to exploit the labour of their fellow-citizens upon this site, still belongs to the descendants of the courtier to whom it was originally granted in return for a kiss of allegiance.

The greater portion of the soil of London is in the possession of a few old titled families. But these people do not concern themselves with building houses. They leave this work to the proletarian crowd of inferior human beings. They only lease the building sites to a contractor for a term of years, with the obligation to erect suitable buildings thereon. The contractor pays a fixed annual rent for the site, and seeks to draw as much profit as possible from the buildings; for when the lease is run out both the site and the buildings which are erected on it revert, without compensation, to the ground landlord, and the householder must count himself fortunate if the rent is not screwed up so high that he is forced to quit. How things fare with the tenants under this system one can easily imagine. Also one can see that things often go badly with the middleman. But whatever may befal builder and tenant, the ground landlord in any event derives a gain. He has no risk, no responsibility, no labour—he has absolutely nothing to do save to write receipts for his ground rents. And if he finds this business too irksome, he deputes an agent to relieve him, who has to see that the tenants punctually pay their tribute. In order that the noble idler may draw his rents, little children must sell bunches of flowers and papers in the muddy streets, consumptive girls must glue pasteboard boxes for fourteen hours a day, widows and orphans must deny themselves bread, grey-haired men must go to the workhouse, and the disabled beg.

This is no tearful exaggeration. It is bare fact corroborated in the streets of London at every turn.

Starvation.

Recently, as I was walking through the streets of this dreadful city one hot, dusty day in August, I saw standing on one of the busy bridges a sorrowful woman offering for sale wax matches in a small basket. She held a miserable looking child in her arms, perhaps because there was no one in whose charge to leave it, perhaps because she hoped thereby to elicit the sympathy of passers-by. But nobody grieved for her. I stepped forward and for a penny bought from her a box of wax matches. A grateful, happy smile stole over her face. I wanted to ask her how much she earned, but feared that I should scarcely understand her amid the uproar of the streets. My companion had in the meantime walked on, and I was obliged to follow him. Such figures one meets in London at every street corner.

It happens from time to time that a free-born Englishman, and still more frequently an Englishwoman—since woman is the weaker sex and, therefore, in our Christian society, can be exploited more regardlessly—literally hungers. The papers generally notice such an interesting event for the edification of their readers, but in most cases the affair passes without much heed.

Death from starvation? What frightful words! Is it really possible that in our Christian civilisation, in which the highest learning and elegance are united, in which clever men study with such painstaking care the elementary organs of insects, in which sympathatic persons found societies for the rescue of strayed dogs and cats, is it possible that in this age men die of hunger? Yes, it is not only possible—it actually happens.

It is a fact which every policeman can confirm for us, that in the streets of London, in the streets of the city which boasts itself to be the richest in the world, in the midst of abundance of bread and meat, of sweetmeats and danties, of scarf-pins and picture cards, men's strength fails them because of hunger—and sometimes they even die of hunger.

Before me lies a little book entitled "Pictures of Poverty." It contains twenty-four short narratives selected from ten thousand similar cases; twenty-four stories, vouched for by reliable eye-witnesses, of children who search for crusts in the gutters in order to appease their hunger; of women who in mid-winter have pawned their clothes and cover their nakedness with strips of old carpet; of a father who in the flower of his age has sought death by drowning, because he could find no work—no work in the country whose fruitful fields are converted into private parks and game preserves; in the country where the lack of dwellings is so great that hundreds of thousands of families are herded in hovels where body and soul must both corrupt.

ECONOMICS AS SHE IS TAUGHT AT CAMBRIDGE.

It has been said that the greatest humorists are the unconscious ones, and I believe this is true. When you can't get a copy near hand of "Huckleberry Fin," or when you have read and read "Pickwick Papers" until they begin to lose their pristine freshness, you might try for a change "Economics of Industry," by Professor Alfred Marshall. In the midst of that rubbish heap of German jargon and semi-mathematical argot which passes under the name of "The Science of Economics," there is a fund of comedy worthy of a Molierè or a Rabbelaes. If anyone has any doubt, for instance, of the nature of "Wealth," it is something—indeed about all you can find in this so-called science—to be assured that, "The affection of friends, for instance, is a very important element of well-being, but is not ever reckoned as wealth except by poetic license." I don't suppose that anyone ever expected to dine on such affections or to exchange them for theatre tickets, twist tobacco, or some such luxury; but still it gives considerable satisfaction when you know that a fact like this is declared by a great university don, published from halls of learning. We children of Lazarus must take this and smack our lips as a scrap from the great university feast from the table of Dives himself.

Again, we are told, "a man's personal goods fall into two classes—under the first come the benefits he derives from other persons, such as labour dues and personal services of all kinds, property in slaves, the organisation of his business, and his business connection generally. The second class consists of his own qualities and faculties for action and for enjoyment."

You might perhaps ask what a man is apart from his own qualities and his faculties for action and enjoyment; but such vulgar questions betray a plebian, not to speak of a Public Board School origin. It suggests that you may have made the acquaintance of a low playwright fellow like Shakespeare (if he wrote them plays), or a rhyming common ploughman like him who went by the name of Burns (question—were not Burns' poems written by Lord Dare or Lord Nozoo or Lord Onlynose?) the question might even have been suggested by that tinkler fellow who wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress" if he happened to come across "The Economics of Industry." The first thing one has got to do when studying "economics" is to get rid of such tawdry common sense and remember that a greater than Shakespeare (George Bernard Shaw, to wit) has said "Common sense is common ignorance." Now the brilliant idea that property in slaves was or is an item in the list of a man's personal goods, is one that would only suggest itself to a college professor and a professor of economics at that.

To an ordinary nineteenth century or twentieth century man who works, but has not plunged into fathomless economic depths, Emerson's simple words might answer—

> "Pay ransom to the owner, and fill
> The bag to the brim;
> Who is the owner? The slave is
> And ever was. Pay him!

But this might do for American University teaching of a century ago, which was essentially superficial, otherwise had not lost its grip of commonsense and reality. To-day

American economists have plunged into Austrian depths and have not yet arrived at the surface.

The sum total that the teaching of Cambridge has arrived at is that goods are things saleable. Land, slaves, services, honour, what you please. One would think that "goods" would require to be "good," but they need not be, for the economist takes no account of teleological estimates. The poisonous and semi-poisonous materials with which our foods and drinks are adulterated are "goods" not "bads" as our common sense estimating teleologically would suggest. In an introductory passage Professor Marshall says—"Slavery was regarded by Aristotle as an ordinance of nature," and so probably was it by the slaves themselves in ancient times.

Now the Professor has got clearer ideas, he reckons it with land as personal goods.

Of the two classes of personal goods, "the benefits he derives from other persons, and his own qualities and faculties for action and enjoyment,," the former, continues the Professor, together with all material goods may be described as external and the latter as internal goods. These are transferable and non-transferable.

If one were asked what a person's internal goods were, one might reply that it depended on when and what the person had for breakfast, dinner, or supper, together with all his inner physiological economy. But this would be entirely wrong. A man's internal goods are "his qualities and faculties for action and enjoyment." There is no excuse for not knowing after a plain statement like that.

Further on we learn that some goods are free, namely—"those which are not appropriated and are afforded by nature without the effort of man." The writer, in order to make the thing clear to the simplest apprehension might have added that goods which have been appropriated are not free.

Things which burglars, landlords, fraudulent company promoters appropriate are not free.

According to Professor Thorold Rogers, between the reign of Queen Anne and 1845 some 9,000,000 acres of common land were enclosed. That "good" is not free now.

The goods which an Andrew Carnegie or a Rockfeller have amassed as the result of tariff laws, railway and land concessions being appropriated are not free.

In fact to the workman the only freedom he has is freedom to work for some one if he can find him.

So much for "The Economics of Industry" at present. We are entering the holiday season. Take it with you on your holidays—you don't need *Tit-Bits* or *Comic Cuts*—read without academic bias, and you are bound to enjoy yourself.

William Cassels.

THE "TAX AND BUY" PLAN.

A more ambitious project advocated by the National Housing Reform Association and others is that land should be taxed on its capital value, as assigned by the owner, and that the local authority should have power to purchase any land at the price thus determined.

This scheme appears at first sight to be a very fair one. The owner who defrauds the community by under-valuing his land would be liable to be punished by the obligation to sell, whilst any owner unwilling to sell can preserve his property by assigning to it a high valuation and paying the tax thereon.

The proposal is, however, one which will not stand hostile criticism.

The most serious objection is that it depends on the assumption that public authorities would be able and willing to buy any amount of land which was to be obtained at a price below its real value. If a public authority were like a horse dealer, always willing to buy a cheap article with a view to making a profit on the sale, the legal freedom to purchase at the assigned price would, no doubt, maintain the assigned price at or above the actual value. In fact, an average local authority at present only buys land, perhaps once in 10 years, and then only requires a small percentage of the area under its control. In no circumstances likely to occur in the near future will many local authorities be able and willing to purchase as much as 10 per cent. of their areas. At present, therefore, and for a long time to come, the risk to an owner of being bought out at the valuation would be very small, and the temptation to undervalue would be very great. If land were habitually under-valued, it would rapidly become as impossible for the local authority to buy at the valuation as it is for the King to veto a bill passed by the Houses of Parliament. Finally, if the practice of purchase at the valuation were maintained in occasional use, the temptation to large landowners to gain control over the local authority by illegitimate means would be excessive: and many large owners would, in fact, be able to secure such control as to protect their own property from the legalised confiscation, whilst the small owner (especially if unpopular, as, for example, an aggressive Socialist) would be compelled to pay tax on his land to its extreme value, if he desired to be sure of retaining it.

A proposal which thus directly encouraged the worst form of municipal corruption cannot be recommended by those who desire to extend the sphere of municipal activity.

In New Zealand a law of this character was at one time in existence, but it was repealed; and the purchase clauses were never put into operation.

It is not true, as sometimes alleged, that the New Zealand Government has acquired land by this method. The Cheviot Estate was purchased by the Central Government under the Land Taxation Acts, because taxes were demanded on a higher valuation than the owner thought fair, and the Government preferred taking over the estate at the owner's price (as provided by the Acts), to reducing their assessment of it.—From a special report on "Scope of Housing Reform," prepared by a Committee of the Fabian Society.

"THE MENACE OF PRIVILEGE."

"The Menace of Privilege," by Henry George, jun., is deserving of all the good things said of it by the reviewers as an up-to-date diagnosis of a serious social and political ailment, and no student of events can afford to neglect the opportunity to refresh his mind from this storehouse of facts. Its reading reinforces one's realisation of the whirlwind pace at which American civilisation has moved during the last half century, in the direction of commercial and industrial concentration and combination.

The book offers profitable reading both to him who thinks that amelioration and equalisation lie only in the ownership of monopolies; and to him who hopes for equal relief from the taxation of monopolies; and it is not necessary for either to agree with Mr. George as to the exact point in the taxation of natural resources at which an equilibrium will be found between public right and private wrong, in order to reap the benefit of his patient work.

The accomplished and modest author of "The Menace of Privilege" does not provoke by assumption, nor invite by philosophical forays comparison with the father who has made the son's name world wide and respected, but admirers of the father will rejoice to find his mantle resting upon the shoulders of a worthy son. C. B. Fillebrown.