

the honored man in the town an' the pattern for all the boys.

"Now if Old Man Harder should be goin' over to the depot to play checkers with Tomkins, an' meet a woman bein' insulted, in his ignorance Old Tom would be apt to pick up a club or a fence rail an' rap the insulter over the head, so he would have to go to the hospital for a week. The damsel would be rescued just as good as Tomkins did it, but the woman wouldn't admire him for a minute. Any common sort of a chump could knock him out with a club. She might have done it herself if she'd thought of it. Old Tom don't git more'n five lines in the county paper, an' stands a chance to git sued for damages. So he wakes up to the march o' progress an' goes to the Athletic School an' learns all the fine points about scrappin' that's taught at Scrapsburg, so he's fully prepared to defend himself accordin' to modern rules. If he gits into a place where he has a fair chance to scrap accordin' to rule, he won't need to scrap unless he wants to show off his skill. If he does git into a tough place where he needs self defense, it's ten chances to one that he will run into a sandbag or a revolver, so his science won't help him a bit. The science won't work when you need it real bad; an' when you don't need it bad, you're like a horse luggin' 'round five legs.

"What's that? We have the right to defend ourselves? Certainly! When it comes to a criminal case where violence is charged, self defense is ten or 'leven points in favor of the defendant; but maybe the thing as a gen'ral proposition has been overworked. Maybe it don't amount to such a lot in the long run as we think it does.

"If Old Tom Harder buys a revolver to defend himself against burglars, it's seven chances to one that he shoots himself or some o' the family, before he gits a shot at a burglar. If a man (or a nation o' men, for that matter) gits fully loaded up an' armed for self defense, he's mighty apt to git a swelled head an' invite some insult or stir up some quarrel with his neighbor so he will have a chance to show off his skill in defense.

"We're pretty strong on the self defense in the army an' navy line, an' are spendin' a liberal lot o' money to keep ourselves fit to fight the foreigners. We don't advertise for any of 'em to knock the chips off our shoulders, an' pitch into us rough an' tumble; but most of us feel it in our bones that we could put any of 'em out in five rounds, an' git a lot o' glory out of it, to say nothin' of the real an' personal property we could acquire. On the outside, we're the most peaceful set o' fellers that ever lived on earth, but inside we're secretly pinin' for somebody to hit us.

"Neighbor Jinks bought a shot gun to keep the chicken thieves from stealin' his chickens. When he tried to shoot 'em the gun wouldn't go off. This made him madder at the gun than he was at the thieves, an' he threw the gun away. It hit

the barn door an' went off in a hurry an' shot him in the leg. When he got well he put a new lock on the chicken house. Maybe our big navy won't act that way when we come to use it; but all the fightin' an' scrappin' an' killin' won't settle the right or wrong of anything. Probably the Master was right when He told His people to turn the other cheek. Maybe we don't fully understand yet His declaration that 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.'"

GEORGE V. WELLS.

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THE LAND QUESTION IN HUNGARY

Dr. Robert Braun in *Land Values* (London) for May, 1910.

The history of landholding in Hungary begins—as it does in every other country—with common property in land. When the Hungarians conquered their country, the whole nation was divided into seven tribes, each tribe getting its share of the land. With the introduction of the Christian religion (in 1000 A. D.) and the creation of a new central power, that of a king, the ownership of these tribal lands was transferred to the Crown. With the establishment of western law feudalism appeared, and in the course of centuries—as in other European countries—nearly all the land fell into the hands of large landlords, with tenants and landless peasants under them. But still there were some exceptions, and there were places where the cultivators of the soil had no individual landlord, but were tenants of the crown.

In the earliest period of its history the kings, anxious to strengthen their newly created power, looked for support in foreign countries, and to that end encouraged Germans to migrate to Hungary. As an inducement the Germans were promised the maintenance of their own law, the free election of their judges and priests, and exemption from all intermediate ecclesiastical and temporal power. The colonization of Hungary went on, and many thousands of western Europeans settled, finding relief from the oppression of the land system in their own countries. The descendants of such settlers are the Germans in Transylvania, generally called Saxons. Other citizens of Hungary had similar privileges conferred on them for special services.

The year 1878 put an end to feudalism in Hungary. The peasants became freeholders of the land they had cultivated, the landlords being paid rich compensation for their rights.

But only a small fraction of the whole land was under cultivation. The greater part consisted of woods and pastures, up to that time held in common by peasants and landlords, and this had also to be divided. In this division the landlords used their greater political influence in order to

secure for themselves the best and richest areas; nevertheless the peasants obtained, in the vicinity of the villages where they lived, their smaller or larger portion of this land. This was of very great importance to them, as many gained partly or exclusively their livelihood from cattle-raising.

The question then arose whether this common land should be the property of the village, with equal right of use to every inhabitant, or the property of the individual peasants who had been using it at the time of division. The question was solved in the latter sense and the consequence was the creation of a rural proletariat.

But this was not all. The government regarding the common property in land as an obstacle in the way of its proper use, facilitated subdivision and private property. Nearly all the common land in Hungary is either divided or in process of being divided. The basis of the allotment was the amount of arable land held. The more arable land a proprietor had, the greater was his share of the common land; with access to the commonage now denied to them, and as artificial pastures were at that time nearly unknown in Hungary, most peasants were rendered unable to feed their cattle, and they were obliged to part with them. The consequence was a decrease in the number of all domestic animals, the land was deprived, not only of the animal power necessary to work it, but also of manure, and a sudden decline in agriculture set in.

Even worse results attended the division of the woodland. Systematic forestry cannot be conducted on a small scale; many of the holders of the land after division quickly got rid of their portion, selling as a rule without knowing the extent, location, and still less the value of the property that belonged to them. Adventurers and speculators took advantage of the ignorance of peasants and robbed them of their patrimony. It might be mentioned here that a very conservative author (Dr. Sebes), who held a high position in the ministry, writes that on an average a Hungarian acre (1.72 English acre) of woodland was sold for about 1s. 8d., its real value varying from £17 to £30. The first work of the new proprietors was to cut down the woods, which had become especially valuable during the previous 8 or 10 years. The consequence was quite disastrous. The thin stratum of land being no longer protected, was soon washed away by torrents and the bare rocks exposed, which are never likely to be capable of cultivation. This caused a most unfavourable change in the climate, and in the distribution of moisture. The government felt obliged to interfere in order to check this wholesale denudation and to force the proprietors to observe less reckless methods. They forbade them to give a share for free use to any owner having less than 170 acres. These measures were, however, ineffective as the speculators bought up several shares and,

having more than 170 acres, they secured the free use of these lands.

Hungary is a country with remarkable agricultural resources. Of the whole area only 5 per cent. is incapable of cultivation—in Great Britain the proportion is 41.8 per cent—the soil is, without question, one of the most fertile in Europe. Yet there are few European countries in which the average yield of crops per acre is less than in Hungary.

One-third of Hungary is owned by 1,000 proprietors. The cultivatable area is poorly exploited, especially on the larger estates. For instance, the Greek Episcopate of Nagyvarad grows cereals on only 1 per cent of its 170,000 acres.

The emigration from Hungary is nearly 200,000 people per annum, being second only to Italy.

Strangely enough many people are inclined to say that the emigration is due to there being more people in the country than the land can support. There is said to be "over population." People who think this to be the cause are led to think that the remedy is the "protection" of home industries. Aided by a tariff, they say, a manufacturing industry could provide more people with work, that the taxes would be paid partly by the importers, and the cry is "tax the foreigner!"

But that the evil is due to other causes and must be cured by other measures, can be proved from the evidence, which even a superficial examination of social conditions will reveal. Let us take an example and a contrast.

In the eastern part of Hungary, called Transylvania, where I live, there are two nationalities who never had individual tenure of land: the Hungarians, called in Transylvania Szekelys, and the Saxons, the descendants of the ancient German colonists. The former will provide the example and the latter the contrast.

When the new land laws were passed the leaders of the Szekelys used their political influence to promote the division of common pastures and woodlands. The greatest and most valuable part went over to speculators, and the people themselves are now living in misery, often exposed to starvation in winter. The full effect of this expropriation is not yet felt as there is still plenty of work in the woods, and the building of an important railway in that part of the country provides employment for the time being. The railway will be opened next spring, and gangs of men discharged, and as work in the woods is gradually growing scarcer, the outlook for the people in that region is indeed bad; for there is little opportunity for them to make a living. These 600,000 people near the frontier belonging to the properly Hungarian (Magyar) race, have a special political importance, and the government, heedless of the expenditure incurred, are giving them all possible support. A special Szekely relief department has been created in the Ministry of Agriculture, which disposes of

considerable sums, providing seed, well bred cattle, horses, poultry, etc., at cheap or nominal prices, teaching home industries and new methods of agriculture. The Department is working honestly, I myself see its work and know its officials, but in spite of all their efforts there is no essential change for the better. There is not one of the officials who would say there has been improvement. Indeed, it would be a marvel to me if there was any change. For what can such petty means do to make amends for the greatest economic misfortune a people can suffer, namely, the loss of its land? They can be sustained as beggars are sustained and demoralized by gratuitous gifts, but they can never become a free, self-supporting people until their rights to the land are restored to them.

Now look on another picture. There are about 200,000 Saxons in Hungary who own about two million acres and of this not quite 70 per cent is common land. The legal proprietor is the village community. Consider how different has been the development of the Saxon territory from that of the Szekelys I have described. The Saxon deputies pleaded in the Hungarian parliament for their special customs, and a territorial law was passed in 1880, exempting all ancient Saxon territory from the operation of the new land laws. This prevents any individual proprietor from claiming any portion of the common land, large or small. This common land is used partly as common pasture, and partly as arable land, rented to individuals. The woods are managed by the State, and the timber is either divided among the villages or it is sold to the highest bidder. All returns are used for local purposes. Now, everybody knows in Transylvania that these Saxon villages are the most prosperous in the country. Most of them pay no local taxes. Many villages are giving timber and some electric light as a gift to the inhabitants. There are 13 villages in the county Brasso, which are especially prosperous. Even county taxes are paid out of the income from the common land, and to avoid the trouble they had of soldiers being quartered upon them in the villages, they built comfortable barracks to provide for the visits of regiments. Their special endowments for the poor they cannot spend as they have no poverty except perhaps temporarily. Last year one village spent 15 shillings on paupers. The Saxon communities are raising more wheat per acre than is raised in any other part of Hungary, though their soil is by no means the most fertile. As the State does not support their schools (the language in them being German), they maintain their own schools, and not only do they have the best public schools, but they have 10 colleges or "gymnasias." They have the best schools, the best instructed clergy, and the most favourable economic conditions in the country. Is it necessary to add that they have the least amount of crime?

Their banks are the richest in Transylvania and one of them spent last year for schools and humanitarian purposes as much as £5,000.

Many argue that this thrift and public spirit is a special characteristic of the Teutonic race. I do not think so. There are many hundred German villages in Hungary in deep poverty; nay, there are even such Saxon villages: but they all parted with their common lands. The good public spirit is the natural outcome of common moral and material interests, the emblem of which is common land. This land once lost, all moral and material ties, which keep a community together, are lost too.

BOOKS

A STATEMENT OF BELIEFS.

Lessons in Living. By Elizabeth Towne. Published by Elizabeth Towne, Holyoke, Mass. Price, \$1.00.

The title of this book implies a receptive attitude on the part of the reader which might debar criticism. But the scheme of the Universe is a rather large theme to handle in so slight a volume, though exceedingly well put up. And some of us are inclined to object when preachers and philosophers tell us what God *thinks* and begin to move Him about like a threatened king on the chess-board to suit the rules of their game.

But descending to the human plane of helpfulness, Mrs. Towne, in her usual free, happy fashion, gives the sound, sensible, practical advice that is needed in the daily affairs of living. Her strong, courageous faith in the power of good often works like a sweet contagion on sorrowful, sick, depressed and fearful minds. To awaken the weakened human will to its own responsibilities in the matter of health and happiness is an important use to serve. "Your choice is the one mighty little bit of your being over which you have absolute control."

To choose the right thought, and to cast out the intruding weak, vicious thought that leads to wrong words and actions, is shown to be the simplest beginning of correct living. There are many helpful suggestions along practical lines that are well worth the test.

A. L. M.

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THE UNIVERSAL FAITH.

Ancient Mysteries and Modern Revelations. By W. J. Colville. R. F. Fenno & Co., 18 East 17th St., New York. Price, \$1.00.

"To increase interest in the universal aspects of religion and philosophy," is the purpose of this series of essays which attempts to trace through the sacred literatures of all ages and nations the same divine principle of faith and worship. Seek-