

ship of land, in abstract justice. These are propositions Spencer "proved," although proved is the wrong word. The propositions don't need proving. All one has to do to see the truth is to think of land in a newly discovered country. Who owned it before it was discovered? No one. By what authority does anyone take it absolutely after discovery? By no authority. Land is valuable only because people's use of it makes it so, and the community makes it so, not the individual.

There is no escape from this doctrine—absolutely none.

Count Tolstoy goes into the argument of Henry George at some length, but his main contention is that only by giving the land to the uses of the people can salvation come to Russia, the point being enforced by the fact that Russia is chiefly an agricultural country. The people are impoverished because they are cut off from the land from which they should live. Tolstoy believes the people of the whole world are beginning to see the injustice of private appropriation of the land, and that when they do see it and believe it, the remedy will be applied. The influence of the George doctrine is plainly seen in the movement for a greater taxation of land values and of franchises in which the land is granted for quasi-public use. It has made the Irish tenant practically the arbiter of land values, and given him the advantage in dealing with the landlord in purchasing land. Plainly the George theory is forcing the land back into the common possession of the people by taxing it for the benefit of the people.

"The Great Iniquity," which is the title of Count Tolstoy's letter, has been published in full in the Chicago Public of August 19th, and it should be read carefully by every thinking man who knows and feels the injustice of the world as it is organized to-day. The one thought that comes to the philosophic student of the George theory, even after admitting its almost axiomatic nature, is that when the evil of private ownership shall be abolished, the ingenuity of man will probably contrive that the same advantage shall accrue to the shrewd and able and selfish and unscrupulous few that now accrues in what is known as "the unearned increment." Count Tolstoy seems to scent this, for the nubbin of his argument is that the people who refuse to see the truth have no religion. For the bringing about of the better day of

the land owned by the people, he argues, a change of heart is needed. Will such a change of heart come over us? It has come as to other injustices of organized life, and secured their abolition. It may come to make possible the destruction of the evil of a landed few and a landless many. At least we can hope so.

#### RUSSIA PROGRESSING TOWARDS ECONOMIC FREEDOM.

For The Public.

Count Tolstoy's ringing letter on the "Great Iniquity"\* confirms me in the belief which I often expressed during the revolutionary crisis of last winter in Russia, namely, that the land question presents itself much more clearly in Russia than here, on account of the agricultural pursuits of the vast majority of the people; and that it is quite likely that their revolution, when it succeeds, will carry them, not to the point at which we have arrived of parliamentary representation, but far beyond us to actual economic freedom. The Russian sees all wealth coming out of the ground, and he craves land as the source of wealth. Hence any plan for securing the value of the land for the people would appeal to him. The American workman has lost mental hold of the connecting link between land and wealth, and instead of longing for land, he longs for an opening in the city for exercising in some shape or other the attractive profession of graft.

That Count Tolstoy's ideal civilization, a world of industrious and happy Russian peasants, may not be exactly ours, does not in the least diminish the force of his argument. It is true that the possibility of annexing other people's earnings is the great magnet which entices people into our cities to-day, and that when, under just conditions, that pastime becomes impossible, cities will fall back to the natural size of mere markets, entrepôts and ports, such as were the European cities of a century or two ago. The proportion of country-dwellers would vastly increase, and the production of wealth in rural districts would become the prevailing occupation. And so Tolstoy is not altogether wrong in placing so much emphasis upon rural land. But he fails to note how perfectly Henry George's system adapts itself to the urban problem too. In America the crying evil of land-monopoly—the absorption by

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private parties of the unearned increment—shows itself most conspicuously in the cities. There is our greatest leak, and the leakage can be stopped there by the simple scheme of the single tax, with the same mathematical perfection as on the fertile steppes of Russia.

And Tolstoy is right in urging the land question as the first question upon Russian reformers. Its settlement should precede a constitution if possible. It is easier to make great changes under the autocracy than under a representative government. The Russians freed their serfs by a stroke of the pen, while we spent four years of blood and anguish in accomplishing a similar task. It is easy to see that it will be more difficult to put a single tax bill through a national assembly made up largely of land-owners, than to obtain the assent of the Tsar. And even if the parliament were composed of peasants, which is impossible, is it likely that they will be more intelligent than our farmers, and see how perfectly the plan of Henry George meets their needs? It is very much to be hoped that those who guide the new movement in Russia will listen to Tolstoy's words. If they do, it will transform the losses of this war into the greatest of all blessings, and place Russia, in spite of her present weakness, in the van of the great nations of the earth—just as Japan's marvelous success may degrade her for centuries to the thralldom of low and material ideals.

ERNEST H. CROSBY.

Rhinebeck, N. Y., Aug. 26, 1905.

#### HOW THE RUSSIANS CONDUCT A CONGRESS.

The preparedness of the Russians for parliamentary government is a question upon which we have all been speculating. The following account of the late Zemstvo Congress at Moscow (pp. 276, 308), written at Moscow by Victor E. Marsden, appeared in the London Speaker of August 12.

Russia has held her first Parliament, a Parliament in every sense of the word. The members of this assembly, which met for a brief session of three days at Moscow, the heart of Russia, were the duly elected representatives of those who sent them from all quarters of the Empire of All the Russias, excepting only those parts which are not, and never will be, anywhere but on paper, Russian in more than name. And they have fulfilled admirably the first duty of a Parliament; they have talked and discussed, parleyed and played

with great questions of statecraft and administration in a way calculated to rouse the instincts of freedom and good government in every Russian breast. In early days no Parliament can do more, and the future is all before this youngest child of the mighty Mother of Parliaments, upon whose half-forgotten history the struggles of the present movement in Russia are wholly based. Whatever may be the practical outcome of this Parliament in Russia—and the needle points to civil war—there can be no doubt but that a better knowledge of what is best in England must follow from the discussions of those three days, when English precedent and English practice, even English words and expressions used in our party politics, in the original or in ready-made translations, were constantly appealed to by speaker after speaker. Few more important changes of thought are conceivable nowadays than that Russia, the champion of despotic principles of government for centuries past, should become permeated with those principles of freedom for which England and her neighbor France have ever stood together against the world at large and against Russia in particular. An appreciable percentage of the members knew English to speak, many more could read, and for those who could do neither there were plenty of books in Russian selling freely on the staircase dealing with English constitutional history and the theory of freedom. An interesting late addition to the bookstall was a copy of the Japanese constitution. There was no lack of suggestion in the speeches that members had made themselves perfectly familiar with the details of free government in every part of the world.

One hundred and seventy-two members elected *ad hoc* by the zemstvos of thirty-four provinces and one hundred and twelve members elected by the municipalities of forty-seven of the larger towns assembled, without the sanction and in opposition to the express wishes of the Administration, in Moscow, to discuss the political situation of Russia and vote the draft of a constitution.

The place of assembly was the residence of the twin Princes Dolgorukov, sons of the Lord Great Chamberlain of the Imperial Court, whose house is one of the half dozen most ancient and honorable of the historic nobility of Russia. Many more historic noble names figured among the list of mem-

bers; the class corresponding to our old landed gentry accounted for quite half those present, there were four or five military generals—for there are in Russia civilian and even naval "generals" also—who appeared in uniform, and the remainder were leading professional and business men of the great towns. As varied a list and as truly representative of all that counts in Russia as could well be conceived.

About fifty members were capable speakers and five or six rose to the pitch of eloquence. What was most lacking, and to the English eye painfully lacking, was the hard-headed, unemotional, commonsense, sound Parliamentary debater. Of such a type there seemed but one man present, the chairman of the Moscow Zemstvo Executive Board, M. Golovin, whose words and manner would have commanded the attention of that most exacting assembly, the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland.

M. Golovin, moreover, was almost the only member present who was dressed in the style we are accustomed to regard essential to public occasions. This is a matter of more importance than perhaps appears at first sight; it is certainly a criterion of the stage arrived at by Russian public men. In Russia, under the existing regime, every man who has any claims at all to count wears some kind of uniform. The members of this congress of freedom, with the exception of the military men, who are not allowed to cast off their uniforms, made a point of appearing in civil dress. There are no unwritten social laws in Russia as yet about the wearing of civilian dress; it is possible to see combinations such as white flannels and a black silk hat; brown boots and a dinner jacket under the same solemn headpiece; and other equally curious assortments of masculine attire. For the most part the members of the Congress favored lounge suits, with a partiality for the raw-silk variety of summer jacket, which at a distance bears a very close resemblance to the overalls of the laboring man at home. A stranger to Russian ways would certainly have been mistaken every time in an attempt to place nine-tenths of those who assembled in Moscow to plot the regeneration of an empire. Whether at noon or midnight the scene in this respect was the same, and the solemnity of the occasion suffered not a little in consequence, at any rate to the eye.

This is one point of adverse criti-

cism that occurs to one, and the only other is the want of due discipline in the conduct of business. Largely, no doubt, this was owing to the chairman, Count Heyden, whose previous experiences in the chair had apparently not fitted him to deal with a meeting so mixed as this was, where no small amount of control was demanded. Within half an hour of the close of the Congress Count Heyden fairly gave it up, and his successor, M. Scepkin, only kept the chair for ten minutes, having begun with a threat to leave it if the meeting did not keep better order. When he bounced out of the chair it was taken by M. Golovin, who brought the meeting to an orderly close in a few minutes of calm, tactful control. The disorder, at its worst, was a mere trifle to what most British chairmen are accustomed to almost every time they preside at a public meeting; but the habit of public discussion is very new as yet in Russia. During no inconsiderable part of the meetings Count Heyden, as chairman, would be on his feet at the same time as the lawful speaker, while three or four others would be standing up to interject remarks or insist on a right to speak, and the tintinnabulation of the chairman's handbell became very trying to the nerves in its persistence.

The taking of a vote, which occasionally became necessary, although in general all members were in accord on all main questions, was accomplished in a way which would never have satisfied an English meeting. Count Heyden invariably insisted on putting the question in involved language, and several times votes were repeated owing to members not understanding how the question had been put. Very often merely an amendment was put; the "noes" taken by a show of hands, and on the strength of this the original motion was declared carried. Moreover, any number of amendments were allowed, and the chairman then put something which seemed an attempt to combine the points of various amendments, or he simply put the most comprehensive amendment, and this being rejected the motion was carried without further formality. It is necessary to note, however, that there was rarely any voting on anything but very minor points, the main questions being carried by acclamation, to cries of "Agreed, agreed." The only experience of public meetings which members can possibly ever have had in Russia has been obtained in the meet-

ings of the zemstvos and the town councils, each of which has its own methods; the little irregularities noticed arose doubtless from the mixture of the two methods in the absence of any generally accepted code of rules for the conduct of large public meetings.

The speeches, on the other hand, were in general admirable, and in very many cases admirably delivered. Poetry and eloquence are still held in the highest respect in Russia, and not a little of the latter quality was manifested by several of the speakers. M. Muromtsev, of Moscow; General Kuzmin-Karavaev, of Tver; M. Petrunkevich, of Tver; M. Oppel, of St. Petersburg; M. Kokoshkin, of Moscow, and both the Princes Dolgorukov, are all admirable speakers. M. Golovin I have already mentioned. As a speaker he commanded an instant and attentive hearing in the most excited moments of the Congress. Prince Paul Dolgorukov also repeatedly saved a difficult situation by easy, graceful speeches, full of the tact of the leader of public opinion and occasionally suggestive of an immense reserve of fiery earnestness below. The same qualities are equally possessed by his twin-brother, Prince Peter Dolgorukov, and these two great nobles did no little also of the routine drudgery of the executive committee. Not a single member made any use of notes in any of the speeches delivered, even the least capable speaking extempore. There was no time limit placed on the speeches, nor was there apparently any regulation as to the number of speeches a member might make on the same motion. . . .

There could be no doubt about the success of this Russian Parliament, from whatever point of view it be regarded. There was ample evidence of the existence of all the elements of party government, together with the spirit of statesmanlike compromise which makes progress possible without sacrifice of principle on either side.

C. Bower's story is best told in his own words:

"I was workin down on thee Siction fer jimm Hill fer a dollar an a quarther a da an a dom skoonk of a Chinymen come along an took my job fer six (6) bits. I assed fer a pas to Saint Paul an the supertenint sed howe long hev I bin a work-in an I says thirty (30) years an he sed hav i no money an I says no and

he says ef i would work thirty (30) years longer i will hev money fer to pa me fair, and i says ef he will com out hear I will make him look lik thirty (30) cents an he did an I did." —Book-Keeper's Bulletin.

## BOOKS

### MIRABEAU.

To study the French Revolution is to study the history of the world in concentrated form. It was as if the long conflict of the ages in all progressive lands were compressed into three years in one country and almost within one city. No wonder that more historians and biographers have written of the events and men of these years than of any other period of history. It is not a difficult period. The issue was clear. Nor is it difficult to understand the leading characters. The times called for plain speech, and men, with whatever fear and trembling, spoke their honest convictions hot from the heart.

The greatest speaker, and the man with the strongest intellectual gifts, among the leaders of the revolution was Gabriel Honore Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau. He is the special subject of the latest work on the Revolution, written by Charles F. Warwick (Mirabeau and the French Revolution, Lippincott, Philadelphia, 483 pp., \$2.50). The causes, issues and general characteristics of the time are very fairly told, and from this single volume one gets a pretty clear view of the Revolution up to the death of Mirabeau, April 2, 1791. The book is lacking in consecutiveness. It is strongest in the interesting narration of special incidents. It is essentially a book to read, rather than a book to refer to for definite information. Though it has an index, the facts are scattered and cannot readily be found, and many are omitted which ought certainly to have been given. The exact date, for example, of Mirabeau's death is not told.

The author is a strong admirer of his subject, and over and over makes the reader see the great power of Mirabeau's intellect and his marvelous insight. In dealing with Mirabeau's character he is perhaps rather too much inclined to make excuses. It is true that Mirabeau's early life and training were most unfortunate. He never knew the meaning of a decent home life. His father was a man of strong intellect, but brutish and tyrannical. His mother was weak and silly. Their marriage was a fiasco. Mirabeau's own enforced marriage was also a failure. There was no ennobling influence in his early life, nor indeed throughout his life. He was only 42 when he died. And yet had he had in himself the root

of the matter, he might have risen above his evil influences. The fact is that he was a man of transcendent ability, but without the basis of character. His secret acceptance of pay from the court, while virtually leading the assembly, can by no explanation be squared with honor.

Whether, if Mirabeau had lived, the red terror could have been avoided, and the monarchy preserved, must always remain an interesting speculation. Mirabeau was doubtless entirely honest in his conviction that having gained the abolition of the unjust laws of privilege the revolutionists should be content, and should uphold the existing government. But it is doubtful whether his power, even at its best, could have counterbalanced the weakness of the King and the folly of the Queen. And his power was not at its best; it lacked the confidence of character. In a little over a year from his death, when some of his transactions with the court were revealed, the assembly veiled his bust. The next year it was ordered that his body be removed from its place of honor. In September, 1794, his leaden coffin was deposited, without stone or tablet, in a cemetery set apart for criminals. Of course these were the acts of the extreme revolutionists; but they tell the story of a fall which his great presence could hardly have prevented.

J. H. DILLARD.

### THE RECORDING ANGEL.

Taking its title from a kind of graphophone as yet uninvented, which figures in the plot, this story by Edwin Arnold Brenholz (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 56 Fifth avenue. Price, \$1.00) is a medley of the actual and the hoped for. Its motive is the conflict between labor and capital, and its ideal is socialism. The author appears to have personal familiarity with business methods in some aspects, and a newspaper acquaintance with others; for in some of its stages he walks through his story like a wide-awake observer and reveiator, and in others like a man in a dream. To say that the author walks through the story is literally true. He never leaves his characters to themselves; he is ever in their midst regulating their lives for them. Yet the work is not all bad. Despite the ubiquity of the author and an archaic flavor, it promises more than well until it crosses the line from the realm of life as it is into the fog of life as the author would like to have it. Had the story continued as it seems to begin, with the development of a strong character under the stress of modern business pressure, the interest which the earlier part excited might have been held to the end. One quotation is worth making for the benefit of fatalistic evolutionists: "A product of