

opportunity. In spite of this, the estate Kandanghauer was singled out for a second experiment on a small scale. Persistent rumours of the transfer of the combined Pamanukan and Tjiasem estates and the Djasinga estate to syndicates working with British capital may have had something to do with his promise actually blossoming into a project of law. If he gets it passed there will be reason to rejoice. The *particuliere landerijen* sorely impede the development of those residencies where they most abound. Quite a number of them, under control of Chinamen, are breeding-places of all sorts of iniquity—haunts of opium smugglers, fugitives from justice, robbers, and thieves who prey upon the villagers and infest even the environs of Batavia, making the outskirts of the capital itself notoriously unsafe, reminding one of the crude early days of the East India Company. No one expects the Bill now introduced to perform miracles in this or in any other direction. Supposing that it does become law, it is to be hoped that it will be less of a delusion than so many Colonial Bills of the past; assuming further that the law does hold its own against the adverse claims of penurious finance, the greatest stumbling-block of Dutch Colonial administration, the expropriation of the freehold estates, involving large disbursements, will yet proceed at an exceedingly slow rate. But certainly a beginning should be made in the removal of this evil of too long standing. And after Java, the exterior possessions await their turn—the west coast of Sumatra, Bencoolen, Celebes, and the Banda group.

"MINING ROYALTIES."

By W. B. NORTHROP.

(In memory of the Whitehaven Colliery Disaster, May 12th, 1910.)

- "Five miles under the sea
We slave from morn till night,
With never a ray of the blessed sun
To cheer us with its light;
With frames bent down by toil,
With lungs belogged with dust,
We miners work in the seams below
For the wage that brings a crust.
- "Pick—Pick—Pick
In the tunnel's endless gloom,
And every blow that our strong arms strike,
But helps to carve our tomb;
But what is that to those
Who live by our grim toil?
For 'mining royalties' must be made
To swell the landlord's spoil!
- "O, ye who sit by the coals
As they glow in the cheery grate,
Do ye ever think of our fearsome lives,
Or bemoan our children's fate?
Our children reared in rags,
Our wives but drudges and slaves,
While all our days are turned to night
Five miles beneath the waves!
- "They tell us in the books
No Briton is a slave;
But we are owned, both body and soul,
Five miles beneath the waves.
We toil from morn till night,
But not for our own gain,
But only that 'royalties' may be wrought
From out our sweat and pain.

"O, ye who see the Light,
And know that God is just,
Will ye not help to put things right?
To claim us more than a crust?
O, not the crust of toil,
But the fulness of our own;
For now our children cry for bread,
And they give them but a stone!

"Yes; open your purses wide,
To aid our present need—
But more we ask than this alone:
The death of private greed!
O, free for us the land,
Restore to us our own,
So that our children who cry for bread
May not receive a stone."

"LAND AND LABOUR: LESSONS FROM BELGIUM."

By B. SEEBOHM ROWNTREE.

Publishers, Macmillan & Co., London. Price 10s. 6d. Post free, 11s. from these offices.

Though evidently somewhat prepossessed in favour of small holdings, Mr. Rowntree's searching investigations, which leave no branch of his subject untouched, have led him to the conclusion that: "Belgian experience shows that though there are many advantages in the wide distribution of the ownership of land, in the ultimate solution of the land problem many other factors must be taken into consideration. . . . Her example must serve as a warning. It shows us the wonderful results that can be achieved in agriculture, but it shows us also that these have mainly benefited, not the workers, but the accidental owners of the soil."

Nor will the reader who follows Mr. Rowntree's most careful investigations doubt for a moment the truth of this conclusion. Time after time was it forced upon his attention how futile had been all the efforts of statesmen, philanthropists and social reformers of the familiar type, to improve the economic condition of the masses of the people, and how impossible it was for these permanently to benefit even by their own almost super-human efforts. For all their efforts simply resulted in increased land values, in an increase in the rent and price of land. Light railways, cheap capital or credit, the use of chemical manures, improvements in stock breeding, new varieties of crops, the spread of agricultural education, low rates for transport on the State railways, co-operation whether in dairy farming or for the sale or purchase of commodities, import duties avowedly imposed for the benefit of agriculture, all these have been tried and found to have the same result, viz., to increase the price which land-users have to pay for the use of land. Every successful effort reveals the same effect. To use our author's own words:—"Unfortunately, a farm tenant cannot permanently better his condition to any great extent by improving his methods of cultivation or by taking advantage of co-operation, for no sooner does he do this than his improved position tempts more men to seek for land, thus forcing land values up still further. Indeed, it may be said that farmers are in the long run penalised for improving their methods of cultivation."

Though primarily a land of small holdings, yet, as Mr. Rowntree repeatedly reminds his readers, "Two-thirds of the land of Belgium is cultivated by tenants and only one-third by owners." The effect of high land values on tenant cultivators is admirably summarised by our author as follows:—

"It has been shown how many are the advantages enjoyed by the agriculturalists of Belgium: among them, ample means of cheap and rapid transit, a good system of agricultural education, and co-operative societies everywhere for all kinds of purposes, including the provision of capital and the insurance of live-stock at very low rates. Surely with all those blessings, their life should be almost ideal! But is it? A closer acquaintance with the small holder shows us that although he seldom, perhaps never, suffers from want, he generally lives roughly, and, except in winter, works unreasonably long hours, for low pay. . . . The immediate cause of this is that the rent of land is so high—twice as high as in 1846, and nearly twice as high as in England at the present time. This being

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so, the tenant cannot pay it without living sparsely and working excessively hard. . . ."

"But what of those who are proprietors of their holdings, a class by whom a third part of the land of Belgium is cultivated? Is their lot a desirable one, and does the solution of the problem of poverty in agricultural districts lie in the direction of making the tenants into proprietors?" Answering these pertinent questions, Mr. Rowntree points out that, "The peasant proprietor's mode of life is very similar to that of the tenant. Both have to live sparsely and work extremely hard to make a living." He gives the following interesting explanation of this fact:—

"This may at first sight seem an extraordinary fact, for one would suppose that high land values, which affect the tenant so adversely, would operate in favour of the (cultivating) owner. The explanation of the seeming anomaly is that land belonging to a peasant is scarcely ever sold except on the death of the owner. When a peasant dies leaving his property to his children, those who wish to carry on agriculture find that their personal shares are insufficient and, consequently, are compelled to rent or to buy more land. If they buy, the high price which has to be paid makes the purchase burdensome. It is true that the children who forsake agriculture for the town benefit by high land values, whether they sell their shares or let them, but those who remain agriculturalists suffer, as do all other peasant proprietors who have not enough land on which to live comfortably and wish to add to their holdings. . . ."

"Thus we see," continues our author, "that in the case of the peasant proprietors, as well as in that of the tenants, the immediate cause of the hardness of their lives is not that they cannot produce enough from the soil, but that land values are so high."

Mr. Rowntree then answers an objection which would occur to many of his readers:—

"It may be argued that since there are nearly 720,000 landowners in Belgium, the distribution of unearned increment is already so general that this question need not trouble us. But although land is much more widely distributed than in most countries, and enormously more so than in Britain, even in Belgium it is true that 62 per cent. of the land is owned by 2½ per cent. of the total owners, while four-fifths of the 720,000 owners have less than five acres each."

Mr. Rowntree subsequently gives us the following necessary warning:—

"If even in Belgium the large landowners absorb the lion's share of the profits of agriculture, it seems probable that in Britain, where land monopolies are far stronger, the problem of unearned agricultural increments might become even more serious if agriculture were successfully developed. Such a contingency cannot be lightly dismissed when we recall what has actually happened in connection with urban land values in the great cities of the United Kingdom."

In closing we would express our grateful thanks to Mr. Rowntree for an admirable piece of work, which will be invaluable to political students and social reformers all over the world. He teaches us what steps are necessary in order to promote agricultural industry, which is important; but he also teaches us what steps are necessary if the lion's share of any such increased productivity is not to accrue to those who, though they may take no part in the work, "happen to own the agricultural land," which is of far greater importance. The chief lesson to be drawn from the experience of Belgium might, we think, have been expressed even more strongly; but Mr. Rowntree's moderation should help to commend his work to all interested in public questions. Even the most bitter opponent of the Taxation of Land Values will scarcely deny the statement with which Mr. Rowntree concludes his book:—

"In unearned increments, both urban and rural, there is a source of revenue which will grow with every development of agriculture, industry and commerce. To take advantage of it would discourage no industry, and rob no individual, but would in time sensibly lessen the burden of taxation on the community at large."—L.H.B.

GLADSTONE LEAGUE LEAFLETS.

The Gladstone League have issued a number of useful leaflets dealing with the taxation of land values and other parts of the Liberal Programme. Five of these leaflets deal specifically with the question of Rating and Land Tenure. The arguments are very effective and the leaflets are well printed. The League has also issued as a leaflet Mr. Lloyd George's speech at the Queen's Hall on March 23rd.

THE LAW OF RENT.

(AS STATED IN "THE BEE," A PERIODICAL WORK, BY DR. ANDERSON, VOL. VI., P. 273, &C., PUBLISHED AT EDINBURGH IN THE YEAR 1791.)

Grain is in no case raised without a certain degree of labour or expense, which must be repaid to the grower; otherwise he cannot afford to produce it. This may be said in the strictest sense to constitute the intrinsic price.

Money being accounted the common measure of value, this price will be affected by the quantity of money that can be obtained for labour in general, in that place, at that time. The farmer must give those he employs wages in proportion to what they can get in other employments, so that if these wages be high, the farmers' charges must be high likewise, and the intrinsic price of his corn must rise as the rate of this charge is augmented.

Thus do we perceive that there must be a necessary connection between the price of grain and the prosperity of manufactures, and the degree of emolument to be derived from them; so that any attempt to advance the one at the expense of the other is contrary to nature, violent in its operation, and must be transitory in its effects.

The intrinsic price of grain, however, all other circumstances being alike, must vary with the fertility of the soil on which it is produced. On a rich soil, less labour and less seed will produce a given quantity of grain (more) than they would do on a soil that is less productive: so that, strictly speaking, this intrinsic price of corn, when considered only in this point of view, would be different in almost every different field. How then, may it be asked, can the intrinsic value be ascertained over a vast tract of country, possessing a diversity of soils of various degrees of fertility, and how shall matters be so managed, that all the reapers of it shall draw nearly the same price for their grain, and have nearly the same profits? All this is effected in the easiest and most natural manner by means of rent. Rent is, in fact, nothing else than a simple and ingenious contrivance for equalising the profits to be drawn from fields of different degrees of fertility and of local circumstances which tend to augment or diminish, the expense of culture. To make this plain, a few elucidations will be necessary.

In every country where men exist there will be an effective demand for a certain quantity of corn. By effective demand, I mean a demand which can be supplied, so that the inhabitants may be properly subsisted. It is this demand which in all cases regulates the price of grain: for the quantity of grain required in this case must be had, and the price that is necessary for producing it must be paid, whatever that price may be. These calls are of such a pressing nature as not to be dispensed with.

For the sake of illustration, we will suppose that the soils are arranged into classes, according to the degree of their fertility, which classes we shall at present denominate by the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, &c. Let those comprehended in the class A be richer than in the class B, and so on, decreasing in fertility for each class as you advance towards G. Now, as the expense of cultivating the least fertile is as great or greater than that of cultivating the most fertile field, it must happen that if an equal quantity of grain, the produce of each class of fields, can be sold at the same price, the profit on cultivating the most fertile fields will be greater, if no precaution be used, than could be obtained by cultivating those that are less fertile; and as this profit must continue to decrease as sterility increases, it must happen, whatever be the price of corn, that the expense of cultivating some of the inferior fields may be equal to or exceed the value of the whole produce.

This being admitted, let us suppose the effective demand was such as to raise the price of grain, say to 16s. per boll, and that the fields included in F could just admit of defraying all expenses, and no more, when corn was at that price; that those of the class E could admit of being cultivated when the price was 15s., and that in like manner the classes D, C, B, and A consisted of fields which could be respectively cultivated when the prices were 14s., 13s., 12s., and 11s. per boll.

In these circumstances, it would happen that the persons who possess fields in the class F would be able to afford no rent at all, nor could any rent be afforded for those of G, or other more sterile fields, for the purpose of raising corn; but those who possessed fields in the class E could not only pay the expense of cultivating them, but could pay to the proprietor a rent equal to one shilling for every boll of the free produce. In like manner those who possessed the fields D, C, B and A, would be able to pay a rent equal to 2s., 3s., 4s. and 5s. per boll of their free produce respectively. Nor could the proprietor of these fields