

## Uses Intelligence as to Land

IN Northern Nigeria, now the Northern Provinces, urban and rural land is let on permits of indefinite term, with reassessment of the full site value for revenue every few years. There is no litigation to secure such titles, and multitudes of people live in rapidly increasing comfort as shown by production returns; and the local treasuries, which carry out nearly all Government duties, are richly financed, with no need of any form of taxation on trade or accumulation.

There must be no misunderstanding on this point; the land value duly confiscated does provide richly for all public needs, no taxes are needed, and would-be producers do get access to any idle land without suffering blackmail for the privilege; there is no land litigation either between persons or tribal or municipal-organized groups.

All the facts given above are drawn from West Africa, 1926, by Mr. Ormsby-Gore, late Conservative Under-Secretary for the Colonies.—*Land and Liberty*, February, 1929.

THE story is told that Washington could throw a dollar across the Potomac and find it afterward on the bank where it fell, though he might not have looked for it for several days. Banks on the Potomac were safer then.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### AN INTERESTING BOOK\*

This work, which has attained prominence as a "best seller"—150,000 in a few months, we believe—makes no effort to treat fundamentally of America's history and progress. Mr. Adams tells us his object has been "rather to paint a picture with broad strokes of the brush our variegated past."

Many faults might be found with it. The picture of the Indians as "a savage and barbaric race" must be taken *cum grano salis*. That they were "cruel and revengeful" and of "hysterical make-up" must also be subject to a certain modification which a more careful exercise of the scholarship in the gift of the writer would have done much to correct.

He is alive to the economic advantages offered by free natural opportunities to the new settlers, and says: "With free land easily obtainable there was little or no reason why a hard-working, ambitious man should have to work for another instead of himself. (Page 38.)

He returns to the lessons of these conditions more than once throughout the book. He shows their bearing upon the growth of democracy. He is everywhere alive to their importance.

He tells us that he finds, "despite the lonely roads through the woods, but one case of highway robbery in the colonial period." The cause seems to be clear to him: "Under better economic conditions crimes against person or property became rare in the colonies." Prof. Adams' knowledge of economics is sounder than that of many whose business it is to teach it.

On page 61 he says: "The large land holdings were got for the most part in devious ways."

He shows how Jefferson and others labored for emancipation, but

without results. (Page 104.) He shows that Jefferson was influenced by the French philosophers to some extent, but that he had complete faith in the ordinary citizen." (Page 111.)

On page 157 Prof. Adams gives an account of the passing of the country magnate and the appearance of the city landlord, when the herding of the population into small quarters began. He senses the breaking down of economic democracy in the North (1830-1840), due to the preemption of the best lands in the cities. Cause and consequence are related in a few telling sentences, covering the period from 1800 to 1830.

There is an account (page 168) of the influence of Henry Clay, and Prof. Adams tells us that protectionists who have succeeded him have merely rung the changes on the speech he made in March, 1824.

Perhaps he is not quite fair to Jackson, for, though "a duelling, swashbuckling hero," he was not without certain excellent qualities that have left their impress upon the Republic.

On page 212 mention is made of the orgy of land speculation leading to the panic of 1837. There are passages dealing with the moral consequences following a prevailing devotion to mere money getting, and the prevalence of crime and disorder which is repeating itself in the present era.

There are some thoughts boldly proclaimed dealing with the World War, the causes leading to it, and our entry into it.

On the whole Mr. Adams has made a useful book, with much shrewd comment and sanity of observation, among which we would give unstinted praise to the fine and wholly discriminating tribute to the character of George Washington.

There is also a rather searching account of William Jennings Bryan and his campaigns, briefly touched upon, and the causes that lay behind Free Silver, which Prof. Adams recognizes was but the symbol of revolt. This might have been written by Henry George himself, so astutely penetrating is it, resembling Mr. George's great pamphlet "Beneath the Silver Question."

And, by the way, why was there not a mention of Henry George? And when we are discussing omissions, why not a mention as well of Thomas A. Edison, of Wendell Phillips, of the Christian Science movement? And while the Ku Klux Klan of Civil War days is referred to, why no mention of its more recent picturesque successor with a membership of more than three millions?

The author's criticism of Henry Ford is misplaced censure. The \$50 profit which Ford makes on each automobile he manufactures cannot begin to compare with the hundreds of dollars' benefit the farmer receives by reason of having purchased easy and quick transportation from the farm to the city.

Of course Prof. Adams has not attempted an answer to the problems that are crowding on us. That was not his purpose; he has, as he tells us, but set himself to paint a picture in "broad strokes." Therefore, perhaps it is not fair to find fault with him for the things he has not said, the profound causes he has not touched upon, the fundamental truths of which it was no part of his purpose to treat. Some of these he has at least sensed and in partial lights envisioned.

B. W. B.

### A GREAT CAREER \*

A man named Henry George wrote a book. To a great number of men and women life thereafter was never the same. Many met him personally and had the advantage of that great companionship. He touched them by his writings and by his remarkable personality with something like a divine fire.

Samuel Seabury fell under that influence. He read "Progress and Poverty" and met the author. The high-minded youth whose intellect was of a serious cast had his career determined for him then and there. Something of the tradition inherited from distinguished forebears

\*The Epic of America. By James Truslow Adams. 8vo; cloth; price \$3.75. Little, Brown & Co., Boston, Mass.

\*Samuel Seabury: A Challenge. By Walter Chambers: cloth; 12mo; 389 pages; illustrated. Price \$3.50. The Century Company, New York City.



furnished contributory causes to his conversion to a life of service. Something, too, of rare intellectual capacity in the young man himself made the influence of Henry George inescapable. The moral implications of the great philosophy of social reconstruction set forth by the author of "Progress and Poverty" fell upon fertile ground. The young advocate became the intellectual and spiritual child of the great teacher whose influence has enrolled a growing army of distinguished adherents, of whom Samuel Seabury is not the least.

All this the writer of this "life" has told—and he has told it well. In the present flair for biography this work should have a large circle of readers, and it well deserves it. Despite the introduction of many pages of the testimony before the Hofstadter committee, most of which is familiar to us who have read the newspapers, we cannot regard this as "padding," since it must be new to many readers, and its permanent preservation between covers is not undesirable.

There are many interesting incidents related which we do not wish to anticipate for the readers. We want to comment on Mr. Seabury's command of English. He has a style remarkable for its force and clarity. We do not have to stop to ask what he means. He is both eloquent and simple. And he is bold to the degree of being on occasions very unflattering. Even when a candidate for office he said: "We have in our court of last resort some altogether estimable gentlemen whose views upon social, economic and industrial questions would have been somewhat behind the times if they had lived in the time of Columbus." A rather neatly packed sentence.

This work bears evidence of having had cooperation between the author and subject. There are revelations of intimate contact which help to fill out the engaging picture of a remarkable man. Judge Seabury's tastes and cultural recreations as well as the ideals he holds are indicated in many pages. The author has an intense admiration for him, but he does not allow this to betray him into hyperbole. Refraining from words of praise, he reveals his hero worship less by his words than by his attitude, for he does not overemphasize the merits of his hero. It is only in the concluding paragraph that he permits himself to say:

"Samuel Seabury comes then as a radiant challenge to youth to arm itself with convictions; to remain steadfast to its ideals; to hold its faith that there can be here in truth a government of the people, by the people, for the people."

And this is indeed so. Though we have had occasion to differ with Judge Seabury on more than one occasion—which differences we need not stop to indicate—we have watched his career with satisfaction. He is one of the men in public life whose ideals are derived from the great man who has touched more than a few with his prophetic glow. We refer to Henry George.

J. D. M.

#### ANOTHER AUTHOR WITH A "SOLUTION" \*

This book has one grave disadvantage. Composed as it is of pamphlets and addresses written by Mr. Klein at various times, there is much repetition.

It is a plea for the limitation of great fortunes. Even the Rockefeller Foundations, which at least are directed to useful purposes, are to be levied upon. "This book will cure hard times," the cover tells us. The author even hints that a war may be necessary to bring about the readjustment aimed at. We might comment on the superficial character of the work, as shown by such comments as the following on page 79:

"We have reached a stage where the industrial fortunes completely overshadow land fortunes, where money control has produced mental and moral debasement and where the poor are in a worse plight than Henry George pictures. The inequality is more extreme and the structure of government has been changed from democracy to plutocracy or money oligarchy. The condition which Henry George pictures has

been far extended in intensity, and for that reason a radical cure is needed."

If there is any really great fortune which is not based primarily on the inequality that results from the divorcement of man from the land, we do not know of it. The Rockefeller fortune, which is referred to often by the author of this book, would largely disintegrate were land values taken by the people. Railroads, oil wells and pipe lines are *land*, and the Rockefeller fortune was built up by private ownership in these resources, and public utilities based on land. Every great fortune would be severely hit by the so-called Single Tax (inadequate name) more severely indeed than even by the form of "capital levy" Mr. Klein suggests. For that reform would forever prevent their rebuilding. For those fortunes that rest on patent monopoly, which are not of great significance, other preventive measures might be applied.

J. D. M.

## Correspondence

### DEFENDS PROHIBITION

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Please let me take exception to the way Mr. Henry Ware Allen handles prohibition in your March-April number. On page 57 he gives two causes for the present depression. If we accept it as he wrote it we might think that all free soilers were wet, and I know one who is not. The statement that it was "put over" on the American people would seem to carry its condemnation of the methods used. A long, hard fight for prohibition was waged before the World War started. It was probably a necessary measure like the seizing of the railroads to conquer the enemy.

Mr. Allen must assume that the absent soldier vote was wet. I do not think he knows. I was a soldier in another war, and I am not on the liquor side. The revenue that the government lost by that measure should not disturb free landers, for they know that the people's revenue is the nation's land rent. If we collected our ground rent the expense of enforcing prohibition, or the effort to defeat it, would be negligible.

I will not admit that it is unenforceable. What becomes of the sovereignty of a nation of sovereigns if we cannot enforce our laws? Readily will I grant that a government of landlord racketeers are hardly competent to enforce that or any other of our penal statutes. However, we will not always have landlord masters. My opinion is that prohibitionists, like Georgists, want better government, and to that degree we are natural allies. Let us hope that Mr. Allen and others will answer this, for it may be well to learn where Single Taxers stand on the matter of alcohol. Are the laws against theft, burglary kidnapping enforced any better than is prohibition?

Cordele, Ga.

HOWELL CLOPTON HARRIS.

### RENT—COST—PRICE

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Anent the current discussion in your columns of the relation between Rent—Cost—Price:

In contending that rent does not increase price it might be well to explain to one's opponent a certain feature which frequently, and quite naturally, is his stumbling block. It is obvious that if the seller is paying rent that on the average amounts to 5 per cent of the value of the goods sold, and that if the owner of the site occupied should remit this rent charge, the goods *could* be sold for 5 per cent less.

Thus, reasons said opponent, rent has increased price to the extent of 5 per cent. Then we start at the other end and demonstrate with a few words and figures that rent does *not* enter into price.

The seeming contradiction disappears when we recognize that the suggested remission of rent would be merely a gift from the landlord to the seller of the goods, his tenant, which would *enable* the tenant

\*America, Use Your Head. By Henry H. Klein: 12mo; 192 pages. Published by the author.