my way out here last spring, and I thought it fine when I saw it. Late last evening he phoned me I must decide today. The landlady answered, and I found the message when I went back to my room, after the party. A New York man will be here to look at the place tomorrow, and will probably take it, if I don't today. You know, Glen, I am not rich,'' he had moved closer, and now held the hand nearest him, and she did not withdraw it. ''I have enough to pay for the place, and about three hundred dollars over—a small amount to start on? Then there is the printery.''

Glen Harding was thinking rapidly. "When we go in to breakfast, Ernest"—she saw the light of a great happiness come into his eyes as she spoke his name—"you can phone Mr. Norwood that you will take the ranch—the commission will help them—then we can consult with Will about going right ahead with the plans for the printery. With his ten thousand dollars, and Jack's help, we can build and equip a place amply sufficient to begin with."

"Glen, you are——"

"Auntie Glen! Auntie Glen! Where are you?" called a child's voice.

"Here in the arbor, Merwyn."

"Oh, Auntie Glen, Fay has found a flower in the garden we don't know. Will you come and see it and tell us what it is? Please," the eager voice went on, as the child ran into the arbor. "Mr. Wynn, will you come, too? It's a pretty flower."

As they rose to follow the child, Glen Harding said, happily, "This is not Mr. Wynn, to you, any more, Merwyn. He is going to be your Uncle Ernest."

The child's eyes opened widely. "Fay's Uncle Ernest? And Carol's, too?"

"Yes, dear, he will be Uncle Ernest to all of you, just as I am Auntie Glen."

"Oh, I must tell Fay," and off darted the child. The new flower was forgotten, for the moment, at least, in the greater wonder, and two pairs of flying feet carried their owners swiftly toward the house, to tell Mama and Papa the wonderful news.

"Mama, Mama, Uncle Ernest is coming to breakfast," they proclaimed together, as they mounted the steps of the side porch, where Mrs. Dennison stood waiting a moment for the sound of the breakfast bell.

"I found Uncle Ernest in the arbor," added Merwyn, proudly.

"That was a great find, Merwyn; a very good find, indeed. Now run in and get ready for breakfast, while I wait for your Uncle Ernest.

"What's the news, Birdie?" Her husband emerged from the library and stood beside her in the shelter of the vines.

"The children tell me their Uncle Ernest is coming for breakfast, that Merwyn found him in the arbor. What do you think of that, Will?"

"Uncle Ernest! Well, I declare! I'm surprised, I'll admit, Birdie; but I'm mighty glad Glen is not going to Japan. We need her here in the propaganda work."

"There they come. Do look at that man's face, Will—they have not seen us yet. If you ever tell me again that Ernest Wynn has no sentiment, I'll know you don't care a bit about being truthful!"

"Oh, I give in, Birdie. You are wiser than I in a lot of ways. I keep finding them now—you are a regularly splendid little woman."

His wife laughed. "Oh, Will, it's Glen and Ernest Wynn, not you and I, who are just engaged!" Yet her eyes and voice showed her pleasure in the action that had accompanied his speech.

The heartiest of welcomes met the new brother-to-be, when they at last reached the porch, just as the breakfast bell rang, and Mrs. Dennison had only time to give her sister a hasty hug and a low-toned, eager word, "Oh, Glen, I'm so glad you are going to stay with us!"

It was a happy party that gathered around the breakfast table at Arroyo Vista that morning.

"You will want your own car now, Glen," remarked her brother-in-law during the talk. "What am I to order?"

"We must plan it first. I want one to suit our needs in the propaganda and printing work. A sort of combination affair is what I have in mind."

"All right, Glen. I will order it as soon as you have the plan ready. Going to have the printery on the ranch?"

"Yes, we want you to help plan it, so work can begin right away," said Ernest Wynn.

"You must let me furnish your house, Glen," her sister broken in. "It will be such fun to take you around to select things."

"That will be splendid, Birdie, if you——"

"No ifs about it," interrupted her sister, brightly. "You can consider that as settled.

Will Dennison had been thinking. "Suppose I call up Jack and find out just what he will do? Then we can make definite plans for the printery. Excuse me a moment, Birdie. I'll call him up now —if they haven't gone."

He came back shortly, saying, "Jack will come right over."

The older members of the family had just adjourned to the cool library when Jack Romaine hurried in and shook hands all around in the liveliest fashion, his boyish face all alight.

"I'm so glad, Miss Harding, I want to hurrah! I feel as tho I needed to let off steam."

Glen Harding laughed. "Wait till we are out at the ranch, and then you can make all the noise you want to, without fear of disturbing the neighbors."

"We want to know just what you will do toward the printery, Jack," said Will Dennison.

The young man looked a little surprised, then said, earnestly: "I meant exactly what I said when I told Mr. Wynn he could count on me for all I am worth—my mother's income is entirely independent of mine. I understand that a good-sized printery, outfitted especially for our propaganda work, is the first essential. I talked the whole business over again with mother yesterday morning. I want to learn the printing and publishing business from the ground up—and help along the propaganda at the same time. You said," he turned to Ernest Wynn, "that you know all but the press work, enough to get started. I thought we might have Mr. Burns—Aunt Kate's friend is more wild than ever to stay out here, Mrs. Dennison—to manage the presses. I will put up all the cash that is needed in addition to Mr. Dennison's help, to build and equip the sort of printery Mr. Wynn has planned, and to hire the right kind of help to start with. Then we can begin right away with the paper and leaflets—and even books—and as the business grows we can add to it anything needed."

"Oh, Jack, that will make success sure," exclaimed Glen Harding, "and in looking for help we want to employ people who can put their hearts into the propaganda as well as their heads and hands into the printing."

"To be sure we will," assented Ernest Wynn. "I know several old-time single taxers, who have seen glimmers of the new light, who will be glad to come out here and work in such a shop."

"But how about your two more years at Stanford, Jack?" asked Mrs. Dennison.

"I'm not going! I told mother I could learn a lot more worth knowing in a print shop, such as we will have. She did not see it that way at first, but I told her to try me a year, and if she is not satisfied—why, I can go back to the university. I will not have to, I know," he ended, confidently.

"Are you engaged anywhere today, Jack?" Mrs. Dennison put the question.

"No. Mother took Aunt Kate and Mrs. Burns, and started for the Beach half an hour ago, but I did not want to go down there and loaf around. I want to help get the propaganda going."

"Then suppose I have a lunch put up," suggested Mrs. Dennison, "and we all go to the ranch and look over the place? You people can figure on the printery while I plan things for the house. It will be great fun!"

"That will be splendid, Birdie," said her sister.

"We can go round by way of my room—it's

always pleasant to ride down South Marengo—and I will get the list of things I have made out. then we can tell how large a building will be needed. I have the floor spaces all figured out for the machines and presses,'' concluded Ernest Wynn.

''We will all go, Birdie,'' said her husband, and Mrs. Dennison hurried out to order the lunch and give Mrs. Dent directions about the children.

''If we send in the orders for machinery now, and rush the building, we could get all ready to start this fall, couldn't we?'' asked Jack Romaine.

''Certainly,'' answered Will Dennison. ''I couldn't say just when, tho.''

''I thought it might be a sort of fitting tribute to the memory of Henry George if we could have the outfit all ready to start by October twenty-ninth,'' said the young man.

''We will, Jack, if hard work can do it,'' assented Ernest Wynn.

''That's a good thought, Jack, and we will all try our best to accomplish that result,'' added Will Dennison. ''It will be a token that the fire of Henry George's enthusiasm kindles the flame of this new movement for human freedom.''

''Yes, we will do it!'' Glen Harding spoke, and the thrilling ring of an assured hope sounded in the music of her voice. ''Then it will take but a few years of earnest, steady work, in the right way, to spread the light of this new knowledge thruout the land—and we shall see the last vestige of oppression abolished, and a rational, sane humanity standing forth on the normal basis of a balanced land tenure, to realize at last the full joy of living in the glorious air of equal freedom. Then we shall know in daily life the deep pleasure of universal equity, harmony, and friendship.''

* * *

Having come thus far with me, would you like to go farther? Have you felt the pulse of the Soul of the World? Would you like to have it beat in rhythmic harmony with natural law? Then write to me at once, and let us discuss together in detail the plan of which Glen Harding speaks.

Remember that what you and I, and other folk like us, think, makes ''public opinion.'' Let us make it consciously, deliberately, so that our children can grow up in the inspiring air of true freedom, and show to what glorious possibilities human beings can rise.

I would like to hear from every person who reads this book—no matter what va thinks of it—for I am certain that somewhere there are those who will gladly join in making the Soul of the World a living, manifested, reality, here and now.

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