

"The Brussels Financial Conference was undoubtedly of the greatest possible value, since it brought a certain amount of order into ideas (but) the findings . . . were hardly more than a common programme for national measures. Those of the economic conference will probably be entirely different. No doubt they may run counter to certain habits and to certain private interests—or, rather, to the false ideas entertained by certain circles as to their own interests—and will require temporary sacrifices.

"The industrialists and the farmer complain of the increased cost of production and of their inability to reap themselves in their sale price. The trader complains of the difficulties of all kinds which he encounters in transporting his goods and in bringing them on to the markets where they should normally be sold. . . . The consumer, finally, who represents the great mass, complains about all these difficulties, which in his case result in what is known as the high cost of living.

"If here and there we develop a public opinion favorable to international co-operation, the Governments concerned will be obliged to take account of that fact. They will feel themselves supported and encouraged, and consequently sufficiently strong to thrust aside, if necessary certain private interests, interests possibly ill-understood by the parties themselves, and therefore they will be in a better position effectively to apply the resolutions and the remedies and improvements which will be recommended by the forthcoming economic conference.

"The work of economic pacification will be long and will proceed by slow stages, but the aim to be achieved is worthy of our best efforts. For those who are working for a high ideal, the greatest recompense is to be able to feel that they have brought a worthy contribution to the collective work of humanity."

The Endless Procession

PROFESSOR ARTHUR THOMPSON says that there is in Italy a creature which is known as the Procession Caterpillar, so named because it is instinctive for one caterpillar to follow closely upon the heels, so to speak, of the next one. Frequently a dozen or more of these caterpillars are seen in procession, and mischievous Italian boys amuse themselves at times by placing the head of the foremost caterpillar to the tail of the last one, when, it is said, the procession moves in a circle for days, unless there is some accidental occurrence which breaks the circle. The unreasoning instinct of the caterpillars resembles the unthinking attitude of those people who do not know where they wish to get, but who imagine that all that is necessary for them to do is to organize in some union and trust to luck.—*Commonweal*, London, Eng.

Eugene Manlove Rhodes

THIS is the name of a writer whose cowboy stories of the Southwest are deservedly popular. In *Copper Streak Trail*, a lively and stirring cowboy story, he writes as follows on page 151.

"A most desirable neighborhood; the only traces of democracy on the river road are the schoolhouse and the cemetery."

In another part of this same work speaking of the land grants of an early period, Mr. Rhodes says:

"Such grants were not uncommon in the Duke of York, his Province. In that good duke's day and later, following the pleasant fashion set by the Pope who divided his world equally between Spain and Portugal, valleys and mountains were tossed to supple courtiers by men named Charles, James, William or George, kings by the grace of God; the goodly land, the common wealth and birthright of the unborn, was granted in princedom, to favorites of king's minions, for services unspecified.

The toilers of Abingdon—of other Abingdons, perhaps, know none of these things, winter has pushed them hard, summer has been all too brief; life has been crowded with a feverish intensity of work. There is a vague memory of the Sullivan Expedition; once a year the early settlers, as a community enterprise, had brought salt from Syracuse; the forest had been rafted down the river; the rest is silence.

Perhaps this good old English stock, familiar for a thousand years with oppression and gentility, wonted to immemorial fraud, schooled by generations of cheerful teachers to speak no evil of dignities, to see everything for the best in the best of possible worlds, found no injustice in the granting of these broad manors—or, at least, no novelty worthy of mention to their sons. There is no whisper of ancient wrong; no hint or rankling of any irrevocable injustice.

Doubtless some of these land grants were made, at a later day, to soldiers of the Revolution. But the children of the Revolution maintain a not unbecoming reticence as to all things Revolutionary; from their silence in this regard, as from the name of Manor, we make safe inference. Doubtless many of the royalist estates were confiscated at that time. Doubtless, again, our government, to encourage settlement, sold land in such large parcels in early days. Incurious Abingdon! And yet are these folk, indeed, so singular among citizens? So unseeing a people? Consider that, within the memory of men living, the wisdom of America has made free gift to the railroads, to encourage their building, of so much land as goes to the making of New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, a notable encouragement!

History does not remark upon this little transaction, however. In some piecemeal fashion, a sentence here, a phrase elsewhere, with scores or hundreds of pages intervening. History does, indeed, make yawning allusion to some such trivial circumstance; refraining from comment in the most well-bred manner imaginable. It is only the ill-affected, the malcontents, who dwell upon such details. Is this not, indeed, a most beautiful world, and ours the land of opportunity, progress, education? Let our faces, then, be ever glad and shining. Let us tune ourselves with the infinite; let a golden thread run

through all our days; no frowns, no grouches, no scolding—no, no! No ingratitude for all the bounties of Providence. Let us then be up and doing. Doing, certainly; but why not think a little too?

Why is thinking in such disfavor? Why is thinking about subjects and things, the one crime never forgiven by respectability? We have given away our resources, what should have been our common wealth; we have squandered our land, wasted our forests. "Such trifles are not my business," interrupts History, rather feverish of manner, "my duty is to record and magnify the affairs of the great." Allow me, madam; we have given away our coal, the wealth of the past; our oil, the wealth of today; except we do presently think to some purpose, we shall give away our stored electricity, the wealth of the future—our water power which should, which must remain ours and our children's. "Socialist!" shrieks History.

The youth of Abingdon speak glibly of Shepherd Kings, Constitution of Lycurgus, Thermopylae, Consul Luilius, or the Licinian Laws; the more advanced are even as far down as Elizabeth. For the rich and unmatched history of their own land, they have but a shallow patter of that; no guess at its high meaning, no hint of a possible destiny apart from glory and greed and war, a future and opportunity "too high for hate, too great for rivalry." The history of America is the story of the pioneer and the story of the immigrant. The students are taught nothing of the one or the other—except for one case of certain immigrant pioneers, enskied, sainted, who never left the hearing of the sea; a sturdy and stout-hearted folk enough, but something press-agented.

Outside of school the student hears no mention of living immigrant or pioneer save in terms of gibe and sneer and taunt. The color and high romance of his own township is a thing undreamed of, as vague and shapeless as the foundations of Enoch, the city of Cain. And for his own farmstead, though for the first time on earth a man made here a home; though valor blazed the path; though he laid the foundation of that house in hope and in love set up the gates of it, none knows the name of that man or of his bolder mate. There are no traditions—and no ballads."

In a letter to Mr. Will Atkinson, Mr. Rhodes tells how in 1885-6 during Geronimo's raids he lived alone, the sole inhabitant of a strip of country the size of Delaware. His only book for nine months was "Progress and Poverty."

Houghton, Mifflin Co. are Mr. Rhodes' publishers and Who's Who in America gives quite a list of books he has written.

"OUR present rating system operates as a hostile tariff on our industries; it goes in restraint of trade; it falls with severity on the shoulders of the poorer classes in the very worst shape—in the shape of a tax upon the house room. Let the value of the land be assessed independently of the buildings upon it, and upon such valuation let contribution be made to those public services which create the value."—SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

"I BELIEVE in the taxation of land values only."—JUSTICE LOUIS D. BRANDEIS, of the U. S. Supreme Court.

Ohio Assessor Tells of His Difficulties

A. J. THATCHER, auditor and tax assessor of Franklin county, Ohio, had an article in the *State Journal* of Columbus, March 20, in which he described the dilemma assessors find themselves in when they come to getting all property on the assessment rolls at its true value in money as Ohio's constitution requires. The portion relating to personal property is as follows:

He would have to know values of every stove, range, chair, bed set, dish set, diamond, topaz, ruby, garnet, picture, rug, library, piano, radio, victrola; each stock of drugs, shoes, groceries, dry goods, tobaccos, first in the hands of the maker, then the wholesaler, then the dealer and then the user. He would have to know the value of every share of stock, every bond, every mortgage owned by an individual in or on every industry in this and other countries or on chattles, land and buildings located here or in the other 47 states of the Union and also its dependencies. He would have to know every note and account payable to an individual and the ability to collect the same for the latter, who might reside here or in any of the tens of thousands of villages, cities or townships throughout the country. He would have to know the exact amount of money each individual has in pockets, bureau drawers, banks, building and loans. He would have to know the exact amount each individual owes to individuals, firms, banks and on mortgages. The only way an auditor knows this is by confession of the citizen. Merchants are misinformed by customers, banks are misled by customers, individuals find themselves mistaken as to individuals. No human being in the world knows these things fully about another human being. A county auditor is simply a human being. As long as we base taxation on these faulty conditions there are going to continue inequalities we would like to prevent but cannot reach.

In another part of his article, Auditor Thatcher declares that if an auditor could do what the law requires, he would not be a county official at all, but would set up as an expert of experts in appraising property values and draw \$100 a day.

The sensible lesson to draw is that the assessor should have only one kind of property to assess. That's a big enough job.

The Age Old Question

LET me tell you that no sooner have these so-called personal movements started than the age-old question of Mexico takes the field: the landed aristocracy against the people. When the big issue appears the people take command: General and politician, social prophet and vulgar grafter—they all obey. Knowingly or unconsciously, they line up, and the old fight between privilege and destitution is once more in full sway.—From *Some Mexican Problems*, by M. Saenz, of the Dept. of Education of Mexico.