

MORE THAN LANDWORKERS INTERESTED.

(WM. CAMM in *Farmers' Voice*.)

Editor *Farmers' Voice*—Many men who are not land workers say the land question is of no interest to them, as they want and use so little of it. Of course such men never read Henry George's assertion that whether a man toils in a garret ten stories above the street or moils in a mine a thousand feet below the surface of the earth, it is the price that labor pays to get at the soil that determines how much of the products of his labor shall be his. But if such men could see what landlordism is doing even on the richest prairie lands of Illinois they would soon discover that they were vitally interested as the men who actually follow the plow.

Here is an eighty that was once in a fair state of improvement. It was hedged all round and had some cross hedge. The house was good and the outbuildings fair. A mortgage took it before it could be tiled, but it was drained by open ditches. The new landlord rented it out, and at rock rent, of course, for we have no other kind of rent here; and though he made more out of his tenants than if he had owned them as chattle slaves, he added nothing to the improvements, and ordinary wear and tear has reduced them till it is a shame to see such land in such a condition. No tile has been put in; the house is leaky; the plaster and window panes broken. There is no wind pump. The well platforms are dilapidated and dangerous, and all stock water has to be pumped, or drawn, by hand. There being no drainage, the wells are now full; while the horse lot nearby is half leg-deep in manure and mud. This is nothing to the landlord, because the children, the renter and his wife cannot look to him for their doctor's bills; and if they die it is not ten cents out of his pocket. There is no garden, and the orchard of young trees has been neglected, and is open to the small pasture. Even the yard and fence would not keep pigs out; and beyond the small and now dilapidated barn there is no shed or shelter for stock of any kind except a small chicken shed that a tenant put up for his hens to roost in. There is no meat house, no cellar, no storm pit, and not a gate on the place. This eighty acres rents for \$4.50 per acre, and is for sale at \$70 an acre, so that only a rich man could afford to buy it.

All the rented farms are not so badly improved as this, but some of them are worse; for "anything is good enough for a renter;" so this place may be counted an average. Now, aside from the labor required for the cultivation of the land this farm is sadly in need of a considerable amount of labor by the carpenter, the painter, glazier, the mason, the ditcher, and of the labor of all the men who make or manufacture all the material which these tradesmen use in repairs and new improvements, and they are interested as well as the farmer. If the land was held under conditions that encourage instead of discouraging improvement, we have not now tradesmen, nor artisans enough to supply the demands that would come from the farms alone; for even

the best improved farms are lacking now in much that they would get then; and such farms as the one I have described would require the expenditure of an amount nearly or quite equal to the price the land is held at now. If others than farmers would look into this matter they would find in it something bigger and better than pensions, for there are the social and moral effects of such changes still to be considered.

I do not cite this particular case because the landlord, or perhaps I should say the landlady, is a hard or bad woman, for I am told she is not; but if the opposite were really true, it is the system, and not the individuals, that must be condemned, and the large majority of working people who suffer are more to blame for the existence of such a system than the small minority of landlords who profit by it, for in this country the majority is supposed to rule, and can if it will.

But there is no hope of anything better so long as we sacrifice to one god the almighty dollar. Our prayers and protestations are only lip service and mockeries.

Morgan County, Illinois.

CONDITIONS IN SERVIA.

"We are a nation of peasants," says M. S. M. Lorsanitch, the Servian Minister to the Court of St. James in an interview published in the *Humanitarian*. "We have scarcely any aristocracy. On the other hand, we have no proletariat, the plague of your great cities; no paupers, no 'submerged tenth.' We have, therefore, no need of work-houses and asylums. As for our industries, agriculture and cattle-raising are our principal occupations.

"All our peasants are landed proprietors. Some of them are rich, while others are poor, but to prevent entire pauperization the law guarantees to each peasant five acres of land and the necessary number of agricultural implements. They are inalienable property. The living together of families and relations in community of goods—a custom dating from time immemorial—acts in the same direction; it promotes social equality between the members of the clan. In the next place, each commune is bound by a law, which was first promulgated by King Milan, to have a general central storehouse; each member is bound to contribute to it annually five kilogrammes of wheat maize. The object is to keep in reserve certain quantities of food—we have at present 40,000,000 kilogrammes stored up—so as to prevent the possibility of famine. Should a local magazine, either through a bad or deficient harvest, or for some causes pertaining to a particular place, run short, it obtains a temporary loan from a store more favorably circumstanced.

FREE TRADE BENEFITS.

The recent census of Australia shows that while the free trade colony of New South Wales has largely increased its population, the colony of Victoria, which is protectionist, has lost 50,000 souls.—*Nashville American*, June 16, 1901.