

in *Grundskyld*, the Danish quarterly; of addresses given at the International Conference in Copenhagen in 1926, and at other important meetings. The material has been knit together in more or less chronological order, interspersed with notes on personalities, those who are still working for the cause, those who have passed on; with reminiscences of particularly important gatherings and lines of effort that have influenced political action. And through it all pulses the rich personality of the woman who is one of the leading figures of the movement in Denmark, and who yet belongs to our country as well, by her early life and family connections here.

Denmark's importance in the furtherance of the ideal of social justice preached by Henry George, cannot be overlooked. In this energetic modern-minded little country, the purest form of the doctrine is understood, and put into practical action, as nowhere else in Europe. There has never been, in Denmark, any stepping aside towards land-nationalization or communalization, as in England or Germany, for instance. The backbone of the Danish nation now is the free farmer on his own land, and just these "small-holders," as they are called, are the backbone of the Danish land-value taxation movement as well. A movement which they never forget is more than a mere fiscal policy. They understand it as the first and all-important step towards true liberty and justice for the people of any country.

As Mrs. Björner shows us, the Danish Single Tax movement has lived through three distinct periods of growth, separated by intervals of dormancy, due in one case to the World War, in the other, to the world economic depression. It is just now entering on the third period, and promise of new life is given by passage of laws that have written a certain measure of land value taxation into the Danish political edifice.

Touching lightly herself on the first period, Mrs. Björner has given the word there to an article by Dr. Villads Christensen, historian. Dr. Christensen was a sterling fighter for the cause, whose death in 1922, in his best maturity, was a great loss to the movement. His position as curator of the city's archives gave him authority which he used to high advantage in expounding the doctrines of Henry George. His article on the first period of the movement, given in full in Mrs. Björner's book, is a record of importance.

It is interesting to know that the Danish movement, based so largely as it is on that typical Danish class, the "small-holders," had its start and its early roots in another typically Danish institution, the so-called "People's High School," that admirable system of adult education for which Denmark is deservedly famed. Dr. Jacob Lange, still a tower of strength to the movement, gave the first impetus in an article of his in the organ of the People's High Schools. It will be remembered that it was Dr. Lange who first rendered Henry George's most important writings into Danish. Dr. Christensen gives a graphic description of the controversy called forth by Prof. Lange's writings and the first meetings that grew out of it. Even today, the Danish comrades hold their most important conferences and conventions in these High Schools for adult education, a most valuable and fertile field for propaganda. Out of these beginnings grew the first Henry George Club, in 1899. It was not a very husky infant and passed out gently two years later. But its successor, started in 1902, grew lustily and was able to endure although quiescent, even through the war years.

Then (Mrs. Björner herself takes up the tale) came the period of second blooming, culminating in the Parliamentary measures of land value taxation for State and Communal purposes. In this the Danish Georgists had the assistance of the Radical Left Party, of which many of the comrades were members. Their success in bringing about some measure of governmental achievement led to the holding of the Third International Conference for Land Value Taxation in Copenhagen.

Then came the period of world economic doldrums and, as everywhere, the work in Denmark languished. For even Denmark, with its interesting and valuable economic innovations, could not but feel

the grip of the universal calamity. And amid frantic governmental efforts to improve the situation came protectionist measures which discouraged and angered the Danish Single Taxers. But the tide seems turning now, and the various organizations are going ahead with renewed energy, finding a public once again ready to listen to some more fundamental remedy.

Mrs. Björner does not attempt to hide or palliate the disagreements among the Danish comrades, the same there as with us or anywhere where there is an alive and vital progress in the movement. In Denmark, as with us, the main discussions as to ways and means hinge on the two divergent paths of political action or educative work. The Danish League of Justice, a political party of Single Taxers, was formed against much opposition, even from the leading workers. But it accomplished its purpose of electing several members to the Parliament (four, at the moment), and does seem to have been useful. So much so, that even those who first protested are now helping. The work of education is going on actively. And as a number of the leading Danish comrades are principals or instructors in the group of People's High Schools, the study of fundamental economics and just taxation has become a part of the curriculum of many such establishments.

The charming personal note Mrs. Björner gives her book, introducing many of her fellow-workers to us, with photographs and the story of their labors, makes it delightful reading. Even in its easy informal manner, it is a document of lasting value. And it bears a message of encouragement to us all, in its story of what one little country has accomplished, and what it is still planning to do.

GRACE ISABEL COLBRON.

A SPARKLING WORK

Sociocratic Escapades, by Francis Neilson, 12mo., clo., 319 pp. Price \$2. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

Who was it said political economy was a dull subject? He must have been blind to the screaming fun that is hidden away in what is taught as political economy. Is there anything really quite as funny as Malthus and the Malthusian theory, a curious caricature of the Creator at the hands of a preacher of Christianity? Or anything quite as subtly humorous as the Wage Fund theory in which it is assumed that labor, which produces all wealth and therefore its own wages, is dependent upon a mythical sum which nobody has ever seen set aside in some mysterious way to keep the workers employed. Due to its obvious absurdity this theory has not the strength it once had, though it bobs up every now and then.

Is there anything quite as amusingly ridiculous as the economic doctors at Washington busy with their fantastic devices. Some day a new Gilbert and Sullivan will embody them in some comic opera and the people of 1950 will laugh their heads off, but will say that of course it is grossly exaggerated. It seems unkind and perhaps a little disrespectful to picture the Chief Executive who gave away billions of other people's money as the Lord Bountiful of a spending campaign in which dollars are made to figure as pennies.

Man is an "amoozin' cuss," as Artemus Ward called him, and he is never quite as amusing as when he is reconstructing the economic edifice and piecing together the sorry patchwork of his substitute planning for the plan of nature. Marx, Tugwell, Richberg, Harry Hopkins, and the late General Johnson in his character of Coney Island barker for the administration—all are supremely amusing playboys amid the eternal verities they do not understand.

Because Francis Neilson is keenly alive to all this he has made a sparkling book. He sees all the funny spectacles provided and he just canters through them in a spirit of positive enjoyment in the havoc he is wreaking. He is having a good time and he shares it with his readers. If there is any stupid pretender who escapes his sharpened spear it is because he is too insignificant to be noted.

There are keen thrusts at Richberg, Lippman, Norman Thomas, all in surpassingly good humor. There is a whimsical defense of

gambling and gamblers which has much underlying truth. And his defense of the American business man who has been abused, lampooned and blackguarded is a spirited and admirable rebuke to the direct charges and covert insinuations emanating from Washington.

There are searching criticisms of the opinions of Justice Brandeis, Holmes and Cardozo, and in these Mr. Neilson shows how shaky and unfixed are the foundations of their democracy, how very questionable are their definitions and their attempts to arrive at conclusions which will leave our institutions invulnerable to attack. He does not spare them, and to Justice Cardozo, who says: "Men are saying today that property, like all social institutions, has a social function to fill," he applies the quick rejoinder: "Property is not a social institution. The mere fact of saying it is a social institution does not make it so."

The lance carried by Francis Neilson is not always pointed in sheer enjoyment of the mischief he is making for the real enemies of a true social order. He is not solely concerned in showing up the curious and often comical misconceptions. We would not have our readers think there is not a very serious undertone to this remarkable book. Francis Neilson is very much perturbed about the future of the nation and the world. He surveys conditions with a sorrow that informs what the reader may sense at times as levity. But beneath it all is a profound seriousness which the judicious reader will discern. We append a few extracts which will give a taste of what is in store for those who will procure the book, and read it from cover to cover, which we trust will be all who read this very inadequate review.

It is sad to think of the intelligentsia of the Sociocratic Party meeting in Chicago and never dreaming what they were in for. Little did they dream once Roosevelt had accepted the nomination that they were on their way to bury the Democratic Party in a non-sectarian cemetery, the only successful collectivist undertaking. Page 41.

Poor labor, your devoted leaders in the Unions and the Houses of Legislature throughout the land know little what bills are piling up all over the country that you will have to foot. One of your true friends told you years ago what would happen, but you were too pre-occupied with nominal wages and shorter hours to give thought to his warnings. He told you that poverty advanced with progress, and so it does. Page 37.

One can acquire a reputation nowadays as a rhetorician by making a speech in which nothing of importance has been said. We have had oceans of them ever since NRA set to work. Our great propagandists, in and out of government, must live in Mason jars. The air never gets at them. Page 78.

For clarity of statement and beauty of prose where will you find in our sociologists, social service people, and relief dispensers anything that can be compared with a work by Eddington, or Jeans, or Herrick, or Sir. William Bragg? These people write prose as poets do. When one turns to the New Dealers' works, the planners' books, and reads their sentences, crepitant Latinisms, and all the hocus pocus verbiage that covers up a host of literary deficiencies, he wonders how university faculties can persist in encouraging the departments through which these authors pass. Page 98.

One reason why our president is concerned about our natural resources is that at one time in this country there were opportunities given to our simple and primitive folk to build homes. But now "the frontier has disappeared." Of course it has. Government stood by and watched it disappear. Page 115.

The man who gave to mankind a set of principles which would lay a sure foundation on which to build a future from the injustices, antagonisms and distinction of class and race that afflict the world today was Henry George. But so far mankind in several countries of which I have had experience, shows little or no inclination to benefit from his work. Yet everybody seems to know something about Henry George. His name appears in editorials, presidents of universities refer to him, statesmen in various countries have caught millions of votes by using his name. At one time in England he was the most popular and unpopular man in this world. Page 120.

Here we see that the essential step in doing something for humanity is to remove injustice. And Henry George has shown simply and clearly what steps are to be taken to carry out this fundamental reform.

Is it a panacea? I do not know. Suppose the reform is carried

out; is there any hope that man will then be happy? I do not know. For happiness, it seems to me, is a question of personal concern quite as much as religion. But this I do know, that there is no other way of setting man on the road to happiness. There is no other way. Pages 124-5.

I knew some one connected with this administration would say, "Our new structure is a part and fulfillment of the old. All that we do seeks to fulfill the historic traditions of the American people." The little grocer who gave a loaf of bread with two quarts of milk he sold to a customer was convicted and fined. I presume that that was according to the historic traditions of the American people. Pages 140-1.

Mr. Roosevelt has my profound sympathy. It seems to me that he is rather new at the game. His speeches seem to indicate that much. He seems to be surrounded by a crowd of people who have the most extraordinary ideas about humankind. There is not one who has delivered a speech or written a book who seems to be conscious for a moment that the working classes are composed of human beings. They seem to picture them as a lot of surpliced choir boys marching down the aisle to service. They never picture the choir boys with the surplices off, before or after the service. Page 173.

Perhaps Mr. Thomas (Norman Thomas) will have an opportunity some day of making a study of the question what is and what is not property. And when he starts about it, he will find that the law of property arises out of the law of social justice. Socialists from the beginning found the law of property the greatest obstacle in their way. So they determined that they would abrogate that law and at one fell swoop, a genius among them decided that there was no such thing as justice and, in abandoning justice, they abandoned economic fundamentals and ethics of which they are the basis. To what extraordinary shifts are men pushed when reason is thrown to the winds! Page 246.—J. D. M.

WELL MEANING—BUT?

Utopia Dawns, by John Pratt Whitman, 20 Union Park, Boston, Mass. 144 pp. Price \$2.

We do not like Utopias. Nothing has ever come of them and most of them have disappeared. They read well on paper but they break down in practice.

This is an interesting account of Utopias, those that have disappeared and those on paper, from Plato to Wells. It is curious to note how the makers of these manufactured Utopias propose to regiment the children, no doubt because they are more easily regimented than the "grown ups." Plato questioned the ability of parents to rear their children properly so he would turn them over to the state. Robert Owen in like manner would have done the same, beginning with children of one year of age. In the Utopia pictured by Andrae in 1691 children were to be submitted to like regimentation. It seems to have been a habit of all of them to consider that if men and women were not the pawns of the state children certainly were. Poor kids!

But these Utopians meant well and there is something catching in their enthusiasm. Mr. Whitman believes that the time is at hand for the adoption of Henry George's proposals and he has a rather interesting chapter on Henry George with a portrait of the great economist.—J. D. M.

AN IMPORTANT VOLUME

We have received from the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade the "Conference Papers" presented at the Fourth Annual Convention at Edinburgh, July and August, 1929. This volume bound in stiff paper covers contains the Declaration of Principles and Policy, the remarkable opening address by Hon. Charles O'Connor Hennessy, president of the International Union, and addresses on Land Value Taxation and Free Trade in Denmark by F. Folke and K. J. Kristensen, The Influence of Henry George in Denmark by Jacob E. Lange, and Spohus Berthelson, papers on the movement in Australia by E. J. Craigie and A. G. Huie, and one by Alan C. Thompson, treating of the movement in Canada. Others represented are John J. Murphy, Dr. Alex Paletta, Otto Cullinan, C. H. Nightingale, Carl Marfels, F. C. R. Douglass, Chester C. Platt