

## Fear, or Pricking of Conscience?

THE agricultural development of the country on new lands since the rich prairies west of the Mississippi River passed into private ownership has lagged, in face of increasing population and steadily advancing prices of foodstuffs at home and abroad. . . ."

"Meanwhile, we have the paradox of more unused land in private hands than ever before in the history of the country, consequent on very large annual net addition to a vast acreage—a quarter of a billion acres—of cut-over land. . . ."

"But the interest and effort are small—regretably small, we are constrained to say—as compared with opportunity and responsibility. . . . These are the realities; and it would be folly to try to blink or ignore them because they are disagreeable."

"The Lane bill will be followed by other bills, federal and State—perhaps providing lands for workmen on harder terms for the owners; but a greater danger would impend if constructive legislation on the subject were delayed and political nagging and confiscatory taxes became the order of things."

"The immediate requirements of the situation are, patently, organization and co-operation everywhere among cut-over and other large undeveloped landholders to bring about immensely greater utilization of such property in the shortest possible time." (Editorial, from March number of *Cut-over Lands*, devoted to utilization of cut-over and waste lands.)

## A Significant Incident

TO what extent the Single Tax propaganda has permeated the minds of the people is often a matter of pure conjecture. But occasionally something happens that shows unexpected progress and leads us to look hopefully to the future.

We were motoring through Loveland, Colo., seeing the sights of the town and the neighboring hills. Our guide was a man of about forty-five, one of those whose features show a life of hard and honest toil. We got to talking about things in town, and I asked: "How are taxes here?"

"Oh, they're pretty high," he replied. "Look at this motor car for example. I pay four taxes on it. There is the license tax to the State, and the general property tax to the city. Then there are two special taxes, one for a driver's license, and one for carrying passengers. So I have to pay one tax for the right to own a car and another for owning it, a third for the right to drive it, and a fourth for the right to drive others in it. In all I pay about thirty-five dollars a year."

"You ought to favor the Single Tax," I remarked.

"I do," came the quick reply.

HYMAN LEVINE.

## Land Speculation

FARM lands in the Middle West have had a great spurt of activity this Spring, and made a general advance, for farms in a high state of cultivation, of \$25 to \$100 per acre. The movement is largely speculative, but has a basis in the high returns that have been realized from the crops at war prices. The farmers have made money and the natural investment for them is in more land. The movement is stimulated by town speculators who buy for the purpose of selling again and make a market by selling to each other. The unfortunate feature of the movement is that a great body of indebtedness is being created, and if farm products should decline, as they must in some degree at least, this indebtedness is likely to be burdensome. There will be no better time for farmers to pay their debts than while they are receiving present prices.

National City Bank Bulletin for July, 1919.

IN the *Evening World* of June 6th, Charles Harris Whitaker, editor of the *Journal of American Institute of Architects*, speaking of Belgium, says:

"Her workers were among the most badly housed in the world, for Belgium had not been able to reckon with rising land values any better than the other countries had. Wherever her government funds were used for improving conditions the surrounding land values immediately rose, and thus the same improvements could not be repeated. At the present time Belgium has a great opportunity to secure a standard of good housing for her workers, for her industrial sections have been in large measure destroyed, and a new start can be made. The laws already passed to govern the rebuilding of her devastated areas indicate that the Government will endeavor to check the disasters that always follow on the heels of land speculation and rising prices."

The "cloud of witnesses" to the real cause of depression in home building as well as all lines of industry increases. Our opportunity is here.

## BOOK NOTICES

### THE LAND AND THE SOLDIER.\*

This work of Frederick C. Howe contains much interesting and valuable information regarding farm colonies, and is a plea for the writer's cherished reform.

Mr. Howe, though a reputed disciple of the Henry George school of economics, has never shown a clear grasp of the principle. That these colony experiments should be urged as any settlement of the great land question to any but a few individuals who might avail themselves of the opportunity, seems as if intended to obscure the real solution of a mighty problem.

We read along, page after page, in this presentation of elaborate plans for farm colonies, and wonder what Mr. George would have thought of a man claiming his discipleship who would waste his time in this manner.

Society, civilization itself, is in travail. It puts to every thinker this question: How will you secure the salvation of mankind, the freedom of the individual, the just distribution of the products of labor? If somewhat more imposing in appearance and extent than most palliatives, these projects of farm colonies are yet only palliatives and trumpety palliatives at that. But they are even worse, since, as we

\*"The Land and the Soldier," by Frederick C. Howe. 12mo. cloth, 190 pages. Price \$1.35. Chas. Scribner's Sons, N.Y. City.



have intimated, they tend to obscure the great question pressing for an answer. They mock with ineffectual reply, or silence opposition by the professions of benevolence with which their advocacy is clothed, the imposing array of historic examples and cotemporary parallels that are cited in their support.

Is it all worth while? Surely Mr. Howe knows better. There are some things he does not know, for his economics are shockingly faulty. He has added portentously to the amount of the printed word in books that have a reportorial if not an illuminative value. But adding to the stock of books is not in itself something to be commended, and most of these works are strikingly superficial.

But Mr. Howe is really capable of better things. He does not need to do this continually. J. D. M.

A PAMPHLET by Chas. H. Smithson, of Halifax, England, entitled "Land in Relation to the Industrial Situation," is a short but business-like and thorough statement of the subject within the compass of a few pages. It was delivered as an address before the Bradford Business Science Club, in March of this year. It concludes:

"The demands of justice will not be satisfied until the whole of the economic value of land be taken for public purposes."

A CLOSELY printed pamphlet of 24 pages, entitled "A Casket of Pearls." Its sub-title is "Economic Truths from the World's Greatest Thinkers." The selections are judiciously made by J. Boundy, and the pamphlet comes from Adelaide. The number of quotations are 241, and are from Carlyle, Prof. Blackie, Henry George, Adam Smith, Grant Allen, Alfred Russell Wallace, Emerson, and many others.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### LITERARY PROPERTY

#### EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Perhaps you can settle a doubt for me. Why, let me ask, is title to a piece of land given forever to the owner, his heirs and assigns, while the right to the creations of an author lapses, often in a brief term of years? My friend, the Duke of Veriphat, is rolling in money, because his ancestor, 400 years ago, got a piece of land; but the descendants of my friend, Charles Dickens, have nothing from the works of their father. Think what the royalties on Shakespeare's plays would be, if they were protected by perpetual copyright; guess at the earnings of Beethoven music, if protected; and the thought will make your eyes glisten. Yet Veriphat's ancestor never made anything, while the others did. And so, when it comes to the profits, it is the what-you-get, and not the what-you-do, that makes prosperity in perpetuity; that is to say, unless you can explain it some other way, Amen.

New York City.

FREDERIC W. PANGBORN.

### A CYNICAL FRIEND

#### EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I picked up in a friend's office today your SINGLE TAX REVIEW. Its contents prompt me to write you a line or two, as one who, while convinced of the correctness of the Single Tax point of view as a matter of pure reason, has never done anything for it, because experience has taught me that the human race is endowed with an invincible ignorance, which causes it to regard truth, instinctively, as a deadly poison. Indeed it may well be that this quality of the human mind serves man as protective coloration does the animals. Had mankind the power of perceiving truth, instead of raising up fatuous illusions which obscure it, the race would long since have disappeared from the planet, for want of a *raison d'être*.

You may therefore believe that I don't take much stock in your Single Tax Party. A one-plank platform would have as much chance of a popular vote, as a temperance lecturer located alongside Steeplechase Park would have of an audience. The people want three rings, an aeroplane and a submarine performing simultaneously. And

strange as it may seem to you a party needs votes as well as principles.

I was interested in your denunciation of Single Tax office holders, who ignore the Single Tax. Such persons are truly despicable. But having reached this conclusion, I searched my memory for one who has been elected or appointed to office in the United States as a Single Taxer and I could not recall one. The few who have held office have been there in spite of, not because of, their Single Tax views—barring a few Congressmen, who went in on Democratic tickets. Would it have been quite fair to the constituents, who elected them for quite other reasons, to make their offices Single Tax pulpits?

Is that your idea of representative government? To me it would seem much like getting publicity under false pretenses. I think that on the whole the Single Tax is to be congratulated on the comparative intelligence shown by the few men, who have held office, whose names were linked with that movement. I never knew that Secretary Lane was regarded as a Single Taxer, but whether he is or not his proposals for returning soldiers indicate a mind with no grasp of the real problem. They ask for farms and he offers them a wilderness—and a poem.

It is interesting to note signs of progress in Brazil and other remote places, but are these not mostly places where the people don't vote? And isn't there danger that it will interfere with foreign concessions? Suppose Mexico were to try to put it in force, what would Lord Cowdray and Lloyd George say? What would the League of Nations do? "I have nothing against your theory but its ill-success," and yet I wish it well. But why waste perfectly good time that might be spent in poker or other harmless pursuits, and what looks at a little distance like actual thoughts, trying to convince fools of their folly? Most reformers have no sense of humor, and hence it is impossible to make them see this, but you have, as evinced in your criticism of that egregious mass of agglutinated verbiage, Ferguson. You are not the only person who has stood gazing after him as he circumnavigated the empyrean and wondered what he would look like when he actually came to earth—but he never has come and he never will. He is Wilson carried to the nth power.

Canarsie, N. Y.

AMOS BARTON.

#### REPLY

This is an amusing letter, as well as a clever one. But we fear that Mr. Barton is too much enamoured of his own powers of repartee to regard with required seriousness any truth of magnitude. He is clever enough to perceive the inadequacy of Secretary Lane's proposal, and has sufficient sense of humor to scent the humbug in Charles Ferguson. If it be a defect of reformers to lack a sense of humor it may be a defect in their critics to pride themselves on their lack of seriousness.

To answer one point in Mr. Barton's letter in which he asks if the triumph of our principles in Brazil, Argentina, and other parts of South America are not mostly in places where the people do not vote, it is sufficient to reply that the people of these communities have an inveterate habit of voting almost continually.

Single Taxers do not consider that they are wasting their time in working for a great cause, and are not likely to be led aside from their devotion to truth by sneers at "fools and their folly." All progress has consisted in the fools getting rid of their folly, whether that folly was a faith in false or outgrown systems, or an equally childish infatuation for their own clever cynicism and contempt for the human race.

Another point. Our contention is not that Single Taxers elected to office unpledged by the Democratic Party platform on which they ran to support the Single Tax, have not used their official positions as pulpits to preach the doctrine. Our critic does not know the ground of our objection, and is not informed of the theory and practice on which we have hitherto proceeded. He does not know that, following the theory that by electing Single Taxers to office in the Democratic Party we would gradually induce that party to adopt all or a part of our principles, we have shaped all our activities to that end. There is a flavor of truth in the assertion that we were not so much the victims of these aspirants to office as the dupes of our own delusion.

Every time a Single Taxer was nominated for office the appeal went out for money and help to elect him. If elected they usually ceased to preach the principles once boldly enunciated. We are not blaming