

BOOK REVIEWS

ANOTHER USEFUL BOOK

"Land and Unemployment." By James F. Muirhead, M.A., L.H.D. 12mo. Clo. 211 pp. Price \$2.50. Oxford University Press, New York and London.

Here is another book among the growing number that seek to present the Henry George philosophy as the antithesis of socialism. It would seem that in the world of books at least the issue is being sharply drawn. Against a flood of books that advocate the teachings of communism, or the parlor pink school of socialism, or the New Deal brand, books like those of Francis Neilson, Albert Jay Nock, Gilbert M. Tucker, Louis Wallis, Prof. George Raymond Geiger, Henry Ware Allen, Dr. S. Vere Pearson, Frederick Verinder, the late Dr. Muirhead and many others, the literature of protest against the present trend and in favor of the teachings of the great American economist is receiving adequate presentation as the alternative philosophy.

The editor of LAND AND FREEDOM has already reviewed Dr. Muirhead's "Land and Unemployment" in the *Survey Graphic* of this city, but it is well to call attention to it here, for it is a work which merits careful consideration. It is an Oxford book which label bespeaks its character. It is worth reading if for nothing more than the "foreword" of Arnold Wilson, conservative member of Parliament, and the slight but significant sketch of Henry George by its scholarly editor, Garnet Smith.

Perhaps the most portentous of Dr. Muirhead's statement, and he writes with amazing clarity, is the following:

"The Old Order seems to have more or less collapsed; the outlines of the New Order to arise out of the ruins remains very vague. We begin to realize how much of our civilization rested on tradition and how little on reason. We are amazed, now that the crash has shaken the blindness from our eyes, how preposterous were many of the conditions that we accepted unthinkingly and even complacently."

It should be said that the chapter on "Tariffs and Trade" is a bit disappointing.

The absence of a concluding chapter that would "appropriately follow the appeal and exhortation struck at the beginning" is noted by the Editor, and the fact recalls the unfinished task of Henry George in his "Science of Political Economy." In each case death intervened. But while this is to be regretted Dr. Muirhead in his present work has left us material in which the finely persuasive character of the appeal is certain to be of value to the movement.

The progress that has been made in many countries is outlined in one of the latter chapters and reference is had for some of these historic instances to the Single Tax Year Book published and edited by Joseph Dana Miller in 1917, as well as to Prof. George Raymond Geiger, author of "The Philosophy of Henry George," and to Frederick C. Leubuscher from his address at Copenhagen.—J. D. M.

A VALUABLE BOOK

"The Path to Prosperity." By Gilbert M. Tucker. 12mo. Clo. 312 pp. Price \$2.50. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York and London.

Here at last is a book we can recommend without apology or dissent, practically without qualification of any sort, and with all the enthusiasm of which we are capable.

On the "jacket" of the book we are told something of its author whose father was the writer of several books and the editor of *The Country Gentleman*, with which the son became associated on his graduation from Cornell University in 1901. From that time to this Gilbert M. Tucker has been interested in the teachings of Henry George, and this work is the ripened fruit of prolonged study and observation.

It is not easy to review a work in which there is so much that tempts us to quote. There are wise words in defense of the "profit motive," against which so many socialistically inclined professors and well-meaning divines have thundered. To these our author replies (page 74) as follows:

"Why labor with brains and muscle? Why wear ourselves out

teaching and training? * * * Why lie awake nights, thinking, planning, working to organize a new industry, to develop a new process or invent a new tool for mankind? Is not our incentive nearly always the hope of profit?"

And again:

"And to some of us this expectation of profit is a far more powerful incentive to achievement than any vague dream of some hazy social benefit, as conceived and planned by some official."

Mr. Tucker indicates that this incentive may be misdirected. "Any good quality" may be carried to excess." Surveying the practical side of the question he contrasts the private physician, "frankly expecting his fee," with the less efficient service of the great public clinic. It is such considerations as these that are lost sight of by those who decry the profit motive, and our author presses home his argument from every angle.

We can picture the sentimental and benevolently sloppy, condemning the author for his contention that it is no business of government to regulate wages nor to tax the employing class in the interests of so-called "social security." Socialists and trade unionists who obstinately refuse to take the necessary steps to solve both the wage question and the question of the unemployed will not agree with Mr. Tucker when he says:

"The sum and substance of it is that the State cannot justly interfere in the freedom of contract and compel employers to pay higher wages than conditions justify, or dispense charitable benefits. The obligations of charity and generosity are very real obligations but they should not be made compulsory by mandates of the State"

These are brave utterances in a timid and cowardly world, and we thank whatever gods there be for the man who stands up and says them. And this chapter is further enriched by historical analogies and illustrations. Mr. Tucker shows that unemployment insurance, especially when such plans involve the taxing of pay rolls, is a policy which must slow down employment.

On page 99 Mr. Tucker says (under the heading, "Regulating Business"):

"Not content with various schemes of making the employer play the combined role of fairy godmother and nursemaid, not only to his own employees but to the public at large, Uncle Sam must have his finger in the pie of business management at every turn, fixing prices, regulating methods, and meddling with every aspect of trade policy."

It is impossible not to admire the author's pointed thrusts at the stupid persons in charge of public affairs. What can be better than this:

"Only two centuries after the Norman Conquest there was passed The Assize of Bread and Beer, the first statute drawn in the curious old Bastard Norman-French which displaced Latin. This was an attempt to set prices on a sliding scale, based on the price of wheat, and our British progenitors, with typical British tenacity, kept experimenting with such follies for hundreds of years, despite the monotonous futility of bucking natural laws. Apparently the lesson was learned and the fallacious scheme abandoned, but just when we think we are done with them, they crop up again with the next generation, determined never to learn by experience unless it be their own. One wonders sometimes if the Brain Trust in spite of all its erudition, college degrees and economic standing, is not a bit rusty on economic history. (Pages 102-103.)

The chapter on "Regulating Business" is full of meat. It should be read by every business man and by every one who is seeking relief from oppressive government policies. "There is scarcely a trade practice that is not in constant danger of some new ruling or decision," our author tells us. This chapter reviews the many preposterous interferences with the normal process of industry and closes with restrained eloquence in a picture detailing the progressive abandonment of what we have won in a thousand years of struggle.

The chapter on "Money and Credit" will not find favor with those who entertain weird notions of the circulating medium, but it is a very sane contribution to the subject. We can imagine the anger of this class of thinkers at Mr. Tucker's statement that he would "like to see the value of the dollar definitely established in terms