

OUR boasted freedom necessarily involves slavery, so long as we recognize private property in land. Until that is abolished, Declarations of Independence and Acts of Emancipation are in vain. So long as one man can claim the exclusive ownership of the land from which other men must live, slavery will exist, and as material progress goes on, must grow and deepen.

—PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

JUST in proportion as the interests of the landholders are conserved, just in that proportion must general interests and general rights be disregarded, and if landholders are to lose nothing of their special privileges, the people at large can gain nothing.

—PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

Our Washington Letter

THE meeting of the Woman's Single Tax Club on December 7 was opened by the vice-president's reading of a message from their president, Mrs. Helene McEvoy, extending her congratulations on the new headquarters and expressing her intention to be with them before the next meeting.

Mrs. Walter N. Campbell was appointed chairman of the taxation committee of the D. C. Federation of Woman's Clubs in place of Mrs. Jessie Lane Keeley, who had been compelled to resign on account of ill health.

The good news of Herbert Bigelow's election to the House of Representatives was announced, and deep gratification expressed over the addition of another Single Taxer to our Congressional group.

Mrs. Marie H. Heath read an interesting letter from a former member, Mr. Paul Whitman, and his sister, describing their trips around the island of Hawaii in a trailer which is helping them to solve the question of rent and taxes for the present.

Mrs. Elizabeth M. Phillips gave a review of Mrs. Bessie Beach Trueheart's novel, "Brother to the Ox," depicting future conditions in this world if the present trend toward monopoly of land and natural resources continues unchecked. Mrs. Phillips recommended the organization of a letter-writing corp in the club, similar to the one in the Henry George School of Social Science in New York, in which connection Mrs. Campbell mentioned that since his retirement from the Government service, Mr. Campbell had been quietly operating as a sort of one-man letter-writing corps, writing letters to prominent men and women whose statements in the newspapers indicated a willingness to "see the light," and the members agreed in hoping that others might follow his example. It was suggested that Mrs. Eleanor Patterson, author of a current series of articles in the daily press entitled "Dixie's Dead End," describing conditions among the poverty-stricken residents of the South, might perhaps be added to this correspondence list to receive enlightenment on the causes for these conditions.

Mr. Swanton gave a graphic account of a recent lecture on the situation in Spain, showing how the present civil conflict had its roots in the land question just as did the French Revolution.

The first meeting of the New Year was held on January 4, with the vice-president still presiding in the continued and unexplained absence of the president.

During the business meeting it was voted to contribute five dollars to *Land and Liberty* in response to a letter from Mr. Madsen.

Miss Alice I. Siddall, an experienced proofreader for the Government Printing Office, presented a carefully worked out suggestion for amending the Constitution so as to provide for the taxation of

land values, which brought forth an interesting discussion and suggestions.

Mr. George A. Warren, a member of the D. C. Bar Association, gave an informal talk on "The Curse of Tariffs," showing how the countries of the world suffered loss through their inability to obtain needed products from neighboring nations on account of tariff barriers, which tended to bring about international warfare.

The meeting adjourned until February 1.

—GERTRUDE E. MACKENZIE.

BOOK REVIEWS

PROFESSOR GEORGE GEIGER'S SECOND BOOK

The Theory of the Land Question, by George Raymond Geiger. Cloth, 12mo. 237 pp. Price \$2.00. MacMillan Company, New York City.

This work dedicated "To the Memory of my Father," is George Geiger's latest contribution to economic thought. It is a smaller work than the "Philosophy of Henry George," and is addressed like the first to those who have advanced beyond the initial stages of speculation on this important subject. It is for this reason that the language occasionally employed seems now and then to be rather difficult. But he is never cloudy, and indeed for the most part is delightfully clear.

There is a vein of humor that runs through much of the first chapter. The author cannot frankly express his contempt for the current speculations of so-called economists, so he conceals it with a few sly phrases which are a substitution for the withering scorn to which he must be tempted now and then to give expression.

The book is in great part controversial. It must be that since a correct thesis on the land question involves the clearing away of a number of current fallacies. And this makes the work delightful reading, for Professor Geiger is master of the rapier thrust and his dazzling sword-play is full of surprises.

Some of the chapters are not easy reading, for they require hard thinking. But any attempt to understand what may appear difficult will repay the effort.

The discussion of the nature of value, always a terra incognita of economics, is well done. After explaining that man produces commodities because he needs them, he then proceeds to an impressive analysis of a different kind of value, land value, and says:

"It (land value) comes as a by-product of social life. In no significant way can man control such value. Unconsciously and gratuitously does society manufacture a special and supplementary surplus as it grows; this is what so impressed the classical writers as an unearned increment. It functions independently of man's conscious efforts as they are directed, for example, to the production of wealth. Man creates land value not by any deliberate effort, but only as he congregates in communities—this congregation being the result of psychological forces that operate almost automatically." (Page 40.)

Chapter II is a meticulous exposition of the nature of economic rent which he declares is unearned because no service is contributed. He presses this point from many different angles. He makes his demonstration complete. He is very much in earnest here and has little time for the light touches which in the first chapter have a flavor of irony.

Chapter III is entitled Land and Capital, and it contains a perfectly delightful wealth of allusion, in which theory and humor are mingled, a combination which make this work, despite its philosophic background, such pleasant reading. We quote from page 58:

"Now, it has long been the custom for writers on capital to preface their own remarks by an extended survey of the thirty-six different meanings the word has had, and then to add a thirty-seventh. . . . These prefaces seem almost as obligatory as the invocations to divinities by epic poets. In the present case, however, the reader will have to give the writer the benefit of the doubt of having gazed at that opaque background of controversies over capital; there will

be no encyclopaedic parade of definitions. All that will be attempted will be a passing mention of the most acceptable—if that is possible—connotations the word has for contemporary economists."

Professor Geiger notes the various definitions which economists for purposes of their own give to land. We are not supposed to talk of land without first describing the kind of land. It would seem that a working agreement might be arrived at which would establish a certain unity in the use of the word so that when land was referred to it would have some unmistakable characteristics shared everywhere by this natural factor. We may indicate that the Ricardian Law has demonstrated that unity since it applies to rural and urban land. The persistence with which this is overlooked argues something more than intellectual difference but rather deliberate avoidance.

The distinction between land and capital has never been more clearly stated. Note this from page 87:

The inferences that follow . . . should be clear and simple, but they need to be made articulate. If labor and capital cannot operate without land, i. e., without sites, rights of way, lots, farms, favorable geographical locations, and all else that comes under the heading of land, then, to that degree, land is the dominant factor in economic production. If capital and all the tools of production that man uses are essentially reproducible and replaceable, whereas land space and site value are just as essentially irreproducible, then land, under private control as it is, represents the final and limiting restriction in economic production. If land rent and land value are essentially unearned incomes, depending upon such private control of a given irreplaceable economic element, then the exploiter of that unearned increment occupies the keystone position in economic distribution."

Historical Aspects of the Land Question is the title of Chapter IV. There is one statement to which we must take exception. That is Prof. Geiger's dictum that it cannot be historically demonstrated that private property in land is the cause of the decay of nations. It may be true that a general history of the land question, which would reveal this, has not yet been written. But such a book may yet come from the press, and it was Oscar Geiger's hope that his gifted son might write it. If land has the important place assigned to it by both father and son the effect of systems of land tenure on the decay and deaths of civilizations should find its chronicler. What is needed perhaps for such a work is the faculty of imagination in which the son is not quite equal to the father, fine scholar and expositor as he is. But what remains in the minds of so many of us as a firm conviction, though not readily translatable into detailed exposition, will find its historian when the future gives a larger and more comprehensive elevation from which the problem may be surveyed, in the economic and social march of time. For this the days may not yet be ripe.

That portion of the work devoted to the historical aspects of the land question contains much evidence of the fine scholarship of the author and should be studied for its many implications. They include excursions into all lands. It needs to be studied rather than read.

In this part of the work, with its wealth of historic allusion, Professor Geiger does much to reinforce the conviction that one of the important factors in the decline of civilization, if not the most important, is the prevailing system of land ownership.

And it must be so. If the secret of social well being is "association in equality," which is axiomatic, it must be that a system which most directly and most effectively determines the state of equality or inequality, is a potent factor in the life of civilization. And more emphatically it may be said that there is no other cause which can so rapidly destroy the fibre of a civilization and so surely hasten its decay and death as the division of people into masters and slaves, a system infallibly produced by an order which denies the equal right to the use of the earth. And to this Professor Geiger assents in the concluding part of his work when he says that "the conjunction between social misery and the ownership of the earth" is perennial and ubiquitous."

We think Professor Geiger is in error when he says: "Although he (Henry George) and his followers are ordinarily classed as individual-

istic in their philosophy the very programme of the Single Tax must tremendously strengthen the power of the state by giving it amazing control of social life in the disposition of the huge revenues from ground rents. . . . This problem has never been adequately considered, it seems, by the individualistic adherents of land value taxation."

We were accustomed in the old days to deal with two forms of objections to the taking of economic rent for public purposes, one being that there would not be enough to meet current expenses of government, and a directly opposite contention that it would be so large as to corrupt the sources of government.

Mr. Geiger's dictum is without ground to support it. We do not know whether there would be huge revenues from this source or not.

Nor do we think that the advocates of the individualistic philosophy need to abandon their ground. The taking of economic rent in lieu of all taxes is the final expression of individualism. For the abolition of all taxes and the taking of ground rent mean an enormous simplification in government. For the first time in history its functions will be circumscribed and this is true whether the revenues from ground rents be large or small. The present administration has familiarized us with large federal expenditures, but because this is drawn from hundreds of sources the bureaucratic and overlapping functional structure has created a Frankenstein monster. This has enormously magnified government, so that its ramifications are countless. It is not so much the huge revenues that vitiate the character of governments, but the multifarious activities for which government must assume responsibility when everything conceivable is taxed over and over again, and where the activities it attempts to support are not the true functions of government at all.

But despite the points of difference between author and reviewer we must again assert our belief that this is a very valuable work, skillfully done, keen in its analysis, broad if cautious in its summarizing, and abounding in telling blows in behalf of the basic remedy for our economic ills.—J. D. M

A DEVOTED AND HEROIC LIFE

Macklin of Nanking, by Edith Eberle. 12mo., cloth, 173 pp. Bethany Press, St. Louis, Mo.

Here we have the life of Rev. W. E. Macklin, who carried to China a dual message of redemption, Christianity and the social gospel of Henry George. This story of a great life is attractively told. Not so much is given here as might appropriately have been devoted to the latter. We do not believe that the author of this biography completely recognizes its importance. But Dr. Macklin assuredly does. He knows, too, if his biographer does not, how intimately the two messages are related.

But with a life as busy as Dr. Macklin's has been it is difficult for a biographer brought newly to the task to properly appraise his varied activities. Dr. Macklin's career is fascinating—preaching, lecturing, writing through all the years. His influence permeated far. He brought not only the dual message of which we have spoken, but his own personality, his love for a people crushed under an economic despotism far deeper than any we know. And the Chinese, high and low, listened to him and learned to love him.

Dr. Macklin was born near London, Ontario, of Irish ancestry on his father's side. Miss Eberle tells the story of his youth. He was popular among the young men of his acquaintance but he would not drink with them. As doctor and missionary he did not depend for his strength upon artificial stimulants, and though never physically hardy he was able to pursue long and arduous labors, animated by enthusiastic impulse and a rare devotion. He was essentially a pioneer and found in his desire to blaze new paths the spiritual urge that drove him forward.

We learn much of China from Miss Eberle, and something of Sun Yat Sen. Dr. Macklin informs us that Sun was in favor of the Single Tax before he met him. Dr. Macklin says he was a fine looking man,