

APE ECONOMICS.

[(For the Review.)]

By J. B. FORBIS, Jr.

There was a beautiful country like this fair land of America. The mountains were filled with all kinds of ore, the prairies were covered with grasses that yielded nutritious grains, and the trees bore a super-abundance of fruits and nuts that were good to eat. In that country there lived a race of apes. They could not consume all the grains and fruit. None of the apes ever went hungry, for all they had to do was to exert themselves to pluck and eat. About one-third of their time was occupied in going about to procure food, one-third was devoted to enjoying themselves, and the remainder, which was during the night, was given to sleep. They had everything their hearts desired, for nature liberally supplied their wants. They thought that a good Spirit did all this for their comfort and happiness, and in the groves they would assemble to voice their thanks and sing praises to that good and great Spirit of nature.

It finally occurred to some selfish, short-sighted, predatory apes who had accidentally discovered a big cave, that they would persuade the other unsuspicious apes to gather and bring to them the crops as they matured to be stored in the cave. It was done, and the selfish apes put others with clubs around the mouth of the cave to guard the stored crops. Because they had possession of the crops they claimed that the grains and fruit in the cave were their property to do with as they pleased. They had more than they could use, but they would not let the race of apes have anything in the cave, unless they brought them yellow pebbles to give in exchange for the grain or fruit. By so doing, they established the yellow pebbles as a medium of exchange. These greedy apes considered themselves and their families as better than the others, and as they controlled the necessities of life they lived an idle luxurious existence that was not good for them. They began to demand other things that the country produced and the race of apes had to work very hard to find things to supply their growing wants. The selfish apes also induced the race of apes to think that the proper thing to do was to apportion the land, which was the source of everything needed by the apes, to them, so that they could own it absolutely. They did not realize what harm would result from doing so, but it was such a big country and there were comparatively so few apes at the time to occupy the country, that they virtually gave the land to the predatory, designing apes, who exacted a rental from the others for using their land. As the caves at stated times contained nearly all the crops, great numbers of the foolish apes abandoned their homes in the country and came to live at a congested station around the cave. They were known as the "cave" or "cliff-dweller" apes, for they were compelled to build hovels in which to reside and big structures in which to transact business. All of them had to work for the ruling, greedy apes, and many of them had to do unhealthy work. Some were

made to dig underground for fuel, some where crowded into unsanitary factories, and some spent their time in small, cramped rooms bending over desks. Many of the half grown apes also had to work. Some were drilled and educated to use deadly weapons, and taught that it was right to kill any apes who helped other ambitious ones to get control of affairs. More caves were found and the designing ones, profiting by the example of those who found the first cave, induced more of their fellows to leave the country and work for them. So here and there throughout the land, wherever there was a cave, the silly beasts left their natural outdoor life and sought to live the artificial life of cave apes.

Social injustice and economic inequality were marked. The wily, greedy apes used every device they could think of to get them to be their slaves. It was pitiful to see them so crowded together. They forgot their former natural way of living and became weak and sickly. The ruling apes became greedier and lived more luxuriously, but the majority of those around the caves became weaker and weaker and less able to take care of themselves, became underlings and thought they were fortunate to have a job. Many became absolute paupers and were put in stockades to be taken care of. The land was neglected, for the apes that continued to live naturally in the open air were regarded as ignorant, old foggy and countrified, although they lived better, longer and more wholesome lives than the apes around the caves.

Matters kept getting worse and worse and food more expensive to the cave dwellers. Suffering and want increased among them. Crime became rampant and pens were established in which to confine criminal apes. Finally a rumor was started among the cave apes that the great good Spirit said that the whole country, its increment values and its natural resources belonged to all the ape race alike, irrespective of their parentage or condition. But the strong apes, having control of affairs and the stores in the caves, laughed at the suggestion and said, "No, it belongs to us and everything above and below the ground that the land yields and produces is ours to do with as we please, for did not the race of apes a long time ago consent to such a plan." The servile apes replied, "At one time when there were few apes in the country our ape ancestors did not consider the land of much value, as there was an overabundance of everything for all and there were no caves or cave dwellers, but now that the race of apes has increased so largely in numbers, we demand that our natural, inalienable rights that were given away by our ancestors be restored to us and that equity be done to all." Did they get it? No, the drilled fighting apes shot the protesting apes, and the others, cowed to subjection, led a more miserable life than before.

The consequence was that selfishness began to be the general principle of all the apes, and they also began to think that self-preservation was the first law of nature, whereas formerly they had thought that the great Spirit of nature was generous and kind and had intended it to be a happy land for their race. Cheating, hypocrisy, lying and stealing became common among them. Some "holier than thou" apes told them there was an evil Spirit that was the author

of this great injustice, but it was not so, for the selfish apes had created all these wrongs. It required more and more fighting apes, as the years moved on, to preserve order. These fighting apes were wholly unnecessary if the race had lived unselfishly. A great deal of the stored crops also were required to feed and support the fighting apes who did not work, for those who did not work had to be fed and supported by those who worked. The race began to degenerate and the apes were very unhappy. Those living around the caves lost all memory of how their ancestors had lived, and tried to occupy their idle time in foolish sports. Many of them would spend much of the night time in trying to amuse themselves or in dissipation. Still the select, greedy class of apes could or would not see what was the matter. More arduous labor was imposed. The supply of food was held at higher prices, and the stations around the caves were filled with angry, chattering apes who sought to change and better their conditions. Instead of joy, they experienced want and sorrow, and they complained, "Why were we born into this country that could easily afford food and comfort for all of us and not be permitted to have our just share without these strong, selfish apes interfering." At last it occurred to them that the plan of giving the natural resources of the land into the charge of the few, and permitting them to have absolute control of it, was wrong. So the race revolted, induced the fighting apes to join them, slew the arrogant, greedy, predatory ones, closed up the caves, and lo they found that all had more than enough to supply their wants. In fact, there was so much that they could not use it and they preserved the great surplus for apes who would afterwards be born to use it. What a pity that they had to experience all that trouble because of the greed and selfishness of a few of them and because of those ugly caves. Then a more natural and diversified industrial state of affairs prevailed among them, and they began to be less selfish, grew stronger physically, and lived a happier life. Is it not strange what sorrow and misery a few apes can cause by monopolizing what belongs to the living and the unborn?

THE plute papers pretending to discuss the high price of living never mention the high price of land, yet the people who work for a living in the United States are paying twice as much for the use of the land now that they did ten years ago. They get nothing for it, and the land owner only gets out of the way. This item must be added to the cost of every labor product, and labor pays every cent of it to idleness.—Portland (Oregon) *Labor Press*.

THE more we tax business, or improvements, or incomes, or anything else except land values, the easier we make it to hold land idle and dis-employ labor.—*The Square Deal*, Toronto.