

PROFESSORS.

(For the Review.)

By C. F. HUNT.

We learned in the May-June REVIEW of the perplexities of Prof. Nicodemus, who is hampered by the college owners when he tries to tell the truth, and for the sake of his family decides to relax a little in his truth-telling. He is right, but we wonder why he is perplexed. Is he uninformed in regard to the long list of Professors who have temporized and prospered? I have here "Introduction to Political Economy," by Arthur Latham Perry, LL.D., of Williams College.

After reading this book I would not mind teaching political economy in a slave country, such as the South before the war. I would start out with self-evident truth, and wind up so as to please the nabobs that have survived because they are fit. Here is my formula:

1. The earth is the free gift of nature, and necessary for the laborer, in production.
2. The whole product of labor is due the laborer.
3. The slave receives the whole product of his labor.

I would realize that children (and some others) always believe what they are told, and seldom see inconsistencies.

Prof. Perry teaches:

(1 and 2 same as above.)

3. All land value is caused by labor on the land.

4. No one can sell the gifts of nature; they can sell only the labor-value.

5. Location, fertility, minerals, etc. do sometimes seem to create land value—but never mind that now.

Page 82: The requisites of production are only three. Natural Agents, Labor, Capital. The natural agents "are all gifts of God to men. Before labor is expended, all of them are wholly destitute of value."

Page 83: "Providence indicates that men should be producers by offering on every hand free materials to be wrought upon. These materials are offered gratuitously, since no man has ever authenti-

cated his claim to ask anything for these things in God's behalf."

"If men have done anything to better these materials, they may ask pay for THAT, and get it; but if they ask something additional for what God has done, their cupidity will be thwarted by the competition of other men who will offer similar products for a fair compensation for the human labor expended; and by the fact that there are other free materials not yet laid hold of by anybody. God is a giver not a seller. Men cannot appropriate gifts and then peddle them out for pay. There may seem to be cases where this has been done, but they will mostly or wholly disappear under a rigid analysis, and particularly so when it is remembered that abstinence from use or enjoyment either by a man himself or by those whose labor and abstinence he has rightly become proprietor of, entitles him to demand a return."

"But WHAT would he offer to sell? The inherent qualities of the soil? NO! He could only sell what he himself had contributed of betterment. He could not THINK of selling anything else, and if he did think of it he would not succeed in doing it, for no one would give anything for the original qualities of the soil."

Page 87: "Nothing has value in itself separate from the endeavors of men. While it is not denied that varying fertility may within certain limits vary the prices of those lands, less fertile lands have compensating advantages of another sort; the degree of fertility becomes a common factor, cancelled in price, according to principles already explained.

"Lands are desired on other grounds than fertility, and whatever goes to make them an object of special desire becomes an element in their value. Land in cities becomes extremely valuable, not at all on account of native fertility, not so much on account of what has been done on that particular patch, although the expenditure and abstinence of previous owners may influence the price, but mainly on account of what has been done and is being done all around it;—a busy city has grown up around it and that piece has become desirable for business or other uses, in

consequence of the actions of others than the owner."

Page 88: "Lands supposed to contain rich mines, or holding water power, or building sites of unusual beauty, excite a strong desire in certain persons to possess them, and bear in consequence a high price."

Page 89: "If they are hired, as they often are, the rent paid is not in virtue of the original qualities of the soil of which some chance grabber became proprietor, but in virtue of previous human toil."

"Survival of the Fittest" (my special hobby) is a fine argument in behalf of culture and aristocracy. There is no answer to it. When brute force was the quality of the fittest, the weak never attempted to argue, but submitted and were full of admiration for the strength of their conquerers. Cunning is now the ruling force, and is much more comfortable, because the weaker submit and think they are free, and they also have boundless admiration for nature's noblemen who succeed; and the process of conquering involves no blood, biting the dust, and mussing up generally.

What grouches me is the blundering candor of Prof. Perry, which, if noticed by the unfit, would destroy all the value of cunning as a natural force in controlling the masses. I would not have Prof. Nicodemus emulate Prof. Perry in this respect; he should use judgment.

This force we call cunning, as well as abstinence, is productive. It is manifested in brain labor. Common laborers all admit that the rich earn all they receive; and mental labor is really onerous. Once when working for a corporation, I and my fellow subordinates marvelled at a peculiar humming, swishing noise we heard during the middle of the day, until we discovered that it was not the hum of industry from the shops, but the movement of the brain cells of the President, Directors and Managers. Clerks in legislatures have noticed the same phenomenon when the sages are trying to benefit some corporation, or arranging for bribes from the same. Others who hear noises may now be able to explain them. I hope I have now shown Prof. Nicodemus how he can continue his work with a tranquil mind.

A CORRECTION.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I just write you a line regarding an apparent palpable mistake in the article: "What is the Single Tax?" Speech of Edmund Norton at the Jefferson Club, Los Angeles, in the SINGLE TAX REVIEW, July-August, 1910, Page 17. The part I take exception to reads: "An extraordinary disclosure of land monopoly in California, was made by the Los Angeles *Examiner*, in the issue of March 27, last. Only thirty-five owners, it appears, held one-seventh of the area of that great State. Their holdings ranging from 20,000 acres to 14,500,000 each. Holdings of 100,000, 200,000, 400,000 acres, appear in the list between these extremes."

Now, 14,500,000 acres equal (640 equal one square mile) 22,656 square miles, and as California, according to bulletin 71 of the bureau of the census, has an area of 158,297 square miles, it will be seen that one-seventh would figure 22,614 square miles, or 42 square miles, or 26,880 acres less than the *one* holding of 14,500,000 acres. Where do the remaining thirty-four owners come in, some of whom have holdings of 100,000, 200,000 and 400,000 acres, if the one *single* owner *alone* holds more than one-seventh of the area of California?

The Los Angeles *Examiner* is apparently in error, unless Mr. Norton has been misquoted. If the proportion of thirty-five owners to one-seventh of the area is correct, the quotation should probably read that the holdings of the thirty-five owners range from 20,000 upwards with a *total* of 14,500,000 acres. This would make the figures tally, otherwise the combined holdings of the thirty-five owners would be much greater than one-seventh of the area of California.—C. M. KOBDT, Chicago, Ill.

The *New Era*, an excellent illustrated weekly paper, published at North Bend, Indiana, contains a well written article, entitled "The Oregon Experiment and the Fels Fund," which is illustrated by portraits of Joseph Fels and the five members of the Commission.