

HELPING THE POOR BACK TO THE LAND

Bolton Hall Raising a \$70,000 Fund to Establish a Training School for Farmers.

HOW IT'S DONE IN GERMANY

Vacant Lots Bought by Cities and Rented to Needy Families—Gar- dens for 50,000 Children, Too.

Bolton Hall, the author and land reformer, returned on Saturday from Europe, where he had been studying conditions in France, Germany, and Switzerland to help him in his "back-to-the-land" movement which he started in New York through the Vacant Lot Gardening Association about three years ago.

"The most interesting and significant situation," Mr. Hall said, "I found in Germany, where the city authorities are helping workingmen's families to spend the Summer on vacant lands near the city limits.

"More than 50,000 children," Mr. Hall explained, "were enabled by the authorities of Berlin to spend this Summer on land within easy reach of the city, where they were assigned to plots on which to put up their own little booths, where they could play and cultivate gardening profitably with the help of their parents and the advice of public instructors.

"In the smaller cities of Germany the effort is principally directed to help the families of wage earners, as, for instance, in Goettingen, where the city has acquired 10,000 acres and is renting them out to deserving families at 25 marks for one-third of an acre. This sum pays the rent for fifteen years, and the city tenant has five years to pay it in. I remember one case in particular in which an old man was supporting himself in this way, with his two grandchildren, 3 and 5 years, respectively.

"Near Paris I studied with the greatest interest the intensive gardening which is done there by professional gardeners on little bits of farms. Many of these rent at \$250 an acre per year. They are roofed over with glass and very profitable. We can apply this system of intensive gardening with great advantage here, because our climate can dispense with the glass roofing.

"We expect to get busy right away with our work here," continued Mr. Hall. "The Little Land League, which I was instrumental in organizing before I left for Europe about four months ago, has about 200 members now, and the number keeps on increasing every day. This league has superseded the Vacant Lot Gardening Association, which conducted a number of experiments in and near New York during its existence.

"In the Spring of 1908 we were obliged to give up the thirty acres of land on Bronxdale Avenue, near White Plains Road, which the Astor estate had allowed us to use and on which a number of families had been living. In vain we tried to get other cultivatable land within a 5-cent limit of the city, and finally found a small piece of land at Dyckman Street, near Prescott Avenue, which the owner, a Mr. W. F. Burns, had allowed the association to use.

"This land, however, was not suitable for cultivation, but was excellent for tenting; there was not space enough for more than half a dozen tents; but it seemed better to help half a dozen families to live a natural, healthful life and to keep them off the charity lists, than to allow even this small space to be unoccupied during the hot Summer months.

"Accordingly lumber was bought for platforms, water-proof tents were put up, and worthy applicants most in need were selected. These families have lived there all through the Winter, too, without suffering from the cold.

"Our experience has shown us how difficult it is to get land near the city to be used, free of charge, for vacant lot gardening. Real estate men and owners do not want to be bothered. It was this obstacle which led to the formation of the Little Land League.

"We shall endeavor to raise a fund of about \$70,000 for our purposes and get a small piece of land within an hour and a half of New York. This we shall use as a test and training school, and the people who have proved capable there we shall put on their feet as farmers on a larger tract of land further away."

The officers of the league, whose headquarters are at 56 Pine Street, report having received many applicants—some desirous of enough land to start small farming, others compelled to come into the city for their daily work, but glad of a chance to live away from it. The league hopes in time to spread its work around large cities other than New York, as applications from all over the United States show the need for this aid.

The officers and the general committee of the Little Land League are P. Tecumseh Sherman, President; Kate Sanborn, Vice President; Bolton Hall, Treasurer; E. M. Freye, Secretary; Poultney Bigelow, R. Fulton Cutting, Robert W. De Forest, Hamlin Garland, G. B. Hopkins, W. Lloyd Garrison, Seth Low, V. Everitt Macy, Hamilton Holt, J. Pierpont Morgan, John Moody, N. O. Nelson, Mrs. Frederick Nathan, George Foster Peabody, L. Rudy, George T. Powell, E. R. A. Seligman, Charles Sprague Smith, Albert Shaw, Spencer Trask, Francis L. Stetson, Booker T. Washington, and Mrs. Samuel Untermyer.

KEPT THEIR WEDDING SECRET.

Miss Grace Shawcross and H. W. Smith Were Married on June 26.

The friends of Miss Grace Mae Shawcross, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Shawcross of 24 Lake Street, Bloomfield, N. J., were surprised yesterday when it became known that she has been the wife of Herbert W. Smith of Orange since June 26 last.

The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Otho F. Humphreys, rector of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, West Orange, and the young bride and her husband imposed a promise upon the minister to keep the marriage a secret.

The parents of the bride, when they learned of the marriage last night, promptly gave their forgiveness.