

WINSTANLEY THE DIGGER

The Cresset Press has published Selections from *The Works of Gerrard Winstanley*, edited by Leonard Hamilton and with an introduction by Christopher Hill (price 7s. 6d.). The editor states that it was intended to bring out a complete reprint of Winstanley's writings, but this project was abandoned because of the publication of *The Works of Gerrard Winstanley*, edited by Professor G. H. Sabine, by Cornell University Press. The present volume gives a selection which will sufficiently indicate the nature of Winstanley's thought, and is welcome as *The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth*, by Lewis H. Berens (Simpkin, Marshall, 1906), which has long been out of print. It is strange that no reference is made in the introduction to the present work to that by Mr. Berens, who was the pioneer in this field of research.

CHINA

In an article entitled "The Mistake of China," in the *Contemporary Review* for August, the Hon. George Peel writes:—

"If we consider the land tenures of China at the opening of the eighteenth century, much the greater part of the land was Royal, Governmental, Temple, military colonisation and clan. Since then private persons have 'rushed' this public property, with the final result that, in our time, 'this irresistible process of transferring public land into private land is becoming more and more apparent with the additional result that the land of China has been passing more and more out of the hands of the State' and also out of the hands of the peasantry. For 'concentrated land ownership from the Great Wall to the southernmost sea coast' has been the order of the day (*Agrarian China*, 1938, article by Sun-Shao-Tsun, *The Land Problems of Modern China*, pp. 2-3). This misappropriation of land by private persons has continued very rapidly under the Republic of 1911. 'After that revolution, vast amounts of temple land, educationalists' land, military colonisation land and other forms of Governmental land, were illegally sold through the manipulation of corrupt officials and greedy gentry.' (Op. cit., p. 2.) As Professor Touney very just comments: 'A Government which permits the exploitation of the mass of its fellow-citizens, on the scale depicted in the pages which follow, may make a brave show, but it is digging its own grave. A Government which grapples boldly with the land question will have little to fear either from foreign imperialism or from domestic disorder. It will have as its ally the confidence and goodwill of half a million villages' (op. cit. p. xviii.). But China, for generations, has made the mistake of neglecting this, the fundamental interest of its most worthy citizens, and, most unfortunately, there is little sign of a better state of things."

ALBERTA

Mr. J. B. Ellert, of Milk River, where land value taxation for local revenue is in full operation, writes that another success has been gained in Coaldale. That village has also adopted the principle fully. Immediately thereafter there were advertisements in the *Lethbridge Herald* of lots for sale at greatly reduced prices, lots in the centre of the town that had no improvements on them. "When we consider," he writes, "these circumstances—lots obtainable at less cost, buildings exempt from taxes, the revenue from land value taxation coming back to the people in municipal improvements and services, wages earned for work done and purchasing power increased to that extent, one can see the great advantage that free land gives to the people."

The *Lethbridge Herald* reported that the poll in Coaldale was held on 22nd January. It calls land value taxation "the Milk River system," and adds the expectation that it will be put into effect also in Lethbridge.

CUBA

Mr. Rogelio Casás Cadilla has written an attractive pamphlet on Cuba's economic problems (*El Problema Económico de Cuba*). It is now in a fourth edition and is published by the Compañía Editora de Libros-y Folletos, O'Reilly 304, Habana. Among other things it points out that a plot of land in Habana worth \$10,000 pays nothing in taxation, the revenue being raised by customs duties and other indirect taxes, while in New York such a plot would pay \$325. The City of New York spends more on public education than the whole of South America, Central America and Mexico together. The exports of Cuba are a fifth more than the imports. The excess mainly represents rent taken by absentee land-owners. Such are some of Cuba's economic problems.

SOUTH AFRICA

CAPE TOWN LAND PRICES.—"M.S." in the *The Free People*, April, reports that Councillor H. S. Walker, M.P.C., recently made a six months' investigation of land prices in the Peninsula. Quoting recent transfer figures he said that at Clifton an estate which the municipality had valued at £50 was sold for £500 in 1942, resold a week later for £1,500, and when subdivided at £1,849. A plot in the Gardens was valued at £60 and changed hands in 1938 at £1,350, and would probably to-day fetch a "fantastic price." Plots at Sea Point had been sold at 37½ times the municipal valuation. Land required by the Municipal Council was sold after the war began for £6,500. The owner cut off a portion and now offers the remainder to the Council for £20,000 and there seems no alternative but to buy. That will inflate the cost of housing schemes. "If we don't find land for them in the suburbs," he pointed out, "returned soldiers will be forced to make their homes on the out-

skirts far from transport, where they will have to wait years before the municipality can supply transport services and amenities. Wives will find such lives trying, and I fear many soldiers' marriages will be broken in consequence."

LAND AND HOUSING

The paper on "Housing—The True Solution," read by Mr. W. E. Fox before the Clapham Labour Party on 3rd April last, has been published as an illustrated pamphlet. It is a statement for the home-maker and all who are looking for homes, told in a simple and attractive way. Concluding his review of the matter, Mr. Fox says: "To deal with the question of accessibility to land is the first business of Government. It is not an incidental matter, but the first business for attention in the long list of matters requiring attention in a highly evolved society that has allowed itself to get entangled in the undergrowth of land monopoly. Indeed many of the provisions and safeguards dear to the hearts of Socialists will be revealed as unnecessary in that new state of affairs lying in the lap of the society whose structure is based upon a just system of land tenure: a system of land holding in which every child on reaching man's estate (which includes womanhood's estate) has right of access to land on equal terms with everyone else. To pretend otherwise is both foolishness and cowardice. All other provisions must wait upon the terms upon which the land can be had. Men whose access to land is all on the same footing, none having any privileges in the matter (for this is the true Anglo-Saxon principle of land holding from which our ideas of freedom, fair-play, generosity, kindness, liberality, proceed as children from their mother, and Magna Charter and Habeas Corpus as its descendants) have no masters and no servants; the whole prodigality of the earth's bounty is their wages, they will live in their own houses, and sit in the shade of their own trees with none to vex them or make them afraid. Their religion will be pure because its maintenance will depend upon all of them equally, and no one, nor any few will hold the many in the hollow of their hands."

Copies of Mr. Fox's pamphlet may be had on application to our offices.

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