

Uses Intelligence as to Land

IN Northern Nigeria, now the Northern Provinces, urban and rural land is let on permits of indefinite term, with reassessment of the full site value for revenue every few years. There is no litigation to secure such titles, and multitudes of people live in rapidly increasing comfort as shown by production returns; and the local treasuries, which carry out nearly all Government duties, are richly financed, with no need of any form of taxation on trade or accumulation.

There must be no misunderstanding on this point; the land value duly confiscated does provide richly for all public needs, no taxes are needed, and would-be producers do get access to any idle land without suffering blackmail for the privilege; there is no land litigation either between persons or tribal or municipal-organized groups.

All the facts given above are drawn from West Africa, 1926, by Mr. Ormsby-Gore, late Conservative Under-Secretary for the Colonies.—*Land and Liberty*, February, 1929.

THE story is told that Washington could throw a dollar across the Potomac and find it afterward on the bank where it fell, though he might not have looked for it for several days. Banks on the Potomac were safer then.

BOOK REVIEWS

AN INTERESTING BOOK*

This work, which has attained prominence as a "best seller"—150,000 in a few months, we believe—makes no effort to treat fundamentally of America's history and progress. Mr. Adams tells us his object has been "rather to paint a picture with broad strokes of the brush our variegated past."

Many faults might be found with it. The picture of the Indians as "a savage and barbaric race" must be taken *cum grano salis*. That they were "cruel and revengeful" and of "hysterical make-up" must also be subject to a certain modification which a more careful exercise of the scholarship in the gift of the writer would have done much to correct.

He is alive to the economic advantages offered by free natural opportunities to the new settlers, and says: "With free land easily obtainable there was little or no reason why a hard-working, ambitious man should have to work for another instead of himself. (Page 38.)

He returns to the lessons of these conditions more than once throughout the book. He shows their bearing upon the growth of democracy. He is everywhere alive to their importance.

He tells us that he finds, "despite the lonely roads through the woods, but one case of highway robbery in the colonial period." The cause seems to be clear to him: "Under better economic conditions crimes against person or property became rare in the colonies." Prof. Adams' knowledge of economics is sounder than that of many whose business it is to teach it.

On page 61 he says: "The large land holdings were got for the most part in devious ways."

He shows how Jefferson and others labored for emancipation, but

without results. (Page 104.) He shows that Jefferson was influenced by the French philosophers to some extent, but that he had complete faith in the ordinary citizen." (Page 111.)

On page 157 Prof. Adams gives an account of the passing of the country magnate and the appearance of the city landlord, when the herding of the population into small quarters began. He senses the breaking down of economic democracy in the North (1830-1840), due to the preemption of the best lands in the cities. Cause and consequence are related in a few telling sentences, covering the period from 1800 to 1830.

There is an account (page 168) of the influence of Henry Clay, and Prof. Adams tells us that protectionists who have succeeded him have merely rung the changes on the speech he made in March, 1824.

Perhaps he is not quite fair to Jackson, for, though "a duelling, swashbuckling hero," he was not without certain excellent qualities that have left their impress upon the Republic.

On page 212 mention is made of the orgy of land speculation leading to the panic of 1837. There are passages dealing with the moral consequences following a prevailing devotion to mere money getting, and the prevalence of crime and disorder which is repeating itself in the present era.

There are some thoughts boldly proclaimed dealing with the World War, the causes leading to it, and our entry into it.

On the whole Mr. Adams has made a useful book, with much shrewd comment and sanity of observation, among which we would give unstinted praise to the fine and wholly discriminating tribute to the character of George Washington.

There is also a rather searching account of William Jennings Bryan and his campaigns, briefly touched upon, and the causes that lay behind Free Silver, which Prof. Adams recognizes was but the symbol of revolt. This might have been written by Henry George himself, so astutely penetrating is it, resembling Mr. George's great pamphlet "Beneath the Silver Question."

And, by the way, why was there not a mention of Henry George? And when we are discussing omissions, why not a mention as well of Thomas A. Edison, of Wendell Phillips, of the Christian Science movement? And while the Ku Klux Klan of Civil War days is referred to, why no mention of its more recent picturesque successor with a membership of more than three millions?

The author's criticism of Henry Ford is misplaced censure. The \$50 profit which Ford makes on each automobile he manufactures cannot begin to compare with the hundreds of dollars' benefit the farmer receives by reason of having purchased easy and quick transportation from the farm to the city.

Of course Prof. Adams has not attempted an answer to the problems that are crowding on us. That was not his purpose; he has, as he tells us, but set himself to paint a picture in "broad strokes." Therefore, perhaps it is not fair to find fault with him for the things he has not said, the profound causes he has not touched upon, the fundamental truths of which it was no part of his purpose to treat. Some of these he has at least sensed and in partial lights envisioned.

B. W. B.

A GREAT CAREER *

A man named Henry George wrote a book. To a great number of men and women life thereafter was never the same. Many met him personally and had the advantage of that great companionship. He touched them by his writings and by his remarkable personality with something like a divine fire.

Samuel Seabury fell under that influence. He read "Progress and Poverty" and met the author. The high-minded youth whose intellect was of a serious cast had his career determined for him then and there. Something of the tradition inherited from distinguished forebears

*The Epic of America. By James Truslow Adams. 8vo; cloth; price \$3.75. Little, Brown & Co., Boston, Mass.

*Samuel Seabury: A Challenge. By Walter Chambers: cloth; 12mo; 389 pages; illustrated. Price \$3.50. The Century Company, New York City.