

BOOK REVIEWS.

A NOTABLE WORK.

A book giving the history of the Digger movement and the striking figure of its leader in the days of the English Commonwealth has been needed ever since Mr. Lewis H. Berens, through the columns of the *Single Tax REVIEW* and elsewhere, told us something of this remarkable prophet of the people who, by reason of his commanding abilities and magnificent devotion deserves to rank among the great reformers. That Gerrard Winstanley has not received the honors due him from the too partial hand of history is owing to the fact that the great truth for which he stood was overborne. The generation for which he worked was unmindful of the light of which he was the torchbearer, and he was one of the great prophets of unsuccess.

More than usually endowed with the faculty of philosophic reasoning was this sturdy reformer, as many of his compact and far reaching generalizations prove. His mind was singularly acute and powerful, and his expression often eloquent and forcible.

It was in 1649 that Gerrard Winstanley with his associates began to dig upon Surrey Hill and sow the ground with parsnips, carrots and beans. Thence originated the name by which they began to be known—the Diggers—perhaps as unfortunate an appellation in their day as ours (*Single Taxers*) in this, since it tended to obscure the broad universal principle they were teaching. How firm was Winstanley's grasp on the essential truth this paragraph from "The New Law of Righteousness," must suffice among many quotable passages;

"And this is the beginning of particular interest (monopoly?) buying and selling the earth from one particular hand to another, saying, 'This is mine,' holding this particular propriety by a law of his own making, and thereby restraining other fellow-creatures from seeking nourishment from their Mother Earth. So that though a man was bred up in a land, yet he must not work for himself where he would, but for him who had bought part of the land, or had come to it by inheritance of his deceased parents, and called it his own land. So that he who had no land was to work for small wages for those who called the land theirs. Thereby some are lifted up in the chair of tyranny, and others trod under the footstool of misery, as if the earth were made for a few and not for all men."

Whereas we would say to-day that land monopoly is the basis of industrial slavery by which some are exalted and many degraded, Winstanley put the same thought

The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth. By Lewis H. Berens. 8vo, cloth, 250 pp., Price, 7/6 net. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., London, Eng.

in the language of metaphor, with which he constantly enriched his strong and sturdy habit of expression. Something, too, of the mysticism of his theology permeated his thought and language; something, too, of a prophetic utterance, characteristic of those who have glimpses of universal truth. This is curiously similar in all those whose names are allied with that of Henry George as "precursors" of his in the discovery of the truth which to-day numbers hundreds of thousands of adherents—Winstanley, Spence, Dove, and George himself—fuller, completer, more emphatic and defiant in George than in any of the others, in keeping with his firmer and more comprehensive grasp of the great truth which the others had striven to teach—and had indeed taught well according to their lights.

Mr. Berens has made Winstanley a real and impressive figure. The chapters of the book which treat of the Reformation and the Civil War contain many valuable reflections on the history of the period, its seething political and social unrest. This part of the volume reinforces Hon. Joseph Leggett's opinion that no reform movement is so valuable in good literature as ours. Mr. Berens' work is a contribution to the library of our propaganda of permanent historic interest and usefulness.

J. D. M.

GREAT ECONOMIC CHANGES POSSIBLE BY ENFORCEMENT OF PRESENT LAWS.

A recent number of "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science" contains a symposium on Taxation in American Cities. The cities considered are Buffalo, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Detroit, Washington, Seattle, Grand Rapids, Milwaukee and Duluth. While the systems of taxation in these cities differ somewhat and the conditions differ still more, the similarities are striking. In all the cities some revenue is derived from sources other than taxation. Cincinnati obtains the largest revenue in proportion from sources which are not classed as taxation source. 60 per cent of its revenue, however, is derived from taxation. A large part of the 40 per cent is obtained from subjects which in other cities contribute taxes. For example, a railway pays \$1,000,000 as rental, and the street railways pay \$250,000 as a percentage on their receipts. Milwaukee obtains 85 per cent of its revenue from taxation, and the percentage of revenue from taxation in the other cities is greater than in Cincinnati and less than in Milwaukee.

The only city in which real estate is said to be assessed at its full value is Detroit, and that is also the only city in which vacant land is said to be assessed at its full value, although the very interesting asser-

tion is made that in Duluth land is assessed at a higher percentage of its value than either improvements or personal property. In almost every case some such assertion is made as that with regard to Seattle, that "the small property owner has to pay more taxes than he would if all property were assessed at a uniform percentage of its true value. This disparity between the assessed and the market value is greatest in the cases of the larger and more valuable pieces of property."

In almost every city complaint is made either that public service corporations are favored by the law, or as in the case of New Orleans that "public franchises are assessed at a very low figure."

The contribution to the revenue made by personal property varies greatly, ranging from about $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in Buffalo to 82 per cent in Grand Rapids. The statement with regard to Cincinnati is generally true with regard to the other cities. The author of the paper on Cincinnati says, "Intangible personal property cannot be reached by the assessors, and even tangible personal property is not returned to any great extent. From this it can readily be seen that Ohio is in the same position as the rest of the country as regards taxation of personal property."

The symposium as a whole bears strong testimony to the fact that the superstition for taxing everything is yielding to the logic of facts which daily become more eloquent, and that more and more attention is being paid to the full assessment of land values. All should realize that great economic changes can be wrought by merely enforcing the law as it is, by assessing land for all it is worth and not over assessing improvements.

LAWSON PURDY.

AN INCISIVE PAMPHLET.

We know of no more forcible and effective Single Tax tract for propaganda than, "How to Become Your own Landlord without Cost," by F. Burgdorff, 2656 45th Street, Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. Burgdorff offers to return the price of this tract,—ten cents—to the third or fourth individual to whom it is loaned, providing that he can show evidence that he has read it and understood its contents. His object in making this offer is to secure for each copy a certain circulation. Copies in bulk may be secured at a discount from the price for single copies by writing to Mr. Burgdorff.

About ten pages of this effective little pamphlet is given up to "Hammerstrokes." Here are a few:

"Taxing goods makes goods dearer. But by taxing land values, land becomes cheaper."

"Fish in the river, coal in the earth are land. Fish in your frying pan, coal in your shed are wealth."

"Hands and land separated are like two shear blades separated. Either alone is useless."

"Trusts that do not have their feet on the ground are not a lasting menace. The ground trust is the mother of all trusts and most to be feared."

There are many more of these "Hammerstrokes," some quite as good and better. Told as it is in simple language with no waste of words, this tract deserves to have a wide circulation.

"THE MARKET."

This is another of the pamphlets of Mr. Henry Rawie. It is an argument for the Single Tax following from what we regard, if we understand them at all, as erroneous premises. The problem which is plain and simple to Single Taxers after the essential factors are understood becomes in Mr. Rawie's hands one of hopeless and bewildering complexity. This is largely because he magnifies, or substitutes manifestations for causes. The position of cause and effect is reversed, and though this is done with some skill we would be loath to recommend the pamphlet for general use.

That money is the creator as well as the measure of values, that money employs labor, that an increase in value is necessary to keep labor profitably employed; that "commodities are the means of distributing wealth by collecting and distributing money and keep us employed by the constant exchange of money for commodities" (why not of commodities for commodities?) are all only a few of the mazes into which Mr. Rawie leads us.

Doubtless a man may see the Single Tax standing on his head, and it is better to see it that way than not at all. But much of what is seen and described in this position is so impenetrable that one might almost suspect Mr. Rawie of occupying a chair of Political Economy in some one of our foremost colleges.

J. D. M.

ENOCH ENSLEY.

There were many forerunners of Henry George in England and Scotland. Morrison Davidson has treated of them in a volume published by F. R. Henderson, London, Eng. A similar office might be performed for Mr. George's American precursors, whose works deserve to be rescued from the neglect into which they have fallen. The names of Opdyke and Isaac Sherman occur to us at the minute, and before us lies a pamphlet published by the New York Tax Reform Association containing a letter written by Enoch Ensley, a landowner in Tennessee, to Governor Brown in 1871. It is true that these men including Mr. Ensley approached the subject exclusively from the fiscal point of view—they were not concerned about the relation of labor to land,