

The ethical standards of the human race are constantly improving. Many things which were looked upon with approval half a century ago are condemned by society of today. Strenuous efforts have largely put a stop to gambling in, and on, various things, and now speculating and gambling in land, on and from which man has his whole existence, is coming under the ban, as speculating in a necessary of life, and making it more costly and difficult to use, is against public policy.

REVIEWING the recent publications of the Vanguard Press, Ben Ray Redman says in a recent issue of the book review section of the New York *Herald-Tribune*:

"George, Bellamy and Morris were all concerned with the same problem: the amelioration of the lot of man. The one wrote argumentative economics; the other two found expression in Utopias. What George proposed—the abolition of all taxes save that on land—was a simple operation compared to the vast social changes implicit in Bellamy's sweeping vision.

"George, Bellamy and Morris were men of faith and imagination. The more pessimistic of us must believe that their faith is doomed to disappointment, but that should not lessen our enjoyment of their imagination. And if any of them could have made mankind in his own image, as they fashioned their Utopias, then—well, then the history of the future might tell another story."

The Law of Progress

PROGRESS goes on just as society tends towards closer association and greater equality. Civilization is co-operation. Union and liberty are its factors. The great extension of association—not alone in the growth of larger and denser communities, but in the increase of commerce and the manifold exchanges which knit each community together and link them with other though widely separated communities; the growth of international and municipal law; the advances in security of property and of person, in individual liberty, and towards democratic government—advances in short towards the recognition of the equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—it is these that make our modern civilization so much greater, so much higher, than any that has gone before. It is these that have set free the mental power which has rolled back the veil of ignorance which hid all but a small portion of the globe from men's knowledge; which has measured the orbits of the circling spheres and bids us see moving, pulsing life in a drop of water; which has opened to us the ante-chamber of nature's mysteries and read the secrets of a long buried past; which has harnessed in our service physical forces beside which man's efforts are puny; and increased productive power by a thousand great inventions. * * *

To freedom alone is given the spell of power which sum-

mons the genii in whose keeping are the treasures of earth and the viewless forces of the air.

The law of human progress, what is it but the moral law? Just as social adjustments promote justice, just as they acknowledge the equality of right between man and man, just as they insure to each the perfect liberty which is bounded only by the equal liberty of every other, must civilization advance. Just as they fail in this, must advancing civilization come to a halt and recede.

—HENRY GEORGE in "Progress and Poverty".

Local Activity in Pittsburgh

THE Henry George Club of Pittsburgh which conducts weekly luncheons Friday at noon, at Club Room number 1, of the Chamber of Commerce, 7th Avenue and Smithfield, listened to an address on December 10 by Kenneth Lindsay, former member of the British Parliament, his subject being "The Land Problem in Great Britain" On January 21. Hon. Robert Garland, chairman of the Finance Committee of City Council and former President of the Chamber of Commerce of Pittsburgh, spoke on "Pittsburgh's Tax System and Its Advantages."

WHEN two persons desire the same plot of ground, land values arise. If three persons desire it, this value is increased. If scores of thousands cast longing eyes upon it, the value begins to run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars per acre.

An Interesting Letter

The following letter from H. B. Maurer, of Brooklyn to August Heckscher of this city, relative to the latter's proposed plan for housing, is an interesting communication.

"My dear Mr. Heckscher:

I am neither flattered by the promptitude with which you have replied to my letter nor piqued by the information that your letter was 'dictated but not signed' by you, nor by its thinly veiled, but uncalled for, sarcasms.

"Anent the statement 'we are not yet far enough along for the employment of co-operative experts,' I beg leave to say that when you are I shall not be then, as I am not now, interested in any scheme for unloading irksome wealth to ameliorate human ills, especially when it ignores causes; stresses symptoms and leaves the seat of the sore untouched, but serves, however, as an outlet in a fertile field for philanthropy.

"Sharing, as I wrote you, in the conviction expressed in the public prints, that the 'Heckscher Plan' will prove a palliative only, comes now *The Nation*, in its current issue, with an article which leads off thus: 'Henry Ford set sail with the magnificent assurance that he would get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas. Now comes

August Heckscher sailing back to get men and women out of the slums by Easter or thereabouts. The impulse in each case was as decent and generous as the practical realization was dubious * * * * * the elimination of the slums in Manhattan should not mean their prompt development in Brooklyn and the Bronx, which under the Heckscher plan, might readily prove to be the case.' Besides stressing the merits of Governor Smith's solution for the housing problem over the Heckscher plan, *The Nation* offers no remedy and gives no reasons. I shall proceed to do both.

"To the land policy of our boasted civilization may be traced a long train of evils, of which the slum is by no means the most flagrant; a policy which creates vast wealth for the few over night, but causes 'countless millions to mourn' all the time, since from the masses is drained the wealth which is meagrely doled out back to them by the more fortunate, the shrewd and alert.

"So long as the many can use portions of the earth's surface at the suffrance of the few only, no genius will ever arise who can propose a cure for present social and economic ills. Fundamental wrongs cannot be righted by superficial expedients.

"Not so long ago, while riding in a Fifth Avenue omnibus, I counted one hundred and ten vacant lots along the east side of that avenue. When my forebears emigrated from Germany to this country and helped swell the incipient slum population of the east side, those lots could be bought for sums of two or three figures, now they command sums running up to five, six or seven, and quite a few of them still lie serenely in the grasp of the insatiate. Idle land, kept out of use so that the holders thereof may fatten on the enterprise and thrift of others, or used only to the extent of producing taxes and carrying charges, all over Manhattan; in vast areas in the outlying districts, of easy access from the slums, supplies the only natural and effective means for putting to an end a housing condition as easily preventable as it is grossly disgraceful.

"Now, the Creator only could give a title deed to land, as He only could give a bill of sale for a slave, and He has done neither. Human ingenuity has usurped the divine prerogative. This, in the words of Herbert Spencer is how it happened; "Violence, fraud, the prerogative of force, the claims of superior cunning—these are the sources to which those titles may be traced. The original deeds were written with the sword, not the pen; not lawyers, but soldiers were the conveyancers; blows were the current coin in payment and blood was used in preference to wax. Could valid claims thus be constituted? Hardly. And if not, what becomes of the pretensions of all subsequent holders of such estates, so obtained? * * * * * How long does it take for that which was originally a wrong to become a right?"

"Elsewhere in his 'Social Statics' Herbert Spencer says—and this should serve as a hint to those who sub-

stitute charity for justice and eleemosynary enterprise for effective endeavor and sound sense—'Our social edifice may be constructed with all possible labor and ingenuity and be strongly clamped together with cunningly devised enactments, but if there be no rectitude in its component parts, if it is not built up on upright principles, it will surely tumble * * * * * Not as adventitious, therefore, will the wise man regard the faith that is in him * * * * * and made subordinate to calculations of policy, but as the authority supreme to which his actions should bend."

"In an article appearing some years ago in the *Times* of London, Tolstoy urged the acceptance of the philosophy of Henry George as the only means of curing Russia's agrarian ills, claiming that its application would be effective, equitable and expedient. But there, as well as elsewhere, on this round globe where so many of us play the wise and the foolish, men still adhere to the circumlocutionary and the involved."

Is This A Fabled Country?

This admirable "skit" appeared in the *Pennsylvania Commonwealth*, a paper published by R. C. Macauley. The terms of subscription for this little paper which appears monthly, are designed to secure a large circulation. These terms are ridiculously small. Our readers are urged to write Mr. Macauley at 1247 N. 13th Street, Philadelphia, Pa., for sample and particulars.—EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM.

IT is related a certain country adopted a taxation system which absorbed the value of every improved process of production the ingenuity of its citizens could evolve.

A striking feature of this unique taxation system was that a certain privileged few (for some real or supposed service to the State) were permitted to participate in the division of the revenue arising from the aforesaid unjust and confiscatory taxation.

When this special privilege was first granted, the returns to its beneficiaries were quite meager, for the reason that man's power of production was but little in excess of what was required to sustain life and keep him in condition to continue producing.

As years passed, however, by reason of their invention and industry, men became able to produce much more than was needed to satisfy their desires; and the surplus was promptly confiscated under the unique taxation laws of the country.

Soon the few who were privileged to participate in the division of this now greatly swollen fund successfully conspired to divert the major portion of the nation's surplus wealth to their private use.

This action of the specially privileged conspirators aroused severe opposition from the producers, who finally rebelled and refused longer to work for the benefit of the conspirators.

Champions of the conspirators (barristers, they were called) attempted to invoke the law to compel the people