AN ECONOMIST WITH TWENTIETH CENTURY IDEALS:

PROFESSOR FRANK PARSONS, C.E., PH.D., EDUCATOR, AUTHOR, AND ECONOMIST.

I.

"To construct the people—what an aim! Principles combined with science, all possible quantity of the absolute introduced by degrees into the fact, Utopia treated successively by every mode of realization,—by political economy, by philosophy, by physics, by chemistry, by dynamics, by logic, by art; union gradually replacing antagonism, and unity replacing union; for religion God, for priest the father, for prayer virtue, for field the whole earth, for language the Word, for law the right, for motive-power duty, for hygiene labor, for economy universal peace, for canvas the very life, for the goal progress, for authority freedom, for people the man. . . .

"And at the summit the ideal.

"The ideal!—the stable type of ever-moving progress."—"WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE," *by Victor Hugo.*

ALL successful evolutionary or revolutionary steps in political, social, or economic advance must be preceded by patient educational work of the "line upon line and precept upon precept" character; for the masses in all nations are conservative, and it is not enough to convince the reason. The conscience must be awakened to such a degree that the call of right and duty becomes an imperative mandate. For this reason there is always a long waiting time before a radically progressive step can be successfully taken—a time when the silent leaders of civilization work for years, decades, and sometimes for generations to arouse the reason and conviction of the slow-thinking multitude, and during which period their words seem for the most part to fall into barren soil. The public appears sodden, indifferent, and disorganized; and, were the apostles of progress governed by any motive less exalted than loyalty to the call of duty, they would become disheartened. Yet all this silent work has been producing its result. Here is a group who have already become convinced. At another point a leader has been won, and in ten thousand

cities, villages, hamlets, and communities missionaries are quietly repeating the words of wisdom which the leaders have given. In this way a nation is educated and aroused until a certain point is reached when everything seems to swell the rising tide of political and economic enthusiasm. Then every manifestation of arrogance, insolence, injustice, and oppression from the upholders of the older order makes converts to the new cause, though a few years before similar actions excited no response. The essential preliminary educational agitation has been quietly but effectively carried on until the conscience, reason, and judgment of a large proportion of the people have been influenced in such a way that a successful revolutionary step has been rendered inevitable; and without this quiet and persistent educational propaganda victory for the progressive cause would be impossible.

To-day signs are not wanting that indicate the near approach of a social, economic, and political conflict that will prove the most momentous civilization has known. The old competitive order has given place to two elements—private combination, striving to establish an industrial despotism in a republican government, and progressive democracy, seeking to establish governmental ownership of public utilities and a nation-wide coöperative system whereby all men, women, and children shall enjoy the rich and ample blessings of civilization. Professor Frank Parsons in a recent paper thus expresses the demand of the new political economy as insisted upon by those who believe with Victor Hugo that the hour has struck for hoisting the standard, "All for all":

"The science of political economy is undergoing a change almost as remarkable as that which took place in astronomy in the Copernican era. In the old astronomy the earth was the center around which all other things, including the sun and stars, were made to circle. In the old economy material wealth was the center around which all other things, including even life itself, was made to revolve. The new astronomy knows that the earth is not the center but only a planet moving about the sun, and the new economy knows that material wealth and the desire for it are not the central facts, but

only subordinate parts of a great system, of which manhood and womanhood, character, mind, soul, affections, ideals, and development are the controlling elements, the real foci of power."

Now, during the last generation, and especially during the last two decades, there has been going on an amount of silent but persistent educational work throughout the United States which has rarely if ever been equaled in the hours preceding any great revolutionary or evolutionary step known to Western civilization. What is true of America is to a great extent true of England, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, France, and some other European nations; but we are at present chiefly concerned with the work in the New World, because all things indicate that the rapid concentration of wealth in the hands of the master spirits operating the industrial trusts, and the influence they are exerting on government in all its ramifications, will bring the American people face to face with the alternative of industrial despotism or coöperation for the maintenance of free institutions sooner than elsewhere.

The economic awakening was inaugurated and largely stimulated by several remarkable social visions, principal among which were "Looking Backward," by Edward Bellamy; "News from Nowhere," by William Morris; "A Traveler from Altruria," by William Dean Howells; "The City Beautiful," by Joaquin Miller; and latest, and in many respects greatest of all, "Equality," by Edward Bellamy. The enormous sales that many of these books enjoyed, and the eagerness with which the public perused these and scores of other social visions, were indeed significant. But social visions, valuable as they undoubtedly are in stimulating thought, in showing the way out, and in making men dissatisfied with unjust, inequitable, and evil conditions, are not enough. Anglo-Saxon peoples demand far more than theories and social dreams, however rational and pleasing they may be; and, fortunately for the new awakening, the men most needed were ready for the great demand.

Among the master thinkers in the New World who have compelled hundreds of thousands of thoughtful people to study social problems, the late Henry George was preëminent. One may or may not agree with all the theories of this high-minded, clear, and lucid reasoner and incorruptible patriot, but no well-informed student of economic problems can fail to recognize the great work accomplished by Mr. George in compelling the people to think seriously on vital and fundamental social and economic problems. Among other great representative leaders and workers must be mentioned Henry D. Lloyd, whose masterly works, "Wealth Against Commonwealth," "Copartnership in England," "A Land Without Strikes," and "Newest England" have done very much to stimulate thought along progressive lines, as also have the writings and educational work of Professors John R. Commons, Edward Bemis, Richard T. Ely, Eltweed Pomeroy, and a score of other careful thinkers who have been working for true democracy. But among the coterie of silent leaders who have led in the serious constructive and scholarly work that must precede a successful onward movement, no man has wrought more effectively or convincingly than Professor Frank Parsons, who, as educator, economist, and author, has carried forward the cause of coöperation and the public ownership of public utilities in such a manner as to challenge thoughtful attention from friend and foe alike. He is one of the most scholarly, careful, and sane thinkers in the progressive ranks to-day. He is dominated by altruistic ideals—a true son of twentieth-century civilization.

II.

Professor Frank Parsons was born in 1854, at Mount Holly, New Jersey. His ancestors on his father's side were sturdy, liberty-loving Englishmen. His mother was American-Scotch-Irish, and came from a well-known family of clergymen, teachers, and professional men.

One grandfather, with several "greats" before his name, who was keeper of the king's stores in Philadelphia when the

War of the Revolution broke out, turned over the supplies to the Continental forces. The English authorities set a large price on his head, and as a result he and his family were kept in rapid motion to avoid evil consequences. This ancestor was an intimate friend and neighbor of Benjamin Franklin. He entered enthusiastically into the great philosopher's experiments with lightning, and, much to the disgust and vexation of his wife, persisted in tempting Providence by accompanying Franklin in his raids on the errant electricity. The good wife was a typical conservative, and reasoned that, if the thunderbolt did not silence the over-curious men, the rain would bring on disease attended by serious consequences. Happily, in this respect she was mistaken.

When almost sixteen years of age Frank Parsons entered the sophomore class of Cornell University, and in 1873, when eighteen years old, he was graduated from that famous institution with the highest record in the mathematical and engineering courses. On leaving college he secured a position on the civil engineering corps of a railroad company, but the panic of that year caused the failure of the company, and he and his companions found themselves out of employment. Fortunately Frank Parsons had not been injured by the false ideas of manual labor which are the ruin of so many college boys. To him all honest employment was honorable. He was neither ashamed nor afraid of hard work, and as the only immediate opportunity to earn a livelihood that presented itself was a position in a rolling mill, lifting and shearing iron and loading bundles on transfer wagons, he gladly accepted the place, and for the greater part of a year he worked ten hours a day, receiving $39 a month. During this time he had to walk two miles morning and night, to and from his work.

At length a place was offered him in the public schools of a New England manufacturing town, where his superior ability was soon recognized and he received an important position in the high school, where he taught higher mathematics, history, elocution, and French. He had always been

deeply interested in public questions, especially those which intimately related to a well-rounded education, the proper development of the young, and those social, economic, and political problems which aim at wider freedom and juster conditions for all the people. Not confining his labors to his required duties, he entered with whole-souled enthusiasm into the work of a literary and debating society and in other ways sought to stimulate and call out the moral and intellectual energies of the young with whom he worked. Among those who were interested listeners to the discussions of the debating society was the leading lawyer in the place. He was deeply impressed with the masterly manner in which the young teacher presented his arguments. He felt that any one who was at once so careful in the presentation of facts, so rigidly logical in handling a question, so clear and convincing, while being at all times eminently fair, should be at the bar rather than teaching in the public schools; and he became so urgent in his persuasion and so enthusiastic in his presentation of the opportunities offered by the legal profession that he awakened in the young teacher a desire that led to a determination to study law. It was, of course, impossible for him to continue the arduous duties he had engaged in and make rapid progress in legal studies. He, however, succeeded in obtaining the position of superintendent of drawing and painting for all the public schools in Southbridge, Mass.—a work that gave him the needed time for his new studies. He then entered the office of a well known attorney, the Hon. A. J. Bartholomew of Southbridge, where he began reading law. His progress was very rapid, as the studies were such as appealed to his tastes. After a time he removed to Worcester, where he finished his studies with the Hon. F. P. Goulding of that city. He completed the course of study in one year, and passed an examination which the examiners said showed the best grasp of the subject, in all its bearings, that had been displayed by any candidate who had appeared before them in the twelve years of their term as an examining board.

Just after his successful examination for the bar a severe

misfortune overtook the young student that for a time threatened to blight his future career. He had greatly overtaxed his eyes in the long hours of hard study and close application to the printed text, and his entire system was somewhat exhausted by overwork when he was employed to survey a tract of land. The work was done on a raw, cold day toward the close of winter. He was compelled to stand in the biting and penetrating wind until he contracted a terrible cold, which settled in his eyes. So serious was the affliction that he was compelled to go to New Mexico and live in the open air for three years before he could return to his profession.

After his return to New England he opened a law office in Boston, and shortly thereafter he was given a contract by Messrs. Little, Brown & Co. to rewrite "Morse on Banks and Banking." This work proved so satisfactory that the publishers secured him to edit "Perry on Trusts," "May on Insurance," and many other important legal works; while the signal ability displayed attracted the attention of educators as well as of the profession, one result being an invitation from the Boston University to join the faculty of the law department of that important educational institution. This he accepted, and for ten years he has held this position to the entire satisfaction of the faculty. He is considered one of the best lecturers in the law school, possessing the rare ability of presenting his subject with great clearness and in an entertaining manner. He is the only lecturer in the school who never uses a note, his memory being a source of constant wonder to the students, who cannot understand how it is possible for a lecturer to give from twenty-five to thirty citations of cases, by volume and page, during the course of a single lecture, without a single note or memorandum of any kind.

III.

It is, however, in the department of social and economic research embraced in the new political economy that Professor Parsons has gained an international reputation as a well-

equipped and trustworthy authority. Without a clear conception of the great work that lay before him in the cause of social progress Professor Parsons was led while yet at college to pursue an independent course of study that admirably fitted him for treating living problems in a broad and logical way, while it also served to train his mind to the careful, painstaking, and scientific method of treatment which is so marked a feature of his work. In college, mathematics was a second nature to him and was absorbed so rapidly that he had much time for reading, which was devoted to natural science, philosophy, economics, and history. Among the books thoroughly mastered at this time was Mill's "Political Economy." This work furnished a problem that became the focus of the student's thought. The laws and results of the existing industrial system were not satisfactory, because they did not conform to or harmonize with ethical principles. For years no real light or solid conclusion was reached on this problem, which more and more absorbed his thought. Finally light came through the principle of coöperative industry and the public ownership of monopolies, which promised to lead to an industrial system free of the chaotic production, conflict of man with man, and debasement of character incident to ordinary competitive business. Later he saw that public ownership of industry could not be thoroughly successful while the government was a private monopoly; so that direct legislation, civil service reform, proportional representation, etc., came to be a necessary part of his progressive thought.

As these ideas grew more definite, Prof. Parsons became more and more devoted to them, and for the last twenty years their development has absorbed the best energies of his life, enabling him to produce authoritative works that have placed him among the foremost progressive leaders of his day. His success has been largely due to the fact that he is one of the clearest and most logical reasoners of our time, while all his writings are marked by a rigid adherence to the modern critical or scientific method. He is one of the most careful and tireless scholars to be found among economic authorities.

He possesses as do few progressive leaders the power of looking on all sides of every question. He is always candid and fair, exhibiting the judicial spirit rather than that of the partizan; and in one important respect he is far ahead of many economists whom conservatism delights to honor. He is a man of strong moral convictions. With him the fundamentals of ethics are supremely important. He is as one driven onward by an awakened conscience, but ever guided by sober reason. Many reformers and progressives are before all else destructive in their criticism. They spend most of their time in tearing down and too frequently get into the habit of fault-finding to such a degree that they seem to have no clear and well-defined idea of what the present demands in lieu of outgrown and unjust conditions. But Professor Parsons is preëminently constructive, and his arguments are always directed against injustice in institutions and systems rather than against individuals. In him the cause of social advance has a leader who is at all times the valet to conscience, the servant of justice, freedom, and fraternity, and yet a critic so eminently candid that passion or prejudice never blinds his vision or colors his judgment. I have seldom known a man who could present the other side so clearly, concisely, and forcibly as Professor Parsons.

A few years ago he appeared before the Legislature of Massachusetts in the interest of better conditions for the people of Boston. The chairman of the committee before whom the hearing was given acted as if he were an attorney for the corporations against the interests of the people, and it was evident that he had scant interest in or sympathy for the popular weal. When Professor Parsons spoke he began by clearly stating the case in all its bearings. The position maintained and the contentions urged by the class interests antagonized were so admirably stated that for a time it appeared that the brilliant young educator held a brief for the corporations. I think every argument and plea that their representative had intended to advance was set forth clearly, cogently, and with utmost fairness by Professor Parsons, after which

each contention was taken up and answered. Then the case of the people was summed up in a masterly and convincing manner, much to the discomfiture of certain legislators as well as to that of the opposition. I felt at the time, as I have been convinced on many subsequent occasions, that if the daily papers of Boston had the interest of the community upon which their success depends as much at heart as they pretend to have, they would have published this and similar arguments in full; and I am confident that the simple publication of that argument in the various great dailies, in the same way that the same papers have published for years the addresses and the arguments made by the head of the great street-railway monopoly of Boston, would have compelled the Legislature to grant the reform. Unhappily, however, the daily press of Boston is too frequently blind, deaf, and dumb when it comes to advocating the interests of the community that run counter to those of the rich corporations.

Though having received the degrees of C.E. and Ph.D., Professor Parsons, like Herbert Spencer and indeed a large number of the best thinkers of our time, cares too little for titles to attach them to the name, though he admits that they have a value in that they seem to impress a certain class of people more than do deep thought and forcible reasoning.

The high quality of his work has been recognized in many ways. Professor Zueblin of Chicago, Professor Bemis, Professor Will, and many other high authorities have testified in the strongest terms to his extraordinary accuracy and painstaking care in all his work, though in common with Carroll D. Wright, and indeed almost every authority on social and economic questions who has written or spoken much, Professor Parsons has on two or three occasions been made the victim of modern loose reportorial newspaper work in the reporting or republication of his words. Two of these instances will be cited as illustrations.

In one of his arguments in favor of governmental control of the telegraph the Professor showed how, with popular ownership and the introduction of certain practical inventions

for reducing the cost of telegraphing, messages could be sent for a very small cost compared with present charges. Several newspapers copied the statement in part; *i.e.*, they omitted to give the qualifying condition necessary for the low rate given (the use of inventions whose practicability and value had been demonstrated), and the publication of the garbled version made Professor Parsons appear as the author of a reckless statement entirely foreign to the character of all his work. On another occasion he was reported to have said in a public address that the Western Union Telegraph Company had bought and hung up one hundred valuable inventions. His enemies quickly seized upon this statement to discredit his work. What he did say, however, was merely to give a statement made by Mr. Wanamaker to the effect that the company had bought and hung up sixteen inventions. No economic authority, even among conservative writers, wholly escapes this kind of misrepresentation, but a progressive thinker is far more liable to be misrepresented than a conservative, because there are hundreds of persons seeking to discredit his work. This fact has been thoroughly realized by Professor Parsons, and he has accordingly been doubly careful and painstaking in all his writing and teaching. These mistakes, due in part to ignorance and careless work of reporters, were far more injurious in their influence than the amazingly reckless and ridiculous story circulated by the corporation press in Kansas and throughout the West at the time when Professor Parsons was called to the faculty of the Kansas Agricultural College, in which the statement was published and given wide currency that the Chicago *anarchist* Parsons had been selected by President Will to fill a chair in the State educational institution. The fact that the Parsons referred to had been executed several years before, and the further fact not only that Frank Parsons was no relation to the anarchist but that all his social and economic views are diametrically opposed to those of the anarchists, was apparently too insignificant to be considered by conservative and capitalistic journalism.

In consequence of his social writings Professor Parsons has

been elected a member of the American Academy of Social Science and of the American Social Science Association, the leading societies on those lines in the United States. He is president of the National League for Promoting Public Ownership of Monopolies, and in addition to the chairs held in the Boston University School of Law and in Ruskin College, Trenton, Mo., he is also Dean of the Extension Lecture Department of the College of Social Science and professor of history and political science in the same institution. He is also lecturer for the National Direct Legislation League and chairman of the lecture department of the Social Reform Union.

Professor Parsons's great service in the cause of economic progress has been rendered in three distinct lines of work: as a college professor in the chairs of the philosophy of history and of political science, as a popular lecturer and educator, and as an authoritative author.

IV.

A few years ago there was a general political revolt against the domination of the railroads and other great corporations in the State of Kansas. Something of the old-time spirit of liberty that marked the pioneer life of that blood-baptized commonwealth seemed to assert itself over the deadly lethargy that had marked the silent encroachment of corporate greed and corruption, by which the dominant party, the press, and a large number of the other opinion-forming agencies had succumbed to the gravest peril that to-day confronts this Republic. As a result there was a complete political revolution in the State, and it was some time before the corporations and their allies were again enabled, even with enormous capital at command, to recapture the commonwealth. During the interval a strenuous attempt was made by the Progressives to elevate the standard of education, stimulate independent thought, and awaken the public conscience. The State Agricultural College, which, in common with many other small educational institutions in various commonwealths, had been quietly moving along narrow, conventional, and old-time lines,

was reorganized in such a manner as to make it at once a thoroughly practical and immensely valuable institution to the agrarian population, while the curriculum was broadened so that the students should enjoy intellectual and ethical training and a high grade of scholarship be rendered possible. Especially was the science of government and economics dwelt upon as of vital importance to the wealth-creators of the State. Professor Thomas Elmer Will, A.M. (Harvard), who had efficiently filled the chair of political economy for two years, was made president of the institution, and Professor Parsons was selected for the chair of history and political science, while Professor Edward Bemis, Helen Campbell, and other scholars of national reputation were called to the faculty. In a short time the wisdom and value of the new innovations were shown in the great increase in attendance and in the enthusiasm manifested by the scholars. The enlarging of the curriculum in no way interfered with the practical agricultural training. Indeed, the number of hours given to agriculture, horticulture, and dairying was greater than before the innovations, while the increased practical value of the literature published was signally recognized, one great Eastern seed house requesting the privilege of publishing an enormous edition of one of the practical college bulletins for circulation among their patrons. Requests for bulletins were received from various foreign countries, even as far as Egypt.

The college was rapidly taking a commanding position among the leading vital educational institutions of the land, when the corporations were again enabled to make their influence felt at the polls, and the party under which they had fattened off of the public returned to power; whereupon the reactionary influence was immediately seen in the complete revision of the management of the Agricultural College. The strongest and ablest members of the faculty were dismissed. Their presence was objectionable to corporate greed and to the party that depended on protected classes and the parasites of wealth for tenure of power. Professor Parsons, who had accepted a position on the faculty, arranging to teach in the

autumn and spring terms, so that the winter sessions were left free for his duties in the Boston University, was of course one of the marked men. It could not be expected that the cordial relations that had always existed between the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé Railroad and the party in power would be marred by the retention in office of America's most powerful advocate of the governmental ownership of railways. It is a noticeable fact, however, that even the political opponents of Professor Parsons frankly admitted his ability and eminent success as a teacher, while opposing his social and economic views; and the students of the college where he had come to be loved as a friend no less than respected as a teacher addressed a beautiful memorial to the man whose luminous treatment of history and political science had made these studies intensely interesting, and whose broad, sweet, and sympathetic spirit endeared him to all who came under his influence. At the time of Professor Parsons's retirement also, Professor Will, in the course of a statement concerning his work, said:

"During the years 1897-'99 Professor Frank Parsons has occupied the chair of Professor of History and Political Science in the Kansas Agricultural College. . . . He brought to his work in this institution a thoroughly furnished mind, and wide experience in numerous lines and grades of teaching, in lecturing, investigating, and in dealing with men. His earlier studies having included mathematics, civil engineering, law, philosophy, and science, in several of which at least he obtained high proficiency, the professor enjoys a versatility which can but add greatly to his individual power as a teacher and public speaker. To the above should be added a character of rare genuineness and sincerity and a sunniness of temper which are a continual inspiration to his students.

"As a teacher Professor Parsons is conceded on all sides to have achieved a success in this institution almost phenomenal. A more universally popular man, both among students and teachers, I have never known."

And E. F. Fairchild, president of the opposition board of regents, thus wrote:

"I take pleasure in stating that I, personally, have a very high opinion of the character and ability of Professor Frank

Parsons, and I have reason to believe that he possesses unusual power as an instructor. His retirement from the faculty of the Kansas State Agricultural College was occasioned by considerations affecting in no way his character as a man or his ability as a teacher."

I cite these testimonials to Professor Parsons's ability as a teacher because they illustrate the universal feeling among those best acquainted with his work. All in a position to speak authoritatively, even those most bitterly opposed to his economic views, accorded him the highest place in efficiency as a teacher and single-heartedness as a man.

V.

Subsequently Professor Parsons was called to the chairs of history and political science in Ruskin College, Trenton, Missouri. This institution has recently acquired the services of Professor Will and several other master thinkers, and has adopted a broad, constructive, progressive, and well-rounded curriculum, which includes industrial training and ethical culture in addition to the regular college courses. Professor Parsons, while still holding his chair in the Boston University, spends the parts of the school year when not required in Boston at Trenton, as he formerly did at the Kansas Agricultural College.

During other months he works indefatigably, doing much public lecturing, and in this work he has few if any superiors in America, as his address is engaging and his method of presenting his thought clear, entertaining, and effective. He is by no means devoid of a sense of humor, but is not given to dragging in humorous stories, as more prosaic lecturers feel called upon to do. One thing is very noticeable in his platform work: After a masterly presentation of a subject, he will give a clear, epigrammatic summary that cannot fail to stick in the mind of the hearer. The following paragraph will serve to illustrate this fact:

"If one man possesses a franchise that yields an enormous revenue, and another man has no such advantage, the way to diffuse the monopolized wealth is to make the two men joint

owners of the franchise. If a few men own a street railway system that yields vast power and income, while a city full of people own no roads, but must pay tribute to the monopolists, the way to a just diffusion of power and profit is to make the whole city full of people copartners in the street railways. If an emperor (or 'boss') owns the government and the people are political paupers, the way to equalize power is to transfer the ownership of the government to the whole body of citizens on the basis of an equal partnership or democracy. If a railway monarch holds sway over a thousand miles of road, a hundred cities and towns, and thousands of workingmen, draws millions of profit from the traffic of a dozen States, and, with a few fellow-potentates, rules the commerce of a continent, the way to diffuse wealth and equalize power is to transfer the ownership of the railways to the nation."

His services are being sought in all parts of the land where public interest in vital economic issues is aroused. Recently he accepted an engagement to lecture next autumn for the University Association in the ten chief cities of the Pacific Coast.

VI.

Great and invaluable as are his services to the cause of human advancement, as a teacher and a public lecturer, it is through his writing that he has reached the widest constituency and has compelled thoughtful people everywhere to consider subjects which in many instances they had never seriously thought upon before. It was in 1894 that Professor Parsons contributed to THE ARENA one of the most notable economic papers that have appeared in years, entitled "The Philosophy of Mutualism." It attracted wide attention. The late Bishop Phillips Brooks of Massachusetts, the most brilliant and popular of the modern clergymen of Boston, in a letter to Professor Parsons said:

"I am in heartiest sympathy with your 'Philosophy of Mutualism.' Our conversations about it have been a delight to me. The 'Law of Development' and the 'Historic Parallel' are worthy, I think, of the emphasis you give them. All your underlying principles I fully accept. They are simply 'brother-

love and justice put into practise,' as you say; and how can a minister withhold his support from that?"

In 1895 and 1896 there appeared in THE ARENA the powerful series of papers on "The Electric Lighting and Telegraph Monopoly," which have been I think justly characterized as the most powerful indictment of monopoly that has yet appeared.

Since 1894 Professor Parsons has been one of the most valued contributors to THE ARENA. He has also written extensively for other leading magazines, while his economic books are rightly regarded as indispensable to students of present-day social and political questions. Of these works the most important are "The City for the People," "The Telegraph Monopoly," "Direct Legislation," "Rational Money," and "The Bondage of the Cities," all of which are published by Dr. C. F. Taylor, of Philadelphia.

Space renders it impossible for us to notice, even briefly, more than one of these distinctly vital and authoritative works. In "The City for the People" we have a large cloth-bound volume of about six hundred pages, in which all the great problems that intimately relate to the right government of modern municipalities are more exhaustively and lucidly discussed than in any other existing treatise. The volume has called forth the highest encomiums from the governors of different States and from scores of educators, professors, and mayors of leading American municipalities. The consensus of opinion in regard to this work is well reflected in the following extracts from an extended review of the work made by Professor Charles Zueblin, of Chicago University, in the *International Journal of Ethics* for January, 1901:

"A valuable book, encyclopedic in character. . . . Professor Parsons has brought together an immense mass of valuable material from both original and secondary sources. His tables of statistics and comparative statements are invaluable and represent an astounding amount of work for which the municipal student must be truly grateful. . . . One can only wish that the immense number of students of municipal reform may evidence their appreciation of this strictly educa-

tional endeavor to circulate as widely as possible this volume. . . . The ethical phase of the work is manifested in its zealous defense of the popular interests as evidenced in the title and its consistent advocacy of the enlargement of the municipal life."

The Municipal Ownership League of St. Louis placed "The City for the People" first in its list of the six best books on public ownership.

VII.

It has been my fortune to know Professor Parsons for about ten years, and during this time I have had ample opportunity to study him under various conditions and circumstances—in a word, to become acquainted with the real man; and, knowing him as I do, it is a pleasure to be able to state unhesitatingly that among my wide acquaintance I know of no more self-forgetful and truly unselfish person, no kindlier, sweeter, more generous, candid or sincere man, than he. In the service or help of a friend, or at the call of duty, he is ever quick to respond, and no task is too arduous, even though it takes him from his needed rest or deprives him of the opportunity to accept highly remunerative work, if by his service he may assist in enriching the life of some fellow-man or further the great cause of human brotherhood to which he has consecrated the best energies of his life. He is one of the rapidly increasing body of leaders who are helping to inaugurate the Golden Age by living the Golden Rule.

B. O. FLOWER.

Boston, Mass.