Never a tremor of fear seems to distract the aim of a hammerer, or disturb the phlegmatic carelessness of a chisel-holder, although a single failure to strike the narrow mark would bring the heavy weapon crashing down on the holder's naked hands, or let it glance to smite his arms or body.

The observer feels an impulse to hurry on before he must witness such accidents as impend here only an inch of smooth steel away, yet he lingers in the thrall of the reckless precision, like the spectator of an acrobat's defiance of peril on a high wire or trapeze.

What a vivid parable these workers present, of the risks that must be taken by all breakers of paths, and pioneers of the collective human task through the ages, in the twin spheres of invisible thought and outward achievement!—ever must the ringing strokes that smite the tools of progress endanger the vulnerable, courageous hands that hold them to the work.

One of the hammerers in the gang is a swarthy, handsome young fellow, almost a boy, whose face and figure would delight an artist for a model of the youthful Bacchus, and make him wish that the rough garments of toil might be removed from the slender, sinewy form, to let its supple movement and rippling muscle claim the admiration they deserve.

The strokes this lad deals with his sledge are no less accurate than those of his companions, but in apparent recklessness he exceeds them all.

His black eyes sparkle, and his perfect teeth flash with his laughter at some jest of his own in the staccato Neapolitan dialect, until his share of the labor that the others perform as gray drudgery assumes the gaiety of a schoolboy's athletic romp.

The flexile, steel-spring swerve of his body, as he starts the wide arc of the hammer's swing, is followed by a swift uncoiling of the whole form, erect to the outstretched arms that carry his implement overhead and downward with the tension of a spoke in a great driving-wheel, to meet unfailingly the crown of the chiming drill.

His attack is impetuous as that of a young Bayard or Cid cutting his way alone through encompassing foes, with battle-ax or two-handed sword in a medieval battle;

His "delivery" suggests that of a baseball pitcher, delighting in his ability to outwit opposing batsmen, and smiling toward his infielders as he turns to gather speed for a bewildering curve;

Or again he might be the ringer of some ponderous festival bell, laughing for very joy of the season he proclaims, as he launches all his weight and vigor upon the pendant rope.

It is scarcely strange that the audacious precision of this youth and his companions, whose lafor is rated as "unskilled," should rather come to seem akin to the expert accuracy of the surgeon with his scalpel, the organist at his banks of keys, the artist with his bolder brush-strokes, the cowboy with his lassoo, the housesmiths tossing and catching white-hot rivets across yawning gulfs of a steel building-skeleton, and the aviator hurling his aeroplane to a spectacular plunge and recovery before a frightened grandstand.

ELIOT WHITE.

THE ROOT QUESTION.

An Address by Margaret McMillan of London to the Working Girls of America. From "Life and Labor," the Organ of the Women's Trade Union League, for April, 1911.

You girls in Chicago have just been on strike. This in itself proves that you feel yourselves in the power of something or of some one and wish to free yourselves a little. What is this that you have found in the new country? In the office of the Women's Trade Union League I met last month a little Russian girl, whose father had lost everything he had in Russia, and who had had to come to Chicago to get her living in a factory. "I must work," said the child, who already looked tired out (she was but sixteen), "else what will become of me and my sister? We must work very hard now." Close by was an elderly woman with worn, haggard face. She, too, was working hard every day, driving the wolf from the door, a wolf that came back always.

Yet just outside the city we saw plains teeming with riches, seen and unseen. For hundreds and hundreds of miles stretches this glorious continent, with its rich soil, its extensive forests, its laughing slopes, in the fall heavy with ruddy harvests, its great waterways curving round fertile corn lands and rich orchards. Why must people fight for bread—even in America?

It is this very question that is setting Great Britain in a ferment today. Our English Parliament is supposed to be discussing "The Question of the Lords," but it is really "The Question of the Landlords."

"The land!" Do you in America say, "it is not Land but Capital that we have to challenge. The great employers of labor must give us a minimum wage, and also conform to a standard of life (which we will raise when necessary) in all factories and workshops." This is excellent, and yet one of the great dangers of industrial life today is that an immense number of workers, and these not the least intelligent, will concentrate all their attention on workshop reform, and have none to spare for the greater, deeper problems that lie beyond the wage question and have created the wage-system itself.

In a city one is in danger of forgetting that one does not live by stone walls and paved streets, but by the living earth—the Mother Earth that

yields from her heart and womb not only every grain but every mineral, and feeds all the lower life on which human beings live. She, this mother of us all, makes terms with all her children while they are free. To some she says, "Here are ripe fruits. Eat and be happy," or, to some coral islander she shows the gorgeously hued fish that swim among the rosy and golden weeds that float in the blue waters. In the north lands she is sterner but not less kind perhaps, for she says, "Strive for the food and shelter and clothing I can give and you will grow strong and noble." In the blue circled isles, on stern dark hills there is always a treaty we may make with the Earth, and it is when all is said and done, a wonderful generous, motherly treaty. The free Indians of America know it, and the Sicilian knew it once, and even the Hebridean, bare as are his islands.

Something has come between us and Mother Earth in the old world. Something is coming between her and you in America! That is why even if wages are high they are uncertain and may fall at any time to starvation point. That is why labor is always, relatively, cheap and why thousands and tens of thousands are always out of work.

"See! After all you have a good wage," says the master at times. No one listens to the voice of the fields, the prairies, the meadows, the voice that says, "Till me, and you may eat." No wages should fall below the level of those which she would give us in any area for our labor. Meantime there is a stampede to the towns. Everyone is willing to accept the terms of city labor. Competition waxes apace and wages fall. They are bound to fall lower and lower as masters grow richer and absorb more and more of Mother Earth and her fruits, taking her captive over large areas, and thrusting themselves between her and her children.

The factory worker looking round on the walls of her factory or "shop" and listening to the roar of machinery is not reminded very often of the meaning and life of Earth. She pays rent for a room, or perhaps for a flat. The house she lives in is built on the earth, but even this fact is not clear to her always, though she helps to pay not house rent merely, but ground rent as well. Always she is dealing, not even with men but with bodies of men or representatives of companies and combines! So she is in danger of forgetting—forgetting not only for herself but for others.

If we look into the past we see clearly that progress consists very largely in the limitation as well as the increase of the things that may be bought and sold. As regards the increase we have no difficulty in seeing that, for whereas a savage needs only a very few things in order to live happily, a modern rich woman has an urgent desire for hundreds of objects and kinds of service —for every refinement of a luxurious mind and habit.

Still, all the while there is warning off of the barterers and merchants and exchangers. "Thou shalt not buy or sell thy fellow-man," said the American North to the South. The South rose up in horror. She was ruined for a time simply because her kind of merchandise was suddenly condemned. Now a new commandment is going forth, or rather one kind of exchange and barter is being condemned. "Thou shall not buy away and keep forever Mother Earth, the source of all wealth," says a new order of reformers. And now England is dividing into hostile camps—friend separating from friend, father from son, as well as class from class.

What though the land tax levied by the English Government is very small? The principle involved is not a small thing. It is the beginning of the end of monopoly. It is the beginning of real democracy.

Well, you are in this new struggle. Behind all the trade disputes and strikes of today there is the desire for freedom, not freedom to live idle, but freedom to work and reap and enjoy on terms no harder than those which Nature (not human nature) imposes on this planet. That desire is behind the Chicago strikes and all the other strikes. And since mere girls join in these great trade wars it is the hour to tell girls what the real issue is, and to help them to become fully conscious of it. But now having said a few words about Mother Earth we may glance at this human nature which is the crown and pinnacle of her great, age-long, ceaseless, wasteful striving. The modern human being is the result of immense strivings conscious and unconscious, and he or she is also the beam of exhaustless treasures that cannot all be reached save by long effort. Sorrow and joy and labor develop some of this treasure—bring it to the surface as it were. Overwork and mere brutish toil sinks it to where it must remain lost or barren. In order to be oneself then one must have a long human education, passing triumphantly and not too rapidly from infancy to childhood, from childhood to adolescence, and then without haste through adolescence to manhood or womanhood. Then full-grown, one is fit to live a large, swinging, sweet life—to get riches from Mother Earth, to create beauty, and spell out the meaning of existence. Above all one is fit to enter into equal relations with others, but not into unequal relations. Real education destroys every form of slavery—even the later forms. And life is not worth living if we do not live to give it to everyone.

You have free education in the States. But you have also children in the mills and factories. You have not stamped out child labor (which is very little better than child-murder). No doubt you will do it before long. But if it is to be done

effectively it will have to come from the mothers and sisters of working class children. Others might release the children from labor, working women alone can prepare them to become not merely citizens of a free country, but masters and mistresses of their own destiny.

BOOKS

THE GREAT AMERICAN TARIFF GAME A NATIONAL SPECIALTY!

The Tariff In Our Times. By Ida M. Tarbell. Published by The Macmillan Co., New York. Price, $1.50 net.

If there is any one of our national institutions calculated above all others to make the Comic Spirit rejoice, surely it is the political farce known as Tariff Revision. For more than thirty years now our National Legislature has devoted much time during every session to a continuous performance of this highly edifying and amusing entertainment. We really would miss it if it was ever actually settled. Senators, Representatives, the public and the newspapers would undoubtedly feel a lack, as of a dear friend missing, if any of our Presidents took a definite stand on the tariff question, either refusing to argue it at all, or else settling it one way or the other. What would our Presidents do for a message if there was no Tariff Revision to talk about? They would be as badly off as the comic papers would be if the mother-in-law joke went really out of fashion. It is all so ludicrous, or rather it would be, were it not so tragic in its effect on the physical and moral well-being of the nation.

Now that they are at it again in Washington, with a non-committal Presidential message, and an only slightly less non-committal Tariff Board report to consider (what a blessing Congressional sessions so seldom conflict with the baseball season), Ida Tarbell's "The Tariff in Our Times," a book giving a painstaking history of this other great American Sport, comes with a timely appeal. It is an enlightening work, as much from the spirit in which it is written as from the facts it details. It may possibly be provable that some of the facts have been misrepresented or misunderstood. But the mass of them is a matter of common knowledge, and the author has marshaled them in a crushing arraignment of our National Farce. Page after page of names and figures; page after page of history repeating itself from session to session; the same old heart-breaking round of struggle between a few ardent souls who in all sincerity of belief called up a Frankenstein they themselves could no longer control; the same earnest desire for revision on the part of a few, with still another ardent few fighting for the principles of Free Trade; and between all these the great overwhelming army of the Interests, the clamoring Grafters, the thronging lobbyists, the futile messages and reports, the ludicrous attempts at change, leaving no change perceptible at each changing Administration;—the very dreary repetition proves the disastrous folly of it all!

And with this, outside in the great world of daily life, a few growing richer and richer, the great mass growing poorer and poorer; capital and labor taxed alike for the benefit of whoever controls some Senator or Representative—all the natural outcome of a false economic system hemming logical evolution. We may not agree with Miss Tarbell that Protectionism, bad as it is, is at fault for all the economic ills that oppress us. Many of these ills are found in an aggravated form in Freetrade countries. But the very facts she arrays prove beyond a doubt how much of it the tariff is responsible for.

The deadly parallel between the tariff fights of any time during the past twenty years and the tariff fight of last year is appalling. We have gone no further for all our fancied advance in civilization. Or, yes, there is one ray of hope. More of us are beginning to awaken to the fact that the tariff is not a matter of political expediency, not merely a commodity with which to bargain for political preferment. We are beginning to realize that the tariff means a false burden of taxation, and out of that grows, or should grow, logically, the understanding of the fact that wrong taxation is at the heart of all social wrongs of today.

There is no need to linger over special facts in the book. Its most striking feature is the splendid summing up of the case against Protection given in the last chapter. Here, with Rhode Island, a Protection-made State, as an example, the benefits American labor has derived from protection are shown in appalling pictures of conditions among the mill hands in the textile industry. Here also Miss Tarbell strikes at the heart of the trouble in her arraignment of the moral effect on the tariff fight on the minds and hearts of our people—of those who have benefited by it, as well as of those who have been crushed by it out of all joy of life.

"Deeper than the wrongs it is doing the poor, deeper than the warping of the intellect, is the question of the morals which underlie its operations. Simmered down to its final essence the tariff question as it stands in this country today is a question of national morals, a question of the kind of men it is making."

No institution can be morally right which teaches the individual to disregard the rights of others. And no institution that is not morally right can be politically right for any country. This is the burden of Miss Tarbell's book, this