

## BOOK REVIEWS.

PRIVILEGE AND DEMOCRACY  
IN AMERICA.\*

This is another strong and thoughtful book from the pen of Frederick C. Howe, who combines a scholarly apprehension of the facts of history with a practical knowledge of the economic problems of the present day. Added to these is something better—a grasp of fundamental theory, without which the widest knowledge is of little practical utility.

In this book the treatment is very modern, and the problems considered are those which are brought home to us every day. But the slow developments of the economic facts leading up to this day are not forgotten, and they are traced with marvelous fidelity in which even the smallest contributory causes are not overlooked.

We imagine that Single Taxers everywhere will want to read the work in which Mr. Howe has spoken his full convictions with greater emphasis than in any of his previous books. It is for this reason that we will content ourselves with a brief summary of some of the main chapters.

Under the head, "The Lure of the Land," Chapter 1st tells of the concentration of land ownership with its consequent slavery, the poverty of Europe and the many migrations that such poverty has induced. We are shown how the desire for economic freedom caused the peopling of many an unknown land.

Under "The Foundations of Democracy" we learn how the larger economic freedom in the beginnings of American History moulded our political institutions and is responsible for such democracy as survives. The reader of this chapter will be told how the cheapness of land as well as the great public lands has moulded industry no less than politics. "Free land has determined the scale of wages as well as the opportunity for employment. No man will remain in another's employ for less wages than he can earn on his own homestead." Here the reader will find

why wages are higher in this country than they are abroad. "It was free land that raised the American wage earner above the laborer of Europe." "It was not political, it was economic liberty that made America what she is."

"The Rape of the Nation" shows how our public lands have passed into private possession—one twelfth of it to the Pacific Railroads—and what might have been had the nation retained this land and leased it on periodic re-valuations. "Under such a system no billion dollar corporation would have been created, competition would have continued in all industries as it does now in but a few, while the recurring wars of capital and labor would have been forever impossible. Had such a policy been pursued opportunity would still exist for unborn generations." "In such a country there would be no landlords and no tenants. The tenements and the slums would never have appeared with the disease, poverty and vice which they inevitably produce. Crime would have remained at a minimum, for crime is the product of poverty and the lack of opportunity to work."

The figures of land ownership given by Mr. Howe confirm those of Mr. Martin Williams printed in the *Single Tax Review*, as to character and extent. "The Strangle Hold of Monopoly" tells of the growth of giant combinations—the greatest if not all of which have their feet rooted in the earth.

"The Tools of Privilege" shows the concentration of banking and finance, and the power of the use of the savings of the people confers upon a few financiers who are in turn themselves the owners of the great industrial combinations. This credit is used for the further upbuilding of monopoly. In other words, the money of the people is used to fasten more tightly the chains of slavery upon those whose self-denial is represented in these savings.

In his summary of the four monopolies which are the origin and cause of all other monopolies Mr. Howe places, 1st, Land Monopoly, 2nd, Private Ownership of the Highways of the Nation, 3rd, the Power of Taxation as represented by the tariff, and 4th, the direct action of the government in

\*Privilege and Democracy in America. By Frederick C. Howe. 12 mo., 315 p. Price \$1.50 net. Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y. City.

the creation of exclusive grants of rights of way of which the franchises of our cities are the chief. It will be observed that three of these might be included under the first, Land Monopoly, since the highways of the nation and the city ways to which exclusive rights are conferred, are really land after all. And it may even be said that the tariff, or such power as it possesses, would be rendered largely innocuous by the abolition of land monopoly.

"The New Serfdom" shows the rapidly decreasing percentage of home owners in our great cities.

"The Tyranny of the Dead" tells us something of the genesis of the private appropriation of the bounties of the people and the consequent poverty of the workers.

"The Unearned Increment" presents some telling examples of wealth which has poured into the laps of those who have done nothing to create it.

One of the best and most illuminating chapters of the book is that on "The Distribution of Wealth." In this chapter is searchingly shown the true basis of the inequality of such distribution. Mr. Howe shows that competitive industries produces few millionaires; the vast majority are the creation of law that throttles competition. All this is treated with admirable lucidity.

"An Overlooked Cause of Poverty" treats of taxation which bears least heavily upon wealth and with crushing weight upon those who live from meagre earnings.

"The Economic Foundation of Morals" shows how leniently the gloved hand of the law falls upon those who commit crimes against the commonwealth, and with what severity upon that class of petty criminals whose deeds are directed against the legal institutions of property. This is one of the most forcible chapters in the book because it treats of a subject not frequently dwelt upon in detail and rarely with anything like the same insight.

"The Remedy Proposed" deals, as our readers need scarcely be told, with the Single Tax, of which Mr. Howe says with deliberate naivette, "The Simplicity of this proposal delays its acceptance."

"The New Dispensation" pictures the society of the future, with monopoly of land abolished and the freedom of a real

democracy established. This is done with restraint and Mr. Howe holds his imagination in check. But if the phrasing of this seems too restrained for one who realizes what the great reform for which we are struggling means, it must not be thought that Mr. Howe is timorous in his claims. And because he indulges neither in flights of fancy nor rhetorical coloring to which the vision as it rises must sorely tempt his facile pen, his statements are perhaps more forcible for falling as lawyer-like deductions. Certainly they are more convincing to one who reads them for the first time.

But Mr. Howe is eloquent in his own way. As a stylist he is no mere imitator. We are all familiar with the Invocation to Liberty in Progress and Poverty, the prose of which seems almost to break into song. On pages 296 and 297 Mr. Howe writes an invocation in his own style to the same radiant guide of civilization. It is interesting to compare this with that of Mr. George's glorious prose as examples of two distinct styles dealing with the same subject in almost the same way.

With one single quotation we must conclude this brief notice. "The things we hold most dear are but the reflections of the relations of the American people to the land."

This is the lesson that runs through the book, and we close it in the confident belief that in the light of present day problems in their most modern aspect, Mr. Howe has written perhaps the most useful book that the Single Tax agitation has called forth.—J. D. M.

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#### SOCIAL SERVICE.

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Such is the title of this book written by Louis F. Post. It is a series of talks of an easy conversational kind laying bare the working of economic processes, and, underneath them, the fundamental laws by which they are governed. Nothing can surpass Mr. Post's use of the X ray method of treatment by which under the complexities of modern industrial life we are enabled to behold the nerves and arteries and the mystery of blood circulation—all