

Poverty.' I find I must return to it again and again, when I need light on some difficult economic problem, or seek encouragement in its pages, when assailed by doubts of the eventual victory of Right and Justice."—From Johan Hansen, of Gothenburg, leader of the Swedish Land Reform Movement.

The *Fairhope Courier* has become a weekly, which is an indication of the prosperity of Fairhope. We congratulate the management and Mr. Gaston, who has worked hard to make the *Courier* a success.

"The Wasteful War of Organized Labor" is an effective pamphlet written and published by Thomas Bawden, of Detroit, editor of *Our Commonwealth*. It is illustrated with a number of striking illustrations. Copies of this little booklet sold for two and a half cents each may be obtained by addressing the author at 157 Park Street, Detroit, Mich.

We have received "Letters Relating to Taxation in Jamaica," a small pamphlet published by Mr. Wellesley Bourke consisting of the author's letter to the *Jamaica Daily Telegraph*. Mr. Bourke is one of the active Single Taxers of Jamaica, is a prominent member of the bar, and was once mayor of Kingston. They are excellent refutations of the contentions often made, and forming the burden of the *Daily Telegraph* in its attempt to meet Mr. Bourke's Single Tax arguments of the supposed "unearned increment" of a chair or table, the long sanction that time and custom have conferred upon the institution of private property in land, and finally the injustice of submitting one species of "property" to the burdens of colonial and local taxation. Were influential American dailies as willing to meet, as fully and fairly and with the same admirable courtesy, the arguments of their Single Tax correspondents they would perform a distinct service to their readers. But this would be to antagonize the vested interests which determine the editorial policy of these papers through the counting room.

The *Arena* for January is an improvement even over the high standard which that magazine has maintained since it came into the hands of its present publisher. It is presented with a new and attractive cover, and with more than the usual number of illustrations. The most important of the articles are "Corruption in Pennsylvania," by Rudolph Blankenburg, "The Reign of Boodle in St. Louis," by Lee Meriwether, whose name will be familiar to all Single Tax men, and the "Divorce Problem," by Mrs. Spencer Trask. Joaquin Miller's serial story, "The Building of the City Beautiful," is continued. These articles with others not less worthy of mention, make this number of the *Arena* a notable one.

BOOK REVIEWS.

A STUDY OF A GREAT LIFE.*

This book is the latest of the "English Men of Letters," edited by John Morley, whose fine critical discrimination and ripe scholarship have contributed so much to the success of the series.

Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill are the only ones among the older political economists who can by any extension of courtesy be called "men of letters." The innumerable works of countless others are so much lumber which the world would be richer if it had never possessed. And this is said even while we bear in mind the name of Ricardo and his doctrine of rent, the application of which has yielded so much to subsequent speculations. But Adam Smith did more. He remade the economic map of the world. His work is one of the great books of all time. Not Henry George himself was more in advance of his age than this studious, large brained Scot, with his singular gift of lucid reasoning and clear presentation.

We are apt to forget this when we read in the "Wealth of Nations" so much that is familiar to modern ears. Yet it sounded strangely enough to Smith's contemporaries. And how far we are even at this late day from realizing the great ideals based on the irrefutable train of argument which threads its way through the clear uplands of thought in this great work. So long as the battle of free trade and protection wages this book will be the one great arsenal for the protagonists of commercial freedom. It is an ungrateful task to point out Smith's shortcomings. It is a much more useful and inspiring reflection that suggests to us that without the "Wealth of Nations" "Progress and Poverty" itself might, perhaps could not have been written. Political economy was not to spring full-armed like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. Humanity must wring its victories from truth by successive battles—the war itself is never ending. And Adam Smith was the foremost of the great pioneers in the work of clearing the ground for the greater task that was reserved for the teacher whom Single Taxers delight first of all to honor.

One of the great tasks to which Mr. George looked forward was the publication of the "Wealth of Nations," with editorial and critical notes of his own. We must regret that this was not to be. But it should magnify our appreciation of Adam Smith to know that the author of "Progress and Poverty" contemplated such a work. It was one not unworthy of his powers.

The two men are not wholly unlike. Both had amassed much varied information

* Adam Smith, by Francis W. Hirst, *English Men of Letters*. Edited by John Morley. 12mo. cloth. 240 pp. Price, 75 cents net. Macmillan Company, New York and London.

which they used to illustrate and amplify their great argument, which in each case was a doctrine of freedom as a solution of social problems. Both believed that the most important quest was the well-being of society, and both sought it in first principles, appealing to the natural order, and not to artificial adjustments. Smith, it is true, stopped midway in his great inquiry. But it was an incomparable service to have indicated that much of the way.

One likeness is suggested in this little book between these two great minds in the domain of politico-economic science. We all remember how George, walking the deck of the steamer in mid-ocean, pondered on the misery of a great city, and how the thought would not let him rest. Compare that recorded experience with this paragraph from page 5 of Mr. Hirst's work, which tells of the arrival of Adam Smith in Glasgow: "In this rising mart Smith learned to value the English connection, and as he trod its busy streets and watched the merchandise of the West pouring into its warehouses, the boy saw that a new world had been called in to enrich the old. With the new sights and sounds came new ideas that had not yet penetrated the gloom of Holyrood or the rusty pride of the Canongate." How like seem the mental process of the two!

But their differences were greater than their point of resemblance. Smith was not devoid of moral enthusiasm, but it never rose to the dignity of a "grand passion." He had the reformer's intellect without the reformer's martyr spirit. His language, while occasionally eloquent, never quite reaches the soul of the reader, nor wakens his intenser sympathies. The analysis is not frigid, but it is not warm, either. Yet without it one cannot imagine the human sympathy and tremendous enthusiasms which under the leadership of Cobden and Bright translated the cold maxims of Adam Smith's economic reasoning into fiery and eloquent appeal which changed the laws of Great Britain.

This little work of Mr. Hirst's is not the least important of the "English Men of Letters" series. It is an interesting account of the life of the man, and a fairly intelligent appreciation of Smith's great services to political economy. The author is a free trader in the conventional sense of that term, but he does not perceive where the doctrines of Adam Smith lead if relentlessly applied. Though Smith pointed out the advantages of a "land tax" his biographer assures us that he was "far from being a single taxer." But he was not so far as those who have succeeded him, and who, in failing to follow the direction he indicated, have built for themselves fabrics which resemble the "mystic maze" at the seaside resorts, where the unwary having once entered find no rational mode of exit. J. D. M.

See premium offer on back page of cover.

RUSKIN'S LETTERS.

In a recent volume published by the Harpers, *The Letters of John Ruskin to M. G. and H. G. (Mary and Helen Gladstone)* there are some most memorable bits of correspondence. In all epistolary writing there are few examples surpassing those contained in this little volume. They are the unconscious, purely spontaneous revelations of a most beautiful character.

Not in all respects can we accord with John Ruskin's political conceptions. Some of these principles he had derived from the Sage of Chelsea, whom he called "Master," with a modest failure to perceive in his own genius a much finer strain. He had therefore none of the optimism of a true democracy. But fundamentally he was sound; the democracy he revolted against and which he anathematized in much the same exaggerated fashion of epithet as the "Master," was the crude and ill developed institutions and policies which exist in democracies. It was not steam cars he hated, but the destruction of beauty everywhere wrought by this modern method of conveyance; not factories and factory smoke, but the hideous things, the stunting of human lives, the loss of so much that is precious in human sympathy, with which under modern methods of production, these things are associated. It was in this style of metonymy which, taken literally is so perplexing, that Ruskin elected to speak, for his mind was essentially that of a poet; but if we will ignore for a time the figures of his speech, we shall find him oftener sober and sane than those who defend—sans question—all existing institutions.

He saw how frightful were the effects of private property in land, and recoiled from its contemplation with almost a cry of horror, so exquisitely sensitive was his nature and his genius to such manifestation. Here on page 78 is a letter to M. G. in which he says:

"For these seven, nay these *ten years*, I have tried to get either Mr. Gladstone or any other conscientious Minister of the Crown to feel that the law of land possession was for all the world, and eternal as the mountains and the sea.

Those who possess the land must live on it not by taxing it.

Stars and seas and rocks must pass away before that word of God shall pass away, *The Land is Mine.*"

In 1878 Ruskin visited Hawarden. Here he met the Duke of Argyll, and the Duke is said to have laughed almost contemptuously at some of Ruskin's opinions. On this occasion the former defended Landlordism and War, with vehemence, and summed up by saying, "You seem to want a different world to that we experience," to which the finer spirit replied, "Yea verily, a new heaven and a new earth and the former things passed away." Ruskin reverted to the lords of the soil and their