

to direct me to the office of the coal company. He dropped the gun, gave me the direction and an hour later I was told by the superintendent of the company "to come around again in a day or two," and I took that medicine quietly and spat it out after I had left the office, as I knew it meant "No." Failing with the operators, I had but to affiliate with miners to discover as to whether many miners were at work. I went to Nanticoke, 44 miles below Wilkesbarre, where the miners said the condition was the worst in the district. Nanticoke is a city, or borough, as they call it, of 14,000 people, about one-half Polocks and their families—the lowest class of miners. One of the miners, a foreman whom I employed as guide, admitted me to dinner at his home, and the menu his wife had prepared was, in their nomenclature, sowbelly and beans, bread and warmed-over coffee; no sugar, no milk, nothing else.

After dinner he took me to the company house, where exist the thousands of Polock miners and their families. The Polock localities are designated as "Scalpertown" and "Boartown," the former a settlement of huts on a few contiguous streets, about 600 huts in number. Each hut is built of upright planks, battened and whitewashed on the outside, now yellow or gray with exposure. The huts are about 12 feet high in front, possibly 12 feet wide, with roof sloping to within a few feet of the ground; 30 feet back, and upstairs about one and one-half rooms; downstairs not three decent rooms. The coal companies provide about as good quarters for their mules in a big barn 500 feet from the human quarters. I ate supper with one of these Polock families, wife, husband and four children. The menu was bread, warmed over coffee, water, a modicum of milk.

The excellence of the above menu consists in the sharp appetite one always has just after eating. "You rise from the table," as the physical culture people say, "hungry." The above four little ones looked as if they had been hungry for five months.

No, the miners will not be starved to death. Yes, they can hold out, if necessary, till next summer, provided they don't freeze to death; and they will not freeze to death, I can assert most emphatically. On the other side of an alley wall in the rear of the huts and back of nearly all the company huts, is a coal box about 6x6x7, made of rough boards and roofed over, some smaller and some larger. These were

the miners' outside coal bins, and each bin, 600 about in all, was nearly filled to the top with coal. I could see it through the cracks of the weather-beaten boards. In the back room and sometimes in the cellar the miners also have a ton, a half ton, or two or more tons of coal. A humane superintendent has permitted these miners, men, women and children, for the last five months to pick the coal from the great culm heaps, a mile in circumference at the base, and 500 feet high—refuse slate, dust, now and then a piece of coal—all coughed up by the big, black coal breakers.

At noon hundreds of men, women and children climb down from the sides of these big black mountains, carrying baskets, coal scuttles and bags full of coal. Many a baby wagon drawn by the father and pushed by the mother and children, loaded with bags and baskets of coal, passed me on the way home. Night and day, for five months, the miners and their families have been picking out patiently, piece by piece, the coal from these great heaps of refuse. A family of four can on an average pick possibly a quarter of a ton a day. On pleasant evenings the black culm heaps are dotted with more stars than the skies above—the fathers, mothers and little children are picking coal till midnight by the light of the miners' lamps.

No, the miner will neither starve nor freeze. In the winter and during the wet weather, the condition of their homes is awful; and the long, sloping roofs leak like griddles; mud is everywhere about them. They pay in rent for these huts \$5.50 or \$6.50 per month, according to location. Five months' rent is due. When settlement of the strike comes, as it now seems to be approaching, a new problem will confront the poor miners. How much from their wages must they yield weekly to make up rent arrears? It seems to me they can yield nothing, as they are now living so close to the starvation line. When the father works he will need more food, and then he will have the rent as well as the back rent to meet. I pity the rest of the family.

A. P. POTTER.

LAND AND REFORM IN ARGENTINA. For The Public.

A brief glance at history may be useful in finding the cause of the present land distribution in the Argentine Republic. After the conquest of Peru by Francisco Pizarro, the conquered territory was distributed among his sol-

diers according to rank. To each of these estates, or "repartimientos" of land, were attached a certain number of aborigines as serfs. The feudal system was thus inaugurated with few of the checks to excessive oppression that existed in Europe. The repartimiento system, inaugurated in Peru, was before long extended into Argentina as far as the territory of the semi-civilized tribes extended, or the northwest arid region. The fertile, well-watered valley of the River Platte, and the desolate uplands of Patagonia, were then ranged by savage Indians, who were not finally conquered till long after the throwing off of the Spanish yoke, in 1810. For the semi-civilized tribes the Spanish conquest meant only a substitution of a European soldier for the native cacique as taskmaster; but the former exploited for personal gain alone, while the latter's mastery was as a social service.

The feudal land system, begun in monarchical days, was continued with the republic, though serfs and slaves have long since become free. The conquered land in the provinces* was already mostly held as private estates, the remnant, as it was won by degrees from the Indians, was sold off in blocks, with a square league (10.42 square miles) as a unit, at a nominal price. Army officers and speculators were often given "an inside track" at these sales. After the conquest of Patagonia by Gen. Roca in 1885, the army received a vast grant, to be selected at pleasure. Gen. Roca had 100 square leagues, colonels, five; lieutenant colonels, four; majors, three; captains, two, and lieutenants, one, with lesser areas to lower ranks. These grants were exempted for two generations from taxation, if held in the family of the recipient. There are some tracts yet held in common by Indian tribes in the provinces, as well as on the reservations in the territories.

The system of "colonies" is the method adopted by the nation to encourage agricultural settlements, and there were 735 colonies in 1895, against 53 in 1872. Outside of the 29 colonies of the government they are owned by speculators who handle tracts obtained cheaply from the government or from estancieros (estate owners). Each settler obtains a farm of 20 to 34 hectares (2.47 acres) in the provinces, or 100 hectares in the territor-

*At present there are 14 provinces, nine national territories and one federal district.

ies. The payments for the land extend over ten years, and the speculator usually loans tools and seeds, to make the first crop. The improvements of the first settlers in a colony cause the remaining land to be more valuable, and the speculator gets the benefit. In the provinces land now sells for five dollars (gold) to \$60 a hectare, with lower prices in the territories.

As to the size of holdings, in 1889 in the 14 provinces (exclusive of the capital city), there were 355,934 proprietors, owning 161,371,904 hectares, an average of 454 hectares (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ square miles) each. If the figures of the small colonial holdings and the town lots in cities and towns were subtracted, the average individual holding of the bulk of the land would be greater than three square miles. In recent years the government has rented some of its land. The rented area in 1900 amounted to 1,092 square leagues.

Two industrial advantages can be claimed for the large estate system of land ownership, namely, preservation of natural fertility and increased productivity, through intelligent and wealthy owners. These advantages apply more especially to pastoral estates, as in soil cultivation only the latter has any significance, and its value is usually largely outweighed by the increased returns from small holdings by the cultivator himself, as the tenant system in feudal countries shows. In the western United States, the government land remained open to all stockmen on equal terms, until gradually fenced in by the advancing farms of homesteaders. This has resulted (largely through overcrowding of the ranges) in the destruction of the pasturage, many regions formerly feeding 300 cattle per square mile, now grazing barely 30, or perhaps rendered a complete desert. Long ago, before extensive European emigration, the ownership of an estate was an inducement for educated families to go to Argentina, and with their new power they were enabled to introduce scientific stock raising and improved breeds of live stock, by the importation of European thoroughbreds. These advantages, however, could have been all gained by the leasing of the land in large tracts (with the privilege of fencing) to the estancieros, such leases to continue until the land was needed for agricultural homesteaders.

The principal evils produced by the feudal land division in recent years are four, namely, (1) social caste; (2)

disastrous speculation; (3) restriction of immigration; (4) high railroad rates.

1. Whatever advantage the feudal caste system may have had in the early semi-anarchical days of a few whites among many Indians, it is an anachronism, in the modern republic of Argentina, bidding for immigration as a refuge from European aggression. And the estancieros, with a feudal nobility's contempt for honest toil, are an obstacle to industrial progress.

2. The disastrous speculation culminated in the early nineties with the Baring Bros.' failure. The story of national and provincial mortgage banks, loaning cedulas (land bonds) to land holders, on their estates, at inflated valuations, with the subsequent unloading of these cedulas on credulous European investors, is well known. Less well known is the long continued subsequent industrial paralysis; the resulting government debts. The national debt alone in 1900 was \$440,000,000, which is 15 per cent. of the national wealth* as compared with two per cent. for the United States, 12 per cent. for France, and eight per cent. for Australia; and a per capita debt** of \$100, as against \$26.50 for the United States, \$157.50 for France, and \$115 for Australia. Of Australia's debt, a large part represents railroads and other productive enterprises, which form an insignificant factor in Argentina. The total public debt (including provincial and municipal) was \$763,338,352.85 on December 31, 1900, or about \$173 per capita.

3. The occupation of the Plate Valley by great estates entails a scanty population where used only as stock ranges, and where rented to agricultural tenants the immigrant finds he has but changed from the control of a European baron to that of an Argentine estanciero, or has jumped from the frying pan into the fire. The land of the agricultural colonies is usually too high priced in the provinces, and in the territories too remote, arid or unhealthy, to compete with the average colonist against the cheap lands of Canada, or South Africa. This fact is noticeable in the immigration returns. An undue proportion of recent arrivals remain in Buenos Ayres, causing a phenomenal growth, while the sparsely settled country districts received a minority of the 292,281 immigrants (net) entering from 1895 to 1899. Of these 60 per cent. were

Italians, 25 per cent. Spaniards, 3 to 4 per cent. French, and 2 per cent. each of Russians and Turks. The civilization hence tends to remain Latin, with Italians predominating.* Land monopoly also tends to keep down wages, here as everywhere. On the farms of South Cordoba, peons receive \$7 to \$12 per month (with board), and in the wheat and flax districts, around Santa Fe, \$10 to \$13. During harvest \$28 to \$45 a month is paid labor, and this attracts Spaniards and Italians, who come out annually and return after the crops are gathered. In the agricultural district of Mendoza in 1902, a wine cultivator received only 21 cents a day and board (against 15 cents per day that he had formerly received in Italy); and in the sugar region of Tucuman, Italian peons receive 45 cents, and natives 30 cents (both with rations). Foreign carpenters, blacksmiths and other skilled trades receive \$1.75 to \$2 a day in Buenos Ayres and Rosario, and \$1.58 in Cordoba. These wages compare favorably with the southern United States, but production per capita would raise wages to the Dakota level, if land was not monopolized.

4. The sparse population of course makes traffic per mile of railroad light, and accounts for high freight charges. The government made the economic mistake of allowing private capital to own the railroads of the fertile districts while its own lines were through deserts, when the ownership of both would have made the profits in the former pay the deficit in the latter. It may be said in passing that the charters of the privately owned railroads safeguard the public interest much better than similar documents in the United States. The government has usually guaranteed five to seven per cent. interest on average costs of \$50,000 per mile for a period of 20 years after completion; the interest advanced by the government, to be repaid from subsequent profits. The rates for freight and passengers are to be fixed by the government, if the profit exceeds a certain (usually 10) per cent. on the first cost. Land grants (except for right of way) were given only to the "Central Argentine," one of the pioneer companies, which received 900,000 acres. The companies all import supplies duty free, and are also

*In 1886 was \$3,080,000,000 (Mulhall).

**Population, 1900, 4,400,000 (estimated).

*The 1895 census gave 2,950,384 Argentines, 492,636 Italians, 198,686 Spaniards, 94,086 French, 21,788 English, 17,143 Germans.

exempt from taxation for a certain period.

An example for American cities are the public safeguards in the Buenos Ayres street railroads, for each charter requires the company to pay the city 6 per cent. of gross receipts; \$50 per square of single track on paved streets; 33 1-3 per cent. of cost of paving whole width of streets; 0.5 per cent. of total value property tax; right to fix fares retained by the city.

The Argentine Republic is now suffering from an immense burden of debt, a lack of confidence in new enterprises, a chronically depleted treasury, and insufficient immigration. Drought and locusts, physical calamities, have been somewhat responsible for the above conditions. The remedies suggested below, will, in the writer's opinion, cure the complaints of the nation so far as they are curable.

The reforms needed are four, viz.: Fiscal, Political, Educational and Industrial.

The present taxation, like that of most governments, is a patchwork of inconsistencies. Of the total* national revenue of \$59,500,000 in 1901, \$28,000,000 came from the import tariff, \$14,000,000 from internal revenue, on spirits, tobacco and matches, nearly \$3,000,000 from stamped paper, while only \$800,000** came from a direct property tax. The national taxes are 70 per cent. of the total. The provinces have merchant licenses,*** provincial stamped paper, court fines, and a general property tax of 0.5 of one per cent. usually. The municipalities tax public franchises, and charge separate rates for use of public water, police, etc. The latter are the fairest of all.

The introduction of the Single Tax is the solution of the fiscal problem. This will require no sudden changes, or new legal machinery, but simply the assessment of the present national and provincial property taxes on unimproved land values only, and the gradual increase of the tax rate to absorb a sufficient proportion of the total economic rent to permit the abolition of all other taxes. Import

*Excluding revenue of railroads and other productive enterprises.

**From land in the national territories and federal district only.

***These vary from \$50 to \$1,000 each. The most ridiculous is the license of traveling drummers. For example, Salta province charges \$200 license every six months to each trader for every house represented.

duties on all necessities not produced locally should be speedily abolished, and primarily those on lumber, fuel, iron and machinery, which throttle building and manufacturing. The duty on luxuries and the internal revenue taxes, except the absurd trade licenses, can be retained until the land tax becomes adequate to warrant their abolition. As for the tariff for protecting "infant" industries,* it could be preserved until either these were strong enough to walk alone, or being unsuited to the country, had best be left to die a speedy death.

The increasing land tax would cause not only the sale of speculative holdings, but also the rapid transformation of the pastoral estates (wherever land is suitable) into cultivated fields, and this would cause a tremendous influx of immigrants to take advantages of either** the cheapest land, or the higher wages produced therefrom. The lowering of railroad freights made possible by increased traffic would yet more accelerate prosperity, as it would render desirable territorial lands now too remote for profit.

The government treasury, then filled to overflowing from a source now almost exempt, could not only easily meet current expenses and interest charges on its debt, but would be able to rapidly reduce the principal. The rapidly increasing producing population would hasten the process.

In politics, the most pressing need is to induce immigrants to become Argentine voters,*** for the European,

*The sugar industry of Tucuman is a curious example of an entirely artificial business, as the land used, formerly covered with vineyards and orange groves, is unsuitable for economic sugar raising. The protective duty of 1.2 cents per pound (which Argentine consumers pay) has stimulated domestic production beyond the market needs, so prices are becoming unprofitable through competition. It has been seriously proposed by a government leader to destroy 20 per cent. of the sugar lands, compensating the owners at \$95 the hectare, and raising the necessary funds by an extra tax of one cent per Kg., to be paid by the Argentine consumer. This is a remedy of that school of economics that advocates war to produce prosperity.

**Under the Single Tax the immigrant would gain as much, whether laborer on a large plantation, or cultivator of his own farm; often the character of land, or population makes the former the most feasible system.

***In 1895, of over a million aliens, only 1,638 were naturalized. This undoubtedly springs from two causes: first, an expectation of many to return and die in their home land; second, a desire to escape conscription, and a distrust of the stability and fairness of the Argentine government. The naturalization movement needs for success the cooperation of prominent aliens.

even though Latin, would not as tamely submit to a military oligarchy as does the Spanish-American half-breed Indian. Civil service reform would soon establish economy and efficiency in administration, instead of their present opposite, as it has already done where applied in England and the United States. The collection of all the tax from land values will render even the poorer provinces independent of national grants for education, etc., which have been one of the main factors for the establishment of unlawful federal interference in local government. The extension of more self-government to municipalities and counties will also guard against despotism.

It is not surprising that elections are a farce where voters are largely illiterate, as in the interior provinces.* The free education system as established by President Sarmiento,** after United States models, has done wonders, but it should be made compulsory, and better provision made for children in the rural districts. Manual training in the secondary schools will tend to alter that contempt for manual labor among the upper classes which is the bane of Spanish America. The teaching of sloyd work, elementary civil government, and political economy, is advisable for the primary schools. The extension of the Protestant religious propaganda should be welcomed by Argentine patriots, for it will purify the Catholic church, which like all human monopolistic institutions is now corrupt. It will also tend to foster those twin children of Protestantism that have been such a powerful factor in true democracy—mental independence and the subordination of the material to the spiritual life.

In industry, the increase in population and the larger consuming power (due to increased earnings) of the present workers will enable many new factory***industries to be started, now

*In Santiago province only 13 per cent. of the population over six years of age were literate; in the whole republic, 50.3 per cent. were literate in 1899 (including aliens).

**Sarmiento was Argentine minister at Washington, D. C.; in the time of President Lincoln. Returning home, he was elected president of Argentina in 1868, and, infected by Lincoln's spirit, devoted all his power to reforms, of which the chief was free universal education.

***The production of pig iron for billets, as well as other important industries, will probably never be profitable, owing to a paucity of natural resources in those directions. For the weaving of wool and the fabrication of animal and many vegetable products, the country is peculiarly favored.

unprofitable on account of a restricted home market. The removal of the import duties will also aid in this extension.

The development of the immense Victoria Fall of the Ignazu river, in Misiones territory, will render possible factories where the cost is now prohibitive. The throwing open of the rich Plate valley lands to labor, by the Single Tax, would postpone the irrigation problem of the arid west for a generation, and then the public treasuries would be rich enough to supply the large sums needed for its solution.

The above reforms, more especially the Single Tax, would meet with the bitter opposition of all those members of the landholding and other privileged classes, who prefer private to public prosperity. But should another Sarmiento arise, gifted with the intellect and the power to achieve them, what an outdistancing of older and richer nations, accustomed to depend on traditional and makeshift legislation, would take place. The third decade of the twentieth century would not have begun ere would be found in the fertile Republic of the Plate a population of 20,000,000 of free, intelligent, prosperous people.

R. B. BRINSMADÉ, E. M.

BEHOLD THIS DREAMER COMETH.

The reply of the Red Wing Argus to the statement of the Minneapolis Journal, that "The Argus is a dreamy sort of sheet."

Occasionally the Journal has a word that is little less than inspired. To be called a dealer in dreams is the very designation we should have chosen, if it were not too presumptuous. Even with the Journal's sanction, we hardly dare think the Argus deserves such a flattering appellation.

And yet we know that the Argus has its dreams of the day to be when equal justice shall be the rule of the state and the brotherhood of man the basis of society. And not dreams only, but intimations in the happenings of to-day, signs and omens that had no significance, unless the dream came first.

Dreams, forsooth! Pity is it for the man with the muck rake who has them not. His vision fastened cross-eyed on the dollar before his nose, he misses the significance of living. The earth worm is indeed a useful institution, as Mr. Darwin pointed out, but the earth-worm gets precious little fun out of life. For its sensories are so constructed that it has no dreams.

The dreamer has to-day's fun and to-

morrow's hope, getting double measure for existence. Time and space, which so hamper one in what he would do, impose no limitations on the dreamer. He is the one untrammelled creature in the universe.

Now, there are dreams and dreams. There is even a compilation which sets forth that a red-headed girl and a white horse signifies 4-11-44, and a funeral with black-plumed hearse stands for 9-19-26. Those are the dreams that do not come true and the man who invests in them wastes his money. Dreams do not descend to details. We met a man but yesterday who had been consulting such a dream book, from which he learned that Van Sant's majority would be 7,398. He was willing to bet on it until he met a dreamer of opposite faith equally confident. They compromised on 5,000.

Members of the inner faculty of dreams regard such premonitions as spurious. The Argus cannot predict the precise result in a single precinct. Dream tickets issued from this office have no warranty of fulfillment or any certain day, but are stamped surely redeemable some time within a hundred years, or a thousand, as events, which dreams do not control, may determine. Dreams don't bother with immediate sequence, but leap to the terminus to which events drive. Dreams obey the laws of causation, else they had no existence real or fancied.

It is a wonderful company, the dreamers. Joseph is a dean of the inner faculty. And it must have seemed to him his gift was sadly askew when first fulfillment was that they stripped him of his coat and cast him in a pit, when they sold him into slavery and thrust him in prison to rot for years. That simply shows how the dream skips the disagreeable details, caring only for results. If Joseph had been counting the precinct returns he must have been reminded of the saying, commonly attributed to Tom Reed, but venerable as the time of Thotmes, that while one with God is a majority, many a man has died at the stake waiting for the returns to be counted.

Perhaps there were times when he doubted his dreams, for Joseph had not 5,000 years of history to teach him that all genuine dreams are true. There is no excuse in these days for such doubts.

There were the dreams of the French revolution, with their vision of fraternity and equality, eighteenth century

phrasing of brotherhood in society and equal rights in the state.

They too must have thought it was a bad dream when the guillotine began making its horrid hash of society and the reign of terror was the first fulfillment of the splendid vision.

Those were the days when the younger brother imagined he was to receive the obeisance of his elders. What happened but that society lost its cloak of elegance, and lay in the pit of anarchy? Indeed, there had to be a season in the prisonment of the empire's iron rule before the French nation could be enfranchised.

So closely history sticks to repetition of its text.

Martin Luther, the Huguenots, John Bunyan, the Puritans, Brown of Ossawatomic; the abolitionists, Henry George, Lassalle—all the noble army of dreamers have shared the same experience.

It is history's revenge on the dreamer for taking a short cut. If he is to see the result not yet attained, he must suffer things not foreseen.

On further consideration, the Argus does not feel warranted in setting up claim to enter the inner circle of the dreamers. The price for a box seat is too high. Standing room is good enough for us. It is something of a privilege to have a place where one may see what is going on even imperfectly, and hear, if not the finest passages, at least a few of the sonorous chords of the great symphony.

To be a dreamer thus of the second class is to live in the workaday world and to walk with eyes open, yet to have glimpses of the ends to which the confusion of phenomena leads. Phenomena—again one wonders how the philosophers from the beginning came to call events mere shadows.

Without these dream hints the world is a cloud wrack of phantasmagoria.

Blessed are those dreams, brought to earth by relation to current events, by which life becomes real and earnest, a life whose goal is not the grave.

THE BREAKER BOYS.

One of the features of the Labor day parade at Pittston, Pa., was a number of "breaker boys," many of them not over ten.

See them marching, O Nation, boys of ten—
See thy Shame and thy Doom in that human line!

How canst thou expect for the future, Men,
When their souls thou hast dwarfed in
a sunless mine?

Oh, those little tollers, with dragging feet,
Tell thy Shame and thy Doom as they
crowd the street!

—F. Spargo, in *The Whim*.