

and he distributes his own goods (or wealth) by receiving all the product of his labour. When he starts to exchange his goods or services with other men the foundations of civilisation are laid, for the possibility of leisure and comfort is opened up, he can start to develop his higher powers. But he starts to exchange the product of his labour for no other reason than that such an exchange (he thinks) will be to his advantage. He does this at his own risk, and sometimes loses, but that he eventually benefits from his own experience the whole progress of the arts and sciences is there for us to see. Throughout the whole complex and interwoven system of exchanges in modern civilisation the same principle holds good, and each can make his highest contribution not by striving consciously to control the whole, but to make the best exchanges within the range of his own personal contacts. If he will only "mind his own business" and see that the State maintains justice, or equal freedom, the progress of civilisation and happiness is assured.

But, once any kind of injustice has been maintained for a long period in society men tend to accept it as natural and eventually connect the results of this injustice with anything but the true cause. The inevitable conse-

quences of artificial interference are assumed to arise from natural causes, and further artificial interferences are invoked in the attempt to check the effects of artificial interferences which have been overlooked.

Although the principle of exchange remains the same in the highest as in the lowest development of society, as soon as the exchange economy comes into operation another factor arises: the advantages of situation and, with it, the necessity for communal, as distinct from individual, goods and services, e.g., roads and police. This is at once the product of the community and the need of the community. Justice requires that the product of the community—the advantage of situation, or land value—should be collected by the agents of the community, to defray the cost of the community's services. Hitherto Western civilisation has neglected this requirement of justice, and it has suffered accordingly.

Socialism—as it is understood—is an attempt to substitute the privilege of the many for the privilege of the few. No relief will come to us until men and women turn aside from coercion, class-hatred and cultivation of the isms and, instead, remove privilege altogether.

F. D. P.

SETTING BOUNDS TO THE FIELDS AND THE ORIGIN OF PROPERTY

(From Anatole France's *PENGUIN ISLAND*. Translation by A. W. Evans. Edition: John Lane.)

THE island did not preserve the rugged appearance that it had formerly, when, in the midst of floating icebergs it sheltered a population of birds within its rocky amphitheatre. Its snow-clad peak had sunk down into a hill from the summit of which one could see the coasts of America eternally covered with mist, and the ocean strewn with sullen reefs like monsters half raised out of its depths.

Its coasts were now very extensive and clearly defined and its shape reminded one of a mulberry leaf. It was suddenly covered with coarse grass, pleasing to the flocks, and with willows, ancient fig-trees, and mighty oaks. This fact is attested by the Venerable Bede and several other authors worthy of credence.

To the north the shore formed a deep bay that in after years became one of the most famous ports in the universe. To the east, along a rocky coast beaten by a foaming sea, there stretched a deserted and fragrant heath. It was the Beach of Shadows, and the inhabitants of the island never ventured on it for fear of the serpents that lodged in the hollows of the rocks and lest they might encounter the souls of the dead who resembled livid flames. To the south, orchards and woods bounded the languid Bay of Divers. On this fortunate shore old Maël built a wooden church and a monastery. To the west, two streams, the Clange and the Surelle, watered the fertile valleys of Dalles and Bombes.

Now one autumn morning, as the blessed Maël was walking in the valley of Clange in company with a monk of Yvern called Bulloch, he saw bands of fierce-looking men loaded with stones passing along the roads. At the same time he heard in all directions, cries and complaints mounting up from the valley towards the tranquil sky.

And he said to Bulloch:

"I notice with sadness, my son, that since they became men the inhabitants of this island act with less wisdom than formerly. When they were birds they only quarrelled during the season of their love affairs. But now they dispute all the time; they pick quarrels with each other in summer as well as in winter. How greatly

have they fallen from that peaceful majesty which made the assembly of the penguins look like the Senate of a wise republic!

"Look towards Surelle, Bulloch, my son. In yonder pleasant valley a dozen men penguins are busy knocking each other down with the spades and picks that they might employ better in tilling the ground. The women, still more cruel than the men, are tearing their opponents' faces with their nails. Alas! Bulloch, my son, why are they murdering each other in this way?"

"From a spirit of fellowship, father, and through forethought for the future," answered Bulloch. "For man is essentially provident and sociable. Such is his character and it is impossible to imagine it apart from a certain appropriation of things. Those penguins whom you see are dividing the ground among themselves."

"Could they not divide it with less violence?" asked the aged man. "As they fight they exchange invectives and threats. I do not distinguish their words, but they are angry ones judging from the tone."

"They are accusing one another of theft and encroachment," answered Bulloch. "That is the general sense of their speech."

At that moment the holy Maël clasped his hands and sighed deeply.

"Do you see, my son," he exclaimed, "that madman who with his teeth is biting the nose of the adversary he has overthrown and that other one who is pounding a woman's head with a huge stone?"

"I see them," said Bulloch. "They are creating law; they are founding property; they are establishing the principles of civilisation, the basis of society, and the foundations of the State."

"How is that?" asked old Maël.

"By setting bounds to their fields. That is the origin of all government. Your penguins, O Master, are performing the most august of functions. Throughout the ages their work will be consecrated by lawyers and magistrates will confirm it."

"Whilst the monk, Bulloch, was pronouncing these words a big penguin with a fair skin and red hair went down into the valley carrying a trunk of a tree upon his shoulder. He went up to a little penguin who was watering his vegetables in the heat of the sun and shouted to him:

"Your field is mine!"

And having delivered himself of this stout utterance he brought down his club on the head of the little penguin, who fell dead upon the field that his own hands had tilled.

At this sight the holy Maël shuddered through his whole body and poured forth a flood of tears.

And in a voice stifled by horror and fear he addressed this prayer to heaven:

O Lord, my God, O thou who didst receive young Abel's sacrifices, thou who didst curse Cain, avenge, O Lord, this innocent penguin sacrificed upon his own field and make the murderer feel the weight of thy arm. Is there a more odious crime, is there a graver offence against thy justice, O Lord, than this murder and this robbery?"

"Take care, father," said Bulloch gently, "that what you call murder and robbery may not really be war and conquest, those sacred foundations of empires, those sources of all human virtues and all human greatness. Reflect, above all, that in blaming the big penguin you are attacking property in its origin and in its source. I shall have no trouble in showing you how. To till the land is one thing, to possess it is another, and these two things must not be confused; as regards ownership the right of the first occupier is uncertain and badly founded. The right of conquest, on the other hand, rests on more

solid foundations. It is the only right that receives respect since it is the only one that makes itself respected. The sole and proud origin of property is force. It is born and preserved by force. In that it is august and yields only to a greater force. This is why it is correct to say that he who possesses is noble. And that big red man, when he knocked down a labourer to get possession of his field, founded at that moment a very noble house upon this earth. I congratulate him upon it."

Having thus spoken, Bulloch approached the big penguin, who was leaning upon his club as he stood in the blood-stained furrow:

"Lord Greatauk, dreaded Prince," said he, bowing to the ground, "I come to pay you the homage due to the founder of legitimate power and hereditary wealth. The skull of the vile penguin you have overthrown will, buried in your field, attest for ever the sacred rights of your posterity over this soil that you have ennobled. Blessed be your sons and your sons' sons! They shall be Greatauks, Dukes of Skull, and they shall rule over this island of Alca."

Then, raising his voice and turning towards the holy Maël:

"Bless Greatauk, father, for all power comes from God."

Maël remained silent and motionless, with his eyes raised towards heaven; he felt a painful uncertainty in judging the monk Bulloch's doctrine. It was, however, the doctrine destined to prevail in epochs of advanced civilisation. Bulloch can be considered as the creator of civil law in Penguinia.

"LAND-VALUE REFORM" — By J. Dundas White

DR. DUNDAS WHITE'S new work* adds worthily to the contribution he has made, in his many writings, to the literature of the land values movement. Legal scholar and experienced Parliamentarian (Member for Dumbartonshire, 1906-10, and for Tradeston, Glasgow, 1911-18) he has enlightened the subject in numerous books and pamphlets expository of the fundamental principle and giving guidance on many of its associated problems.

The keynote of the new work is that "the lands of a country, with their natural advantages, should be treated as the common inheritance of its people . . . where lands are in private possession those who hold them should pay the people fair rents for them based in each case on the present value of the land, with its natural advantages, apart from any improvements that have been made on it; and improvements and industry should be freed from taxation as far as the circumstances of the time allow." The first Chapter gives a lucid exposition of the principles on which this reform is founded and of the benefits that would follow its adoption. The other two Chapters relate to its application in this country, the second giving a general view of the suggestions for legislation contained in the third, which is followed by notes on some kindred points.

This little book has appeared at an opportune time. Dr. White serves the cause of land-value reform in a unique manner. His treatment of the subject is always comprehensive, but it is rarely tedious. It is no idle claim to use the words "theory and practice" in the text; for

it is a mark of all his work that, however short his discussion he has the gift of combining what is fundamental with what is concerned with minute legal details of application.

Many years ago Sir Frederick Pollock wrote a book on *The Land Laws*. In his introductory remarks he gives a depressing and almost despairing impression of their complexity and of the manner in which they confused and baffled lawyers. "The whole subject is such a mystery to laymen that, though they may know something is amiss, they cannot tell where the remedy should begin and do not know what to ask for. Among lawyers a considerable number are hostile to change and a greater number indifferent. Those who make the shoe do not feel it pinch and those who feel it pinch do not know how shoes are made."

Dr. White is not in any of these classes. He is aware of where the shoes pinch and knows how to make shoes that will not pinch. A prominent feature of this his latest work is his admirable attempt to make language serve the cause of land-value reform most effectively and happily. The use of "land-rent" instead of "tax," to denote the character of the payment made by a holder of land to the government is a help to clear thinking. From his brief and pithy exposition of the deep principles which underlie this reform, through every subsection of his well-framed Bill, through every Note which explains a working detail, there runs the same steady thought.

A study of this short statement, so complete and yet so full of suggestion, will cure anyone of serious mind of indifference to a supreme problem.

* *Land-Value Reform in Theory and Practice*. Land & Liberty Press, Ltd. Price, 2s. net. By post, 2s. 3d.