

## ANOTHER BOOK BY BOLTON HALL

Mr. Bolton Hall's latest book, "A Little Land and A Living" (Arcadia Press, New York) was inspired by a letter by William Borsodi, the author tells us. And this letter, which is used as a preface to the book, was in turn inspired by Mr. Hall's other book, "Three Acres and Liberty." But we doubt if Mr. Hall, who fulfilled Mr. Borsodi's request to write another book on the theme "back to the land," quite indorses all the points of view expressed in the preface-letter. As a convinced and comprehending Single Taxer, Mr. Hall certainly knows that the "back to the land" movement alone will not right economic ill and that this very movement, good though it be, is made more difficult by landowning conditions in every country of the world today. The movement landwards, the beneficent effect of the taking up and working of small parcels, will not come full into play until we have laws which prevent the speculative cornering of the land for the good of a few. Mr. Hall himself realizes this, and shows only how the working man can hold and work land and himself get the good of its rise in value. But Mr. Borsodi's point of view is altogether too shortsighted to be at all interesting to Single Taxers. In fact he does not seem to have any very clear point of view, except that he believes that every man should till the soil. His letter is incoherent at times, and the writing of it so careless as to leave the meaning often in doubt. There can be no doubt, of course, as to the good that would come to very many lives if they were lived out in wholesome, pure air, and the natural wholesome toil of working the land, of reaping Nature's rich bounty. But the very conditions which make the slums of the city, make harder the life of the farmer, large or small, today. Economic wrongs which stunt the growth of the children of the tenements, which poison the blood in the veins of men and women in the city, are a drag also on the farmer and his family. They bow his back and blanch his hair prematurely, they kill the youth of his womenkind, and cause his children's muscles to grow gnarled and twisted while he is toiling to pay the rent extorted by

the lord of the land, as much here as in feudal Europe. As long as the laws of our country permit great syndicates, American or foreign, to own many square miles of American land; as long as the railroads—to whose benevolent co-operation Mr. Borsodi looks for help—are permitted to rackrent their tenants—as long as such conditions prevail, neither the small parcel near the city, nor the larger farm further away, will bring the health and wisdom, the happiness and the peace to the world and its inhabitants that Mr. Borsodi seems to hope for from a mere moving out of town into the country. Mr. Hall of course, understands this, for he touches very lightly or not at all, upon the ulterior benefits of the "back to the land movement" and its bearing on economic troubles. He contents himself with an excellent, and extremely interesting volume of information as to the intensive working of small plots of land. The statistics given for what has been done, the information as to how to go about to do it, are all authentic, and read well. It is valuable information, and the volume might in justice be entitled "Hand-book of small farming."

After talking for several chapters on the prospects and possibilities of small plot gardening—giving among other things some very interesting statistics anent the vacant lot work—Mr. Hall goes on to each crop in turn, telling just what has been done with it, and just what can be done by intelligence and work. He treats of all kinds of vegetables, fruit, animals, how to raise them for profit, how to get the best results with the least expenditure of time and capital. Particularly valuable is Mr. Hall's advice as to the keeping of a small plot with the suburban home, so the city worker need not risk all his capital in the gardening venture, but can let it grow until it becomes sufficiently valuable to satisfy all his needs. The other members of the family can do the work which the bread winner cannot do, and so, what has been merely a pleasure and a relaxation can become in many ways a valuable accessory to the family income. To this is added the greater healthfulness of a suburban home, the escape from the crowding, the insufficient air and light, from the

noise and dirt of the streets of small "flats," which house so many of the city's workers.

A very interesting chapter tells of co-operation farms, another of sanitarium work.

All in all this little book adds to the list of valuable and interesting volumes from the pen of Mr. Hall. But he really ought to make an intelligent Single Taxer of Mr. Borsodi, before a further collaboration. Mr. Borsodi has too much sincere love for humanity to let it thus run waste in side-issues.

GRACE ISABEL COLBRON

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\*A PLEA FOR THE "LABOR COLONY."

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This is an earnest and ever sympathetic study of the tramp problem—in so far as is possible to consider that problem apart from economic causes. The title promises much—The Elimination of the Tramp—and this consummation is sought for in the adoption of the Holland, Belgium and Swiss Labor Colony plans with some modifications that are suggested to fit them to conditions prevailing here. The Swiss plan as exhibited most notably in the labor colonies of Witzwyl and Tannehof, which are self-supporting, is the one to which Mr. Kelly inclines, and the adoption of which in this country he advocates with much optimistic prediction.

We have said that the study is a sympathetic one. It belongs to the class of literature of more enlightened philanthropy which of late years has kept pace with the advance of economic thought. In other terms, it has borrowed something half unconsciously from the teachings of Henry George—and from the socialists as well—while refusing to recognize the recommendations of either school. The philosophers and students of charity and modes of public relief have learned much from radical teachings, and the very phraseology they employ is often

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\*The Elimination of the Tramp. By Edmond Kelly. Questions of the Day. 12 mo. cloth. 133 pages. Price, \$1.00. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

like our own, though strangely incongruous when conjoined with the rejection of all proposed changes in economic conditions and the substitution of elaborately designed schemes of charitable relief. But we are estopped from such criticism of Mr. Kelly's little book, by what he says (page 90):

"It is useless in this connection to inveigh against existing industrial conditions, they may be revolutionized some day; but at this moment they are producing paupers, vagrants and criminals faster than we can relieve or punish them."

In this curious paragraph is exhibited conspicuously but unconsciously the temper of mind of men who think like Mr. Kelly. Conditions may be changed some day, but never mind that. Let us, instead of trying to change conditions which are turning out paupers and criminals faster than we can relieve them, nevertheless use all our energies in trying to relieve them, paying no attention at all to conditions that produce them!

Yet at what are all of these elaborately and painfully constructed relief plans aimed? Solely the providing of work, with which in a normal condition of society the worker provides himself! Does not Mr. Kelly perceive the tremendous contradictions involved in his own philosophy? He sees that alms-giving, soup houses and "indiscriminate" methods of charity intensify the poverty they are intended to relieve. "It is a matter of importance that there should not be a wholesale pauperization of the working class," he says on page 79 in anticipation of the objection he foresees that the labor colony might be liable to abuse if conditions prevailed which would tempt large numbers of workers to enter it. Yet on page 89 he says in the following emphatic words: "It may be laid down as an indisputable fact that no perfectly *healthy* man or woman prefers begging to working." Yet in spite of this indisputable fact he can conceive as a possibility against which it may be necessary to guard, "the wholesale pauperization of the working class"—though we would suggest to Mr. Kelly that in the event of such "pauperization" if anything approaching "wholesale", he