

planes. To suppose this, we should have to suppose that the making and using of planes was a trade secret or a patent right, when the illustration would become one of monopoly, not of capital. . . . If the power which exists in tools to increase the productiveness of labor were the cause of interest, then the rate of interest would increase with the march of invention. This is not so; nor yet will I be expected to pay more interest if I borrow a fifty dollar sewing machine than if I borrow fifty dollars worth of needles, if I borrow a steam engine than if I borrow a pile of bricks of equal value. Capital, like wealth, is interchangeable. It is not one thing; it is anything to that value within the circle of exchange. Nor yet does the improvement of tools add to the reproductive power of capital; it adds to the productive power of labor."

And on the question of the deterioration of wealth in the form of capital there are, said Henry George, "many forms of capital which will not keep, but must be constantly renewed; and many which are onerous to maintain if one has no immediate use for them. So if the accumulator of capital helps the user of capital by loaning it to him, does not the user discharge the debt in full when he hands it back? Is not the secure preservation, the maintenance, the re-creation of capital, a complete offset to the use?"

I think, said Lyon to me, that the usual definition of capital, viz, "wealth used to produce wealth," is likely to confuse. For more wealth cannot be produced by more wealth, more wealth can only be produced by labor again resorting to and using land. Capital in itself does not produce. A machine may stand still forever unless labor starts it up and keeps it going and in repair, and without the energy of combustion in the coal or oil, labor itself would be powerless. And if capital as we say, increases the efficiency of labor, this means that labor in an age of invention uses finer tools and better machines, which is but equal to saying that labor makes an intenser use of the energy of nature or land.

The result of this procedure necessarily is that both rent and wages tend to increase, whereas nothing supervenes to prevent capital or saved wealth, from its natural tendency to disintegrate, become of inferior value and finally disappear.

Of Henry George's own theory of the origin, inevitability and justness of interest the least said the better. It is transparently fallacious and is the one weak spot in his otherwise brilliant treatise. It is seldom quoted now by his adherents.

The foregoing were the arguments by which our friend sought to justify his opinion on interest, viz that it is a robbery of labor and with the socializing of economic rent it will disappear.

The last year or two of his life were brightened by learning that in distant Western Australia a new school of thinkers has appeared who also insist that interest is a

continuous robbery of labor and that it must be denounced along with the private ownership of land. With these "Liberators" he placed himself in communication, and one of the last acts of his life was to direct that a package of their monthly publication, edited by R. E. White, 2 Lane Street, Perth, Western Australia, be placed in my hands for distribution.

E. YANCEY COHEN in *Fairhope Courier*.

BOOK AND PAMPHLET NOTICES

CATECHISM IN FUNDAMENTAL ECONOMICS

I. D. Beckwith, of Stockton, California, publisher and editor of *The Forum*, has issued a fifty page pamphlet entitled "The Catechism of Fundamental Economics." In the form of questions and answers he surveys the entire field of economics, covering the philosophy and practical application of our doctrine.

So well is this done that it seems doubtful if any need should ever arise for doing the job over again. We do not need to comment upon it further. There are points carefully elaborated which are not usually touched upon in Single Tax discussions. Send for a copy and see for yourself.

TOWARD THE LIGHT

This is the title of a book of nearly three hundred pages published by the Deronda Publishing Company, of this city. The author is Mary Fels, widow of Joseph Fels.

It is the work of a spiritual thinker, and the appeal is to the spirit. Here is a religion of the deeper sort apart from formalism and creed. It is a reminder of the profounder philosophy that is Hebraic in its strain, and in its yearnings toward God it realizes the aspirations of the Hebrew prophets.

It is in the form of readable paragraphs, short sermons they might be called, all instinct with the life of the spirit, but related to morals and conduct. Among what may be called devotional literature it should hold a high place.

Indicating the obstacles that prevent the finer development of men and women she speaks of the work of Joseph Fels for economic emancipation. And reflecting upon conditions as they are, "No wonder," she says, "culture is an extraneous thing—something of the brain, not of the spirit."

Mary Fels has taken us up into the mountains, and it will do us no harm to walk with her a little way.

J. D. M.

LAND TENURE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The book "Land Tenure and Unemployment" was first published in England in 1925. Frank Geary B. Sd. Econ. of the Inner Temple and the South Eastern Circuit, Barrister-at-Law, is its author, and A. S. Comyns Carr, K. C. writes the preface.

The book states in its opening paragraph: "It is the purpose of this inquiry to discover, if possible, the cause of unemployment, and to indicate the remedy."

With this purpose in mind, the author attempts first of all, to make it quite clear how wealth is produced. He gives as the essential factors, land, which includes all the natural resources of the earth, and labor, and shows how all wealth is the application of labor to land, "adapting, changing or combining natural products to fit them for the satisfaction of human desires by utilizing the reproductive forces of nature and by exchanging the products of labor." . . . "Capital," he says, "is a derivative factor (itself the product of labor and land) and not a primary factor. For this reason capital cannot limit in-

dustry, but only the form of industry, and not even this for long, where there is the opportunity for producing more capital, and security afforded for its growth."

Next he shows that the supply of labor cannot be in excess of the demand so long as human wants are unsatisfied and man has the alternative of "exchanging his labor with someone who can give him the good he wants, or by going directly to the land, producing his own subsistence, and exchanging his surplus for other goods he needs."

This brings us to the point, "that if the supply of labor is not in excess of the demand, and yet there are men who lack the goods they want, the reason must be that the supply of labor is in some way prevented from satisfying demands. . . ." "either that there is insufficient land or that labor is denied access to the land."

From here the inquiry proceeds along historical lines to ascertain whether there is a sufficient area of land to provide opportunities for employment for those who need the results of labor, and if there is, what it is that is preventing the supply of labor from using the land to satisfy its needs.

We find, and the author supports all his claims with a mass of documentary evidence, that in Saxon and early Norman times there was no unemployment in England. "Nature's opportunities for employment were in abundance, and land was freely at the disposal of him who wished to till it." However, soon after the Norman conquest, the Lords began enclosing the waste and common land and from that time throughout the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, the enclosure movement continued. "In the middle of the 18th century, began the last and greatest period of enclosures, which by the middle of the 19th century had accounted for practically all the land in the kingdom. This period saw the wholesale depopulation and devastation of the countryside; the rise of the slums of the great industrial cities, in which the dispossessed had to take refuge; the pauperization of a large proportion of the population of Great Britain; and the growth of that terrible one-sided competition among the surplus of unemployed for the jobs which appeared to be too few to go around."

In thus appropriating and monopolizing of the land the landlords were, in fact, robbing the community of its rights over land, which originally it clearly possessed and which should have been handed down from generation to generation. These rights were not lost without a struggle. In fact, the Commons of England frequently rose in armed revolt down to the 19th century, when the countryside was so drained that there were few left to rise.

"In Scotland this wholesale confiscation of the rights of the community took place within comparatively recent times, and has turned fertile valleys into desolate wastes and depopulated the whole countryside." Moreover, confiscation is a continuing evil; it does not cease with the generation which commits it.

However, the validity of the author's conclusions do not rest on the origin of rights. Whether the land belongs to the community or to the landlord, his conclusions are based on the fact that when access to land was free to labor and opportunities were available for all, there was no unemployment. Now, with nature's opportunities monopolized, "there is always a large surplus of unemployed, with its complement a mass of underpaid labor."

An investigation of the mineral resources in Great Britain and of land tenure in urban districts, reveals the same state of affairs. Consequently labor, except to a very limited extent, has not been able to avail itself of the advantages of labor-saving machinery. With a surplus of unemployed, the labor-saving inventions only serve to oppress labor further and to throw more men out of jobs.

Capital is often denounced as the cause of unemployment and poverty, but even Karl Marx, the great apostle of this theory, wrote in "Capital" pg. 739, "The starting point of the development that gave rise to the wage-laborer as well as to the capitalist was the servitude of the laborer. . . . The expropriation of the cultural producer or the peasant, from the soil is the basis of the whole process." The capitalist could not have crushed the worker if he had not been driven

off the land and denied the alternative which Nature's resources gave him.

Many support the theory that overpopulation is the cause of unemployment. "If this country contained two men only and one of them owned all the land and had no need of the labor of the other, and refused to even give him permission to use the land, the country would be overpopulated." But in reality, history shows that population seems to increase slowly when wealth is more widely distributed and a rising standard of living is maintained, and that when man is kept down to a condition resembling the lower animals with no future, he, like the animals, multiplies quickly.

Currency manipulation, labor saving-machinery, and trade cycle are other alleged causes of unemployment. The author shows how the exponents of these various so-called causes all err with regard to the same vital point, namely, in entirely disregarding how wealth is really produced and what are the factors necessary for its production.

What is the remedy for the conditions we find prevalent? "The remedy is clear. The land monopoly must be broken down and labor must be afforded free and equal access to all land."

"This might be brought about by a gradual resumption by the community of the rights over land . . . and a change in the basis of taxation and rating, so that . . . industry would be freed from penalizing taxation and the penalty fall on him who withholds land from labor."

"Just as a high protective tariff acts as a wall around a country to keep out a large proportion of foreign goods that in the normal course of trade and exchange would come in, so the land monopoly acts as a tariff protecting the interests of the owners, the monopolist, and keeping out labor.

"This opening up of the land to labor would then have the result of putting an end to the one-sided competition under which workers compete for jobs but employers seldom compete for workers." With Nature's opportunities for employment thrown open to all, the number of potential employers would be greatly increased, and the greatest of all competitors for labor, the demand of labor itself, would have come into the market. Then for the first time for nearly 500 years there would be free competition—a competition which would give to each the full product of his labor, neither more or less."

The research is extensive and detailed, and deals with the subject most convincingly. It should become well known in this country for it is a very valuable addition to "land question" literature.

MABELLE HATHAWAY BROOKS.

CORRESPONDENCE

NEWS FROM RUSSIA

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

In my letter published in the Sept.-Oct. number of LAND AND FREEDOM the statement is made that the Russian Government in carrying out its plan for internal improvements had negotiated no loans either foreign or domestic. This was true at the time the letter was written, but later a ruling was made that a deduction of about 8% would be made from the monthly salaries of all persons employed on government work, and when the deductions amounted to 100 rubles a bond would be given for the amount. These bonds draw interest and are negotiable at the government banks.

In the letter it was intimated that but little Sunday work was done in Russia. This was true also when the letter was written, but a ruling or law has gone into effect giving all workers a holiday every fifth day. Work continues without interruption and one fifth of the workers every day are having a holiday. This arrangement is causing very general dissatisfaction. The full benefits of a holiday can not be secured without the mass of the people having their holiday at the same time, as is the case in regard to the national holidays.

Alma Ata, Kazakstan.

W. A. WARREN.