

SHOVELS, TEASPOONS AND TRAITORS

LISTEN to a fable, children: There was once a Manure Pile, breeding Flies. There were statesmen, politicians, philanthropists, even a few captains who called themselves radicals—making Fly Traps!

One suggested Quicklime on the Manure Pile. He was stoned by the statesmen. Reform politicians searched for a Slowlime.

It occurred to one to attack the Manure Pile with a Shovel. Seventeen Life-Long Singletaxers rushed out to wrest the Shovel from him and place a Teaspoon in his hand!

The Shoveler paid no attention to the Seventeen Singletaxers and dug deep into the Manure Pile. This angered the Singletaxers, who owned a patent on a Slowlime formula that was guaranteed to eat away the filth in not less than 1000 years without disturbing in the least the Fly Trap industry—and they would have coerced the Shoveler to inactivity, but for the Anarchist Policeman on the street corner.

"We must have Law and Order here," he said. "I don't approve his dirty work; no Respectable Person would do it, but this is a Free Countree, and you mustn't physically hinder him without an order of the court."

"But this is also a Democratic Countree," said the Seventeen, "and he's depreciating our Slowlime stock. It is not Fair!"

The Shoveler took no notice. Soon a few Intelligent Persons whose deep studies had gained them the profound knowledge that flies breed in moist filth, came with rakes and helped to spread out the Manure so the sun could cure it.

The Seventeen Singletaxers were heart-broken. Sobbingly they appealed to the busy Shoveler, "It is not Fair!"

The kind-hearted Policeman was deeply affected. "No, it is not Fair," he sobbed.

A few Idlers straggled along, and loitered. They knew nothing about the matter, how Flies originated or how they could be abolished, but they had soft hearts and tender ears for Words. Soon they were sobbing, too—"It's not Fair!"

The tears flowed, covering the ground with moisture that kept the spread Manure alive.

"O, Hell!" said the Shoveler in disgust, as he paused to wipe the sweat.

"Don't you want to be Fair?" wept the Seventeen Singletaxers.

"No, I don't want to be Fair—damn all that rot! I want to clean out this Manure Pile. Get away, if you can't help. Shoo! You're worse than the Flies."

"O! O! he doesn't want to be Fair!" gasped the Seventeen as they scampered off.

Next day they consulted a Nice Fat Office Holder who receives a Beautiful Salary for shooing Flies from the homes of the rich.

"Try him on Harmony," said the Fat One. "He'll fall for some line of Talk—they all do. Ask him to Get Together with you and make Harmony. Everybody wants Harmony—it's the stock-in-trade of the kingdom. We feed it to soldiers and criminals; it's the chief ingredient of powder for machine guns. He'll quit for Harmony's sake."

The Seventeen went back to the Shoveler, but he only grunted as he worked:

"There's no Harmony with these Flies buzzing and stinging. Get away. This isn't a symphony

concert, but a man's job to rid the neighborhood of Flies."

Quite a number of Helpers were now on the job and a big hole was being made in the Manure Pile.

The Seventeen Singletaxers sought the counsel of the Most Prominent person in Fly Trap City, who was named Palaver and kept an elegant pawnshop on Fairminded Street over which was a large sign "The Golden Rule."

"You must induce him to drop that Shovel and use a Teaspoon," said Mr. Palaver. "Promise him a silver spoon, or a gold one—any kind of a spoon he wants, so long as it is chosen at a Democratic meeting. Play up the Get Together and the Democracy stunt good and strong"—

"But he's too stubborn," said the Seventeen out of the fullness of experience. "He won't listen to Reason, but keeps on digging."

"Why—happy thought!—then he's an Autocrat. Go shout that at him. It will scare off some of the Helpers, anyway."

It did frighten away a few of the Helpers, particularly those with pledges in the Palaver pawnshop.

But now the People began to understand about the origin of Flies and how to stop their breeding. They soon came in crowds and worked like Men. At last accounts the Manure Pile was rapidly fading, the Fly Trap industry was waning, and the market quotations in the Morning Bunc listed Slowlime stock at 101 cents below par.

Is it not an interesting fable, children? But gather closer and let me whisper, "It is also true; it is current history, draped as diaphanously as a Newport belle."

The first obstacle to gaining the earth for the people is a hitherto-conspicuous Three Per Cent of Singletaxers—whose interests are bound up in a brand of Slowlime.

In the summer of 1915 the Single Tax Leagues of Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Stockton, backed by the Radicalism of the state, declared for the Immediate restoration of the earth to the people and with unparalleled temerity set about the enactment of its demand.

This was the birth of The Great Adventure which had been conceived in the pages of Everyman (issue of Jan.-Feb. 1915) not as a Single Tax movement, not in any doctrinaire way, but as a Base of Union upon which to focus the entire radical strength and Move it to the Immediate accomplishment of a definite fundamental issue—not by educating the people in the theories and subtleties of a taxation system, but by a direct appeal to their Sympathy and Manhood.

Its demand was, and is, variously stated: That land and resources not in Use shall be free and open to whoever will use them; that the private ownership of land, or its monopoly holding, shall cease; that the raw products of